

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kara Jankowski and I am an English learner teacher in West Carrollton City Schools. House Bill 73 is a necessity for Ohio's students. As a teacher, I have experienced how over-testing can negatively impact our students.

It is important to recognize assessment is an integral part of teaching. I use assessment data every day to make adjustments to my instruction, monitor student growth and evaluate my own teaching and how I can improve my lessons. This being understood, teachers use a variety of high-quality assessments to meet student needs, providing actionable student data. Unfortunately, this does not often include state tests as the results are not provided until after the school year has ended. Instead, teachers use many different types of assessments depending on this class.

Teachers have a number of assessment types in their teaching toolbox. They use performance tasks, written and oral evaluations, portfolios, rubrics among many others. Teachers choose assessment based on their professional knowledge and the needs of the student and then provide developmentally-appropriate, timely feedback. State tests do not offer this kind of diversity or feedback.

This bill would allow teachers to spend less time testing which means more time for teaching and learning. Rather than focusing on tests that are high-stress for students, teachers can focus on their own in-class assessments where students receive personalized, timely feedback.

This bill shifts the focus in schools from passing a state test to high-quality individualized instruction for my students. State testing uses a one-size-fits-all approach while teachers like me know our students benefit more from a personalized approach. For example, some of my English learner students arrive in my classroom with limited English. I sometimes need to teach students how to use a drinking fountain or basic greetings in English. As students progress, we move from basic letters and sounds to more complex phonics concepts and vocabulary and so on. As students learn, I assess them to ensure they grasped each concept and are ready for the next one. This natural learning progression of language is interrupted by state tests.

This bill ensures districts examine their testing practices and prioritizes the needs of our students. It is time for Ohio's students to have more time to learn, explore and grow without the cloud of testing hanging over them.