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**Proponent Testimony on HB 73
Presented by Darold Johnson
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Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, and ranking member Robinson, my name is Darold Johnson, Director of Legislation of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents 20,000 teachers and paraprofessionals in rural and urban school districts and public employees across the state of Ohio. OFT supports House Bill 73, which reduces the number of high school tests and establishes a method to review overall testing in school districts.

Assessment is an integral part of the instructional process. Having a **balanced** assessment system in place to support student learning is critical. Standardized state tests are one form of assessment and **can be** part of a balanced assessment system. Because state standardized tests are used for accountability, the emphasis on them upsets the balance with their taking on a larger role than they should. When standardized state tests are used to label schools, districts, or teachers, it expands their role to be the focus of the school or district rather than individual student learning being the focus. As a result, time is spent during the school year preparing for the state assessments often at the expense of more authentic learning. Assessment has a role in advancing student learning, but it is important to fully understand the uses of different types of assessment in accomplishing this goal.

In 2015, OFT published a position paper on testing that called for ending the testing mania in Ohio schools and moving toward a **system of assessments** that supports authentic learning. The legislature adopted many of those recommendations. HB 73, goes further by reducing high school exams and requiring local school districts to form a work group locally to examine the amount of time spent in testing which will naturally need to include a discussion of the use and usefulness of assessments. It is time for an assessment **system** to be in place which can be used to provide the data needed to help students learn and progress.

To understand the uses and types of assessment in an assessment system, let's look at each – all of them necessary to be present in a balanced assessment system. Essentially, there are three types of assessments that educators need – diagnostic, formative, and summative. **Diagnostic** assessments are given **at the beginning** of the

instructional process to determine where a student is at a particular point in time in order to have a baseline and provide results that help teachers plan future instruction and tailor interventions for individual students. They provide instructors with information about student's prior knowledge before beginning a learning activity. **Formative** assessments are used to track learning during the instructional process. They must be a routine part of classroom activity and not an interruption. These are the most valuable form of assessment as they directly impact next steps in day-to-day teaching to ensure that students' needs are met. Examples include daily quizzes, discussions in class, reviews of student work in class, observations, exit slips, homework and any activity that allows the teacher to see where students are at that moment in time. **Summative** assessments are conducted at the completion of learning as a final opportunity to determine what the student has learned and often to make judgements about students (grades) or the larger elements of the instructional process. In the classroom, these include end of unit tests, final exams, and performance-based activities.

State tests are summative assessments. They are not useful in the direct instruction of students due to the delay in getting results. By the time state test results are in, the students have moved on to the next grade level and a teacher has no opportunity to continue working with the students. State assessments are useful for looking at trends or gaps in learning. State summative tests are best used to determine large-scale, systematic or programmatic changes, including changes in materials/textbooks to purchase, curricular decisions, staffing, and professional development. They are not useful for day-to-day instruction for teachers. However, they can shape system improvement in the future. Depending on the type and quality of the test and data, individual educators can benefit by reflecting on the data and taking steps to modify strategies and techniques going forward

Reducing the number of state tests can free up valuable instructional time. Because state assessments are used for report cards, including rating and ranking schools and districts, they take on an importance that can be detrimental to the learning process. When we focus on schools and districts rather than the student, the stress of making sure the students do well on "the test" produces a plethora of unnecessary assessments - benchmarks, pre-tests, test practice. In preparing to pass the state assessment, there is often too much time spent testing to see if a student is on par to pass "the test" rather than in authentic learning. This the opposite of what we all intend for our children.

Therefore, reduction in the number of state assessments is beneficial, but we also need to have a conversation about the use of assessments in the overall accountability system as well as a district/school level conversation of the most effective use of assessment. This is why the HB73 requirement to convene a work group at the local level is appreciated.

INVOLVING CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN DETERMINING THE FORMATIVE/DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL – District Work Groups

The requirement in HB73 to convene a work group to review the time spent on testing and make recommendations on how to reduce testing locally is a good one. It is vital for local district administration and teachers to work **together** to determine what their students need, what contributes to student learning, and to feel confident that students can progress organically as opposed to artificiality imposed testing for accountability purposes. It is essential to include voices from the classroom in determining the assessments that support the standards being taught and provide information that can guide educators in taking the next steps to ensure students are learning the standards. With an effective diagnostic/formative assessment system in place, teachers will be able to maximize instructional time, determine ways to share responsibility for their students, and focus on creating positive learning environments that foster student growth and provide the supports students need to advance their learning.

ACT and SAT flexibility

The bill allows parents of juniors to determine if their children take the ACT OR SAT exams. With colleges are moving away from requiring ACT and SAT for admission flexibility is needed. Studies show that grade point average is a better determinant of how a student will do in college. Providing flexibility allows parents who children seek a vocational path the ability to do so with less stress.

We support reducing the number of end-of-course examinations required for graduation from five to four by combining the American history and American government end-of-course exams into one exam. Fewer tests means more instructional time..

HB 73 continues to move the ball down the field. We thank Rep. Gayle Manning and Rep. Crawley for introducing this bill and seeking our input during the drafting process. We also trust that any language changing graduation requirements will be harmonized with this bill. OFT supports passage of HB 73 and I welcome any questions.