

Testimony from Terry Portice

Dear Education Committee Member for the state of Michigan,

I know there have been various hearings, conversations, emails, newspaper articles, etc. regarding the importance of Michigan continuing to move forward with funding for the CCSS and the involvement in SBAC assessments.

Please know that I am sending this letter as a personal representatives of families, community members, business and industry, and as a parents of Michigan students. Please stop the adult fighting and do what is right for our Michigan students and for Michigan's economy.

If a real investigation and getting to the truth has taken place, then I am sure you and the other governmental officials have already found that continuing to move forward with CCSS and SBAC assessments is in the best interest of Michigan students and the states economy as a whole.

As a community member, I believe that it is unacceptable to not move forward with an internationally and nationally developed set of standards and assessments. By revoking or stopping any funding would be hurtful to our students and our states economy.

So often, people sitting along the sidelines believes we can do things better as an independent state . . . if we look at our track record then we would know that this is not true. On top of that truth, Michigan cannot afford to do this on their own as we lack the resources, time, and personnel to make this happen in a timely manner.

Please understand, Michigan Department of Education, various state level groups, Districts leaders, building level administrators, and teacher leaders have all been actively involved in this process since the beginning. To stop the positive momentum moving forward in changing the landscape of education would be take Michigan backwards in this process. We cannot afford to do this to our students or to the economic status of our state. Our state is to politically fractured to make decisions about developing or implementing a world-class education to our students, without looking at the real truth and data behind the CCSS and SBAC. Please do not let politics get in the way of what is best for Michigan and our students. We need to do everything we can to increase Michigan's economy and to ensure that ALL Michigan students graduate college and career ready.

I have heard the noise that the CCSS will be funded (and monitored) but that the continuation in the SBAC assessment consortium would be blocked. Please understand that the two educational changes go hand in hand. Please approve both of these initiatives to help keep Michigan moving forward in the changes taking place in education today.

You might ask, why do we need the SBAC assessments? We cannot ask students to be prepared for the work force and give them low level assessments that are given in only a Multiple Choice format. Without going to a multi-leveled assessment system that includes adaptive technologies to reach students at their level, we will not see continual growth and areas of weaknesses in which educators can intervene to help students be fully prepared for post-secondary education and success in the world of work. We need to go beyond a single year assessment (3-8) and a one time assessment at the HS level (11th grade) to deem a student "College and Career Ready". To really be ready for the global economy, we need to have students demonstrate what they can do in problem based assessments where they are required to demonstrate their knowledge through application of skills. We need critical thinkers, problem solvers, collaborative workers, who can demonstrate this understanding in a multitude of ways. We need to ensure that our assessment system is designed to allow students to demonstrate their learning in more than one way.

No state can make the changes needed on their own. When collaboration takes place we can create world class standards and a full balanced assessment system that are both internationally/nationally benchmarked and are affordable to score and maintain over time. There would be no way Michigan could afford to create such a set of standards or assessments on their own. Michigan has been an active leader in the development and the direction of the Multi-state consortium called SBAC, so please keep the momentum going and approve the continuation of CCSS and the SBAC assessments.

Please make an informed decision that is in the best interest of our students and not one that is politically charged and filled with misinformation. I also ask that you don't allow non-profits (ACT), buy their way in by confusing things even more. They are a business and want to keep their business making money, just like textbook companies. We have seen what they have done to market their products to stay in business rather than really making a positive impact on the students and their learning. Please don't get me wrong ACT has a place in testing in the short term, but may or may not be the long term assessment for Michigan for every student. It does not go deep enough even at the HS level and if we keep it as the only CCR assessment then we are missing out on long term educational changes in education preparing our students for the global economy.

I ask as a concerned community member and parent to please make an informed and researched based decision. I ask that as that you do what is right for our students and Michigan's economy as a whole. Please vote to reinstate the funding for CCSS and for Michigan's continued leadership involvement and implementation timelines.

Thank you,

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