

Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
State House Room, 111
Boston, MA 02133

Rep. Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
State House, Room 473G
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Madame Chairs:

I am in support of H340, an Act relative to a moratorium on high stakes testing and PARCC filed by Rep. Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge), and request the Committee report it favorably from Committee as soon as possible.

I am NOT in favor of eliminating testing altogether. I have been teaching since the implementation of MCAS and have seen improvements in the quality of education Massachusetts school children receive across the commonwealth. However, it is time we take an honest look at how MCAS data is used and examine if perhaps there is a more positive way to use such data. The reality is that we continue to collect data, but do virtually nothing proactive with it. For example, if a student does poorly on an 8th grade math test, that will not be addressed until he is entering sophomore year of high school. When tenth grade math doesn't go so well, that student is faced with the potential of not being granted a diploma. At that point, a teacher of juniors or seniors faces a poor evaluation. That is good for absolutely nobody.

As far as PARCC is concerned, here's what I have observed: Pearson is in business to make enormous amounts of money. Why would public schools even get on that road? And they are not even a US company! Additionally, the tests require technology, so the Chromebook parade continues. They are sold (in every sense of the word) with the promise of college and career readiness but there are almost no colleges that are even paying attention. In short, these tests add nothing but expenses to American education.

My advice would be to take three years to really evaluate MCAS and to create tests for all subjects that are more rigorous (spelling would count, calculators would be forbidden) and firmly timed. If technology can be used to administer them, great. If not, let school systems get up to speed at their own pace. Lastly, the data has got to be collected more quickly and remediation programs have got to be at the ready to get/keep students working at grade level. Thank you.

Sincerely,
T. Andrew Frankenfield
8th Grade Social Studies Teacher (20+ years)
Active member of the Westwood Teachers Association