

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

June 8, 2015

Re: Written Testimony supporting H340: An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High-stakes Testing and PARCC

Dear Madam Chairs:

I am the visual art teacher at my school, and twice a year my classroom shuts down. I teach art to 400 students, including my own daughter, K-7. Yet my classroom and I are utilized to administer high-stakes testing that has nothing at all to do with art making. I know every child in the school, so therefore I am needed as a familiar test administrator during MCAS season. Art is missing for all students, not even the non-tested years, because of this. Music class, when it is operating, does so in silence! When I can teach my subject during testing season, I decide to teach less exciting and less in-depth projects, because the students are so exhausted from the tests, that I cannot possibly make my projects as robust as I'd like to, or HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE for the art that they make during those weeks. I lose a whole month of my year, if not more, to testing weeks.

Last year I did my master's degree thesis project in education titled: "**Teacher Qualities in the Massachusetts Educator Rubric.**" In this, I compared the Massachusetts Evaluation system teacher rubric to the research I compiled by interviewing teachers and using focus groups to find the qualities teachers found most useful, and that their own schools' best teachers exhibited. The words love and care were used by all participants in my study to describe their best teachers. This quality is lacking when I see my students testing. I cannot begin to express to you how important it is to stop and think about what we are doing! We

need to examine what these tests are doing to our children. The hidden lesson, in my opinion as an experienced teacher and mother, is that our students are becoming a product of these sterile tests, bored with school, disinterested, and lacking imagination. They need love and care to survive and find their place in this world.

I love the school I teach in. I love my fellow teachers. I trust my fellow teachers to teach my child. I love my students. But I believe that the public education system is no longer working as a system, and I am thinking about pulling my child from public school. I just can't sit back and watch her have to negotiate this broken system any longer. I implore you to please consider a closer look at the impact this is having on our future leaders of this world. I met with Representative Gailanne Cariddi to speak of this legislation on June 1, 2015, because I believe there is a better way to teach and a better way to learn than trusting in a test made for profit by a company removed from the teaching process. Let our teachers teach, trust dedicated teachers not a testing growth percentage, and let the students learn: by giving more time for learning and less time on testing.

Sincerely,

Erica Manville

Art Teacher & Co-Chair of the North Adams Teachers Association

Brayton Elementary School, North Adams Public Schools

cc: Joint Committee on Education Members & Staff

Sen. Patricia Jehlen, Vice Chair

Rep. Danielle Gregoire, Vice Chair