

Dear Honorable Senators, Representatives, and Members of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

My name is Marie Bagarella I am a 7th-grade math teacher in Attleboro. I would like to share my perspective on standardized testing as well as some of my students' feelings.

I wonder if you all realize the enormous expense associated with standardized testing. My school administered PARCC for 4 grades, ELA and Math as well as the MCAS science test for grades 5 and 8. My building's math coach and ELA coach were assigned the task. These 2 individuals devoted a minimum of 10 weeks each preparing testing materials, creating master testing schedules, overseeing the room where the test boxes were distributed, collecting test materials daily and monitoring when students went to the bathroom. I assume both of these individuals earn at least \$60,000 per year so our school incurred a \$15,000 expense just on their salaries alone.

You may be asking yourselves, "Don't those positions hold other responsibilities?" Of course they do, but those were naturally put on hold in order to comply with state-mandated standardized testing. Also, 4 ILAs — individual learning assistants — spent the entire day testing students in small groups in accordance with the students' IEPs and then worked in the "PARCC room," organizing test materials for the next day. You may wonder, "Do these people have other responsibilities?"

Again the answer is, of course they do. An ILA's main job responsibility is to support students according to the students' IEPs. IEPs are legal documents. If students were not supported, then their civil rights are being violated. I am quite confident that districts across Massachusetts were out of compliance during the months of March, April and May due to standardized testing.

I assume many of you here today are attorneys and are well aware how costly a civil rights violation lawsuit can be. One ILA in my building told me, "I haven't been in the classroom for 43 days because of testing. That is sobering.

The most compelling perspective comes from my students. I had explained to my team that I was coming here today.

I told them that I had my opinions on standardized testing and I asked that they share their individual thoughts.

One of my students summed up many of my kids' thoughts by writing: "I strongly agree with the idea of reducing the number of standardized tests we take each year. It would relieve stress and make school enjoyable if we weren't preparing all year for a test that we get an hour on. I mean seriously an entire school year spent stressing just to end it all with a test that basically decides your future. Now I do realize that this test is seeing what we know but isn't normal school work enough? I felt really frustrated because I worked hard throughout the year and if I wasn't able to finish in time then what's the point to show everything you know if you can't?"

Sincerely,
Marie Bagarella
Attleboro