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As an educator, I am certainly not opposed to a consistent set of national education standards. I took the survey and stated the same. What I am opposed to is that the state demands these standards - not all measurable on a test - are used as a tool to over test children. A 270 minute English Language Arts test seems more a measure of endurance. The test itself is developmentally inappropriate. The test is what needs revamped. The test is why parent after parent is in uproar. The test has no value to the students in its current use.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to sit with my colleagues and analyze the released questions. Many of the questions had two correct responses. Many of the questions were so difficult that a large number of students (over 50% in many cases) got the questions incorrect. As an educator, if 50% or more of my students miss a question, that question is typically invalid. As an educator, I understand the weight each question is given, the authenticity of the task I crafted, and the importance of directing my instruction to improve teaching and learning. This assessment does none of that. We, as educators, do not even know the cut scores. The data is not made available to us until well after the test is administered and scored. We do not know which questions are field questions, which are "counted", what weight each is given, or how the cut scores are determined. The level of frustration alone for students, parents, and educators is overwhelming to say the least.

The amount of money being invested... Wasted... On a test that issued solely to expedite the 3020a process and threaten state aide - is a travesty. Why are we not focused on spending money to restore Pre K? Why are we not spending the money to offer valuable, measurable, effective teacher training? Why are we not spending the money to reduce poverty? Why are we not spending the money to fully fund schools so that a wide variety of instructional, vocational, and career programs are made available? Why are we not ensuring that class sizes are at the state's recommended amount rather than exceeding 30-40 in many cases? I could certainly go on, however, I'm sure you understand the points I'm trying to make.

I appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedule to read my comments. I have to believe, like the many educators who devote their lives to making a difference to children, that you care as deeply about the children in our public school systems as we do. I only hope you share our message and echo our voices to change this wave of high stakes testing to something that better demonstrates best practice and a genuine concern for supporting public education.