

Dear Education Committee,

My name is Noel Blevins, I am an intervention specialist in Newark City Schools. I am also a parent in New Albany Plain Local. Testing affects me and my children at home and at school. How does over-testing affect me and my children? At home I am trying to get my children motivated and ready to be as rested and prepared for testing. I have to try and mitigate the meltdowns and the negative attitudes produced because of all the testing. At school I have students that already feel bad or have lower self-esteem because they do not learn like their general education peers. In a school year I am to help 16 special education students meet their goals; plus have meetings with parents and teachers to help these students meet their goals; then teach a resource classroom curriculum along with curriculum in the inclusion classroom; and then on top of that test each of my students in each goal to make sure they are meeting those goals. Then with all these things I am taken out of my classroom 12 days to administrator state testing. Last school year in my 6th grade language arts resource classroom I had 9 students. All but 2 of the students increased their scores as a matter of fact one student increased her score by 30 points and still didn't pass the state test. She was devastated.

With all of the state testing mandates we have, students are not showing as much progress as they could be--especially our special education students. Imagine if your child felt like this because of these state tests. There are many other ways to check understanding from year to year. There is a book I read a couple years ago called *Teach like Finland* by Timothy D. Walker. In Finland they have assessment taking place throughout the school year through student portfolios and project-based assessments with rubrics.

To get relevant effective data we need to meet the students where their strengths are. Too much testing is definitely not the answer! I urge each of you to speak with teachers and students about testing and I guarantee most, if not all, of the people will say they do not see the value in this amount of testing. We yearn for more quality instructional time with our students. I speak on behalf of parents and teachers I know in saying the over-testing needs to stop. We

need more flexibility to evaluate students in different ways. Money would be saved and students feeling like failures would decrease.

Thank you,

Mrs. Noel Blevins parent/educator