

From: jane.gangi
To: carverc; brooksk; boe@bethel.k12.ct.us; StateBoard.SDE
Subject: Stop standardized testing in a pandemic (and end them going forward) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 4:38:07 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Carver, Dr. Brooks, the Bethel Board of Education and the Connecticut State Board of Education,

In December of 2019 Joe Biden was asked: “Given that standardized testing is rooted in a history of racism and eugenics, if you are elected president, will you commit to ending the use of standardized testing in the public schools?”

“Yes,” he responded, adding “...you are preaching to the choir” (access here: <https://news.yahoo.com/biden-vows-ban-standardized-testing-132214104.html>). His first wife, Neilia, and his second wife, Dr. Jill Biden, both educators, have convinced him that standardized tests do far more harm than good (access here: <https://progressive.org/public-school-shakedown/biden-movement-oppose-standardized-test-jacobs-210322/>). It appears, however, that President Biden has reneged on his promise.

In response to President Biden, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Ed Markey and Representative Tom Suozzi, Mark Takano, Ilhan, and Jamaal Bowman have written a letter to President Biden and Secretary of Education Cardona asking that they suspend standardized testing. In an interview Bowman said, “We absolutely should not be doing this now in the middle of a pandemic...We already know where the gaps are because we’ve been testing for 20 years” (access here: https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2021/03/09/democrats-split-over-biden-plan-for-academic-testing-during-pandemic-1367436?fbclid=IwAR2wbkF_vt8Y4c4MCO5WzSseBJvBymd3AaLJKwy2jEdnxvIII6tpyLkzIM0P). Please see my letters to you 2016, 2017, and 2018 for more on Representative Bowman’s work against standardized testing. To test children now is educational malpractice and cruel.

Peggy Carr, the associate commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which administers the NAEP says, “Over the past decade, there has been no progress in either mathematics or reading performance, and the lowest-performing students are doing worse....In fact, over the long term in reading, the lowest-performing students—those readers who struggle the most—have made no progress from the first NAEP administration almost 30 years ago” (access here: <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/no-progress-seen-in-reading-or-math-on-nations-report-card/2019/10>). Unless we are more interested in corporations making money than in children’s welfare, we do not need to test every child every year. All we need is the NAEP.

In literacy, assessments that would help us ensure students are making progress are the Developmental Spelling Assessment (either Bear or Ganske’s versions, both well-researched since the 1960s), K-8, can teach teachers exactly what students need to know next to keep progressing in Word Study (spelling and vocabulary). Also, well-researched since the 1960s—the running record, although a principal in another town told me that, in her building, an outside evaluator would need to take the running record because, sometimes, unethical teachers bump up their scores. These types of assessments, not standardized tests, teach us how to better teach our students.

Since 2000 with No Child Left Behind and 2009 with Race to the Top and Common Core, we have inflicted children with standardized testing. As Peggy Carr says, the millions (billions?) we have poured into standardized tests have done nothing. It’s time to stop standardized testing.

I wonder if youth suicide rates and mental illness would decline if we stopped making children feel as if they are mostly a number? It’s time to stop standardized testing.

I wonder if the civic unrest, the rise in hate crimes, the distrust of science in the pandemic could begin to heal if we emphasized science, social studies, and the arts as much as we do literacy? It’s time to stop standardized testing. As long as teachers are being evaluated on how their students do in math and literacy, they cannot give the emphasis needed to science, social studies, and the arts.

Please do what you can to protect children from standardized testing during a pandemic, and thereafter. Call the White House (202-456-1414) and go to the White House website to email them. Write to them at The White House,

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C. 20500. Call the Department of Education (800-872-5327) and email Dr. Cardona at miguel.cardona@ed.gov. Call Senator Murphy (202-224-4041) and Senator Blumenthal (202-224-2823). Consult Education Deans for Equity and Justice for help on designing assessments that, unlike standardized tests, help children rather than hurt them ([About EDJE](#)). If these efforts don't stop President Biden from supporting standardized testing, be like New York districts. Encourage parents to opt-out and provide the opt-out letter. Our children have one chance at childhood. A pandemic is enough for one childhood without adding the educational malpractice of standardized testing. Sasha and Malia's first standardized tests were the SAT or the ACT. What the Obamas got for their children is what we should want for all children.



Respectfully,

Jane M. Gangi, PhD