



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

PAUL HEROUX
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
2ND BRISTOL DISTRICT

TEL. (617) 722-2000
DISTRICT: (508) 639-9511
Paul.Heroux@MAhouse.gov

RE: H340, H451, H497, and S311

DT: 11 June 2015

Dear Honorable Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of H340, H451, H497, and S311. Each of these bills seek to do the same thing: they seek to make sure that a standardized test such as PARCC or MCAS are not a determining factor in high school graduation or impose a moratorium on the testing altogether. This is a bi-partisan issue and one supported in both chambers of the Legislature.

I have received numerous emails and phone calls from parents, teachers and education organizations asking for my support on this issue of reconsidering Massachusetts' use of standardized tests.

Testing takes the fun out of learning, but testing is necessary. However, a standardized test not only takes the fun out of learning, it attempts to create a standard that all students are subjected to and bases progress and competency on a one-size-fits-all approach. A one-size-fits-all approach does not reflect the range of talents and abilities in our students or nation.

Moreover, a one-size-fits-all approach falls apart when we take into consideration special needs students. SPED students learn differently and as such should be assessed differently.

Additionally, the PARCC test is an online computer test that not all school districts are prepared to administer. Many school districts have neither the internet capability nor the computer terminals to administer the test. The result would be that student would be taking the test at different times throughout the day; this is problematic. We know from practice and research that the time of a day a test affects test scores. This means that test-retest reliability is undermined and ultimately the overall validity of the standardized test.

I understand that there is a need for testing to pass subjects and grades. However, there is no need to have a one-size-fits-all approach. Teaching and learning are very personal and should be custom. Assessment should be as well. I urge you to consider passage of any or all of the bills above. Our students and educators need time learning, not preparing for a test.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Heroux".

Paul Heroux