

# Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7011

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT STATE-WIDE ASSESSMENTS.

**Vote Date:** 3/28/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/26/2025

**File No.:**

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## SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

## REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill was introduced to reduce the number of times public school students are required to take a standardized mastery examination annually in grades three through eight, and in grade eleven, limiting it to only grades four, six, eight, and eleven. The intent of the bill is to reduce the resource burden that standardized testing places on school districts and allow them to devote more resources toward other staffing and student needs. In addition, by removing the testing requirement in grades three, five, and seven, the bill is also intended to reduce student stress and testing performance anxiety, allowing students to focus more on engaging learning rather than solely on mastering the narrow requirements of an annual exam. The bill's secondary provision mandates that a regional board of education notify a student's parent or legal guardian of their mastery examination scores from the previous school year no later than October 1st of the current school year. This is intended to improve transparency and keep parents and guardians informed of the student's current academic progress and potential areas of need.

## SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute delays the start of reduced testing requirements by one year, to the 2026-2027 school year.

## RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut State Dept. of Education, Commissioner, Charlene Russell-Tucker](#): They are supportive of the idea of reducing the time spent on student testing, including state testing, pending federal flexibilities. However, they recommend a data-informed approach that

considers the results of the legislatively required assessment audit. Despite this support, they oppose the bill as drafted for several reasons. First, they argue that the bill violates federal law, which mandates annual standardized assessments in English and mathematics for grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. Additionally, they point out that the actual time spent taking standardized tests averages less than six hours per student. They also emphasize the importance of using annual standardized tests to assess student progress, particularly in elementary and middle school. Furthermore, they highlight the significant obstacles and challenges that would need to be overcome to effectively assess student development in grades where standardized tests would be eliminated.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Bethel Public Schools, Superintendent and CAPSS, Dr. Christine Carver](#): support the bill because it would reduce the number of state assessments required for their students. They state that annual state assessments take up a large amount of instructional time and divert staff attention due to the requirements of implementing the state assessment system. Additionally, they feel that their local student assessments are more meaningful to their teachers in guiding instructional practices.

[Derby Public Schools, Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Conway](#): support the bill because they feel it represents a balanced approach that maintains accountability while also reducing the current testing burdens. They argue that the proposal to administer state tests in grades 4, 6, and 8, instead of in all grades 3 through 8, allows for more instructional time while still enabling the tracking of students' progress at key developmental stages. They also believe this will allow districts to focus more on local assessment systems that directly inform classroom instruction in real time, enabling more personalized learning for each student. Additionally, they support the bill's proposal to inform parents of student state test results by October 1st.

[Teacher, Manchester, Emily Gunzburg](#): support the bill because they believe it prioritizes student well-being, meaningful learning, and actual time spent teaching. They argue that the time spent preparing students for annual state standardized tests takes away from meaningful instructional time and that test preparation turns school into a place of stress rather than exploration for many students. By reducing the frequency of state testing, they believe it will better help students grow, explore, learn, and succeed.

[Educator, Fairfield, Mick McGarry](#): support the bill because they favor reducing the number of mandatory state tests. They argue that weeks of school are spent solely on test preparation, rather than on authentic learning experiences. They say that test prep leads to increased stress and pressure for students, which hampers learning and raises student anxiety. They also cite the struggles that multilingual students may encounter in these exams, sharing personal experiences, and state that, as a result, these tests may not be the best indicator of these students' actual abilities.

[Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents, Executive Director, Fran Rabinowitz](#): support the bill because they believe it reflects their commitment to elevating Connecticut's public education system by reducing undue burdens on students, educators, and families. They argue that by streamlining state assessments, the focus will shift from excessive testing to meaningful instructional time, returning to previous practices that

recognized the limited incremental value of more frequent assessments and restoring autonomy to educators. They also highlight the potential \$4.5 million in savings the bill could generate, which they believe could be reinvested in teacher-designed assessments and targeted interventions for students who may need additional support.

[Hartford Public Schools, Superintendent, Dr. Leslie Rodriguez](#): support the bill because they believe it is a good first step toward reducing education mandates and increasing educator autonomy. They argue that current education funding in Connecticut is inequitable, and that mandatory testing further exacerbates this issue by placing additional constraints on school districts' finances, time, and staff resources. They believe the bill would allow teachers to spend more time teaching and reduce the stress on students, shifting their focus away from standardized tests. Additionally, they cite the potential cost savings the bill would provide if passed, which could help address the budget gaps many school districts are currently facing.

[Wilton Public Schools, Superintendent of Schools, Kevin Smith, Ph.D.](#): support the bill because they believe the current model of assessing student potential and educator effectiveness based on standardized testing is flawed. They argue that annual testing does not improve learning outcomes. Instead, they contend that classroom-based, formative assessments provide more accurate and actionable insights into a student's progress. They also point out that the time and resources spent on preparing students for standardized testing could be better utilized elsewhere to enhance student development and performance. They believe that reducing standardized testing to select grade levels would allow Connecticut educators to prioritize effective teaching strategies, alleviate undue student stress, and improve the overall quality of education by giving more time back to teachers.

[Putnam, Superintendent of Schools, Steve Rioux](#): support the bill because they believe it is a necessary step in reducing the overemphasis on statewide standardized testing while refocusing efforts on meaningful instructional time and student growth. They argue that excessive testing requirements take valuable time away from instruction, and by streamlining state assessments, the bill will help districts prioritize high-quality teaching and formative assessments that better inform instruction, in addition to generating cost savings.

[Cheshire Board of Education, Member, Tony Perugini](#): support the bill because they believe that reducing the emphasis on testing gives teachers more time to work with students and allows students to demonstrate mastery through other methods.

[Connecticut Education Association \(CEA\), Vice President, Joslyn DeLancey](#): support the bill because it will free up resources to promote more effective learning, while still providing the data that proponents of statewide testing consider valuable. They argue that focusing on performance tests for narrowly defined subjects has irresponsibly shaped perceptions of school quality, diverted resources from other subjects, and created undue stress and anxiety for students.

[Teacher, Stonington, Carrie Cassidy](#): support the bill because it will allow more time for teachers to help students become deep thinkers, work on problem-solving, and spend more time on hands-on projects that excite students about learning. By reducing the number of standardized tests, they believe the legislation will ensure that students receive a better, more well-rounded education, while also reducing student stress and anxiety—barriers they say hinder students' ability to learn.

[New Haven Federation of Teachers, President, Leslie Blatteau](#): support the bill because they believe Connecticut has reached a tipping point in education, where the focus on data-driven instruction has led us to prioritize data over the needs of the whole student and how to engage them in learning. They argue that this bill is necessary to maintain high expectations for all learners while ensuring that students receive an engaging and developmentally appropriate education.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Connecticut Republican Assembly, National Director, Anne Manusky, M.Ed.](#): oppose the bill because they argue that no "mastery examination" exists in the state of Connecticut. They state that the "Smarter Balanced Assessment" is not an independently validated assessment and therefore cannot be considered a mastery examination. They also believe that the state's educational standards have declined in recent years.

**Reported by: Alex Sferrazza**

**Date: 04/01/25**