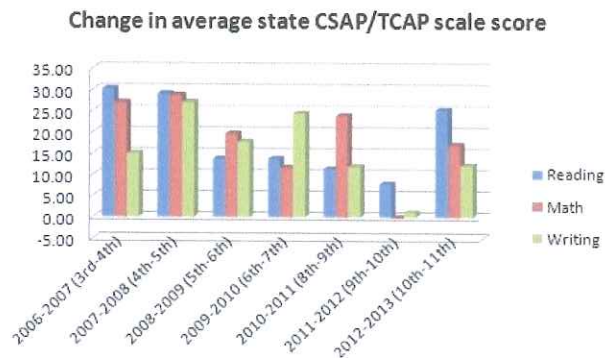


My name is Dr. Paula Noonan. I was on the Jefferson County School board from 2009 to 2013. I've spent a lot of time looking at TCAP results and studying how to use the data to improve education for Jeffco kids. I am here to stand accountable for the fact that all the testing and all the analysis have not produced the results we all hope for.

I'm here to present a case for granting waivers to districts from the new PARCC system and to ask the state to conduct the necessary studies based on the data we currently have to enable us to make progress.

The state through its school districts has collected testing data as long as I have been involved in our public school system, since 1983 when my son entered Normandy Elementary. Thirty years later with my grandchildren in Jeffco schools in the same neighborhood, we have even more comprehensive and intensive data through TCAP to get all Colorado kids college and career ready. The testing does not paint a pretty picture. It shows our kids decline in proficiency from their high points in third grade through low points in ninth-tenth grade. This pattern occurs year after year.



My first premise is that changing to the PARCC test will not affect the trend but will cost districts millions of dollars and thousands of hours of time when they are trying to recover from the recent recession, integrate the expensive and time-consuming SB-191 into their operations, and implement the expensive and time-consuming Common Core standards into their instruction. I contend that districts and the state have not adequately studied the forces behind the unhappy testing trends, and until that occurs, a new test will garble the data and make analysis, if ever done, more difficult.

My second premise is that changing to the PARCC test will make testing adjustments almost impossible. According to Jeffco, our test

results on TCAP in math are not good because the test doesn't match precisely what all kids are learning in math in Jeffco middle schools. TCAP is testing some math that many Jeffco seventh and eighth graders haven't had. I've waited over my four years on the Board for an adjustment in TCAP to occur so that the test is giving us an accurate picture of what our kids have learned based on what they've been taught.

How will this context work with PARCC, a test built by Pearson Corporation in the United Kingdom to test kids across this country. The corollary is that Colorado better make sure its kids are taught exactly to Common Core, and hope that PARCC is tied exactly to Common Core, so we have actionable results. If that exactitude is not met, our test results will not be an accurate reflection of our kids' achievement and should not be used as a basis for SB-191 evaluation or, as is coming, for eligibility to higher education.

Right now, our testing results are diverging some from reported better remediation rates in Colorado colleges. That is, remediation rates are down some but high school proficiency is not showing a consequent increase. I do not believe that we understand this divergence in results. We do not know what is happening that's right in our schools that our tests are not showing. Shouldn't we understand the underlying reasons for this divergence so we can consciously replicate it before we launch into something completely new.

Accountability, in my view, must occur at every level of education delivery, including from those setting policies and creating mandates that educators must implement. If we have test results over many years and still don't understand the factors that, at least at the macro level, affect these results, then those responsible for the policies and mandates have more work to do.

I believe that's what this bill is about: creating time for CDE, legislators, and boards to have a much deeper understanding of what it will take to get kids proficient or advanced in the many skills necessary for career and college readiness. And then creating plans and resources, based explicitly on data from Colorado kids, to get schools and children what they need. Launching into the PARCC testing system will impede this accountability, not improve it. Please support HB14-1202 to get this necessary work completed before we move to the next new thing that, without conscious, intentional change based on evidence, will tell us the same worn-out old story.