

Mr. Waterman,

The purpose of this correspondence is to communicate the undersigned's beliefs and requests as they relate to linking student test data to teacher evaluation.

While we appreciate the elimination of the "student impact rating," we do not support the proposal to incorporate student test score data into teacher evaluations (as indicated in <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=24042>)

Linking test scores to teacher evaluations was a philosophy adopted in large part due to pressure from the federal government¹. Now that the Race to the Top program and the No Child Left Behind Act are both defunct-- and parents, teachers, and students are increasingly repudiating a culture of over-testing²-- the time is now to reject the practice of linking test scores to teacher evaluations. The new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) leaves it up to each state to determine whether or not to use test scores in teacher evaluations. Massachusetts should lead the way toward abolishing this harmful practice.

Linking test scores to teacher evaluations:

- 1) is based on the controversial "value added model" (V.A.M.). The National Academy of Education, the Educational Testing Service, as well as the American Statistical Association (the world's largest community of statisticians) all warn against using V.A.M. in teacher evaluations.
- 2) exacerbates the unintended consequences of high-stakes testing (narrowing the curriculum to focus on tested topics and subjects, increasing time spent on test prep at the expense of educationally-enriching lessons, increasing anxiety/stress)³.
- 3) fosters a culture of *competition* amongst teachers of the same subject to see who had the greatest statistical impact on their students' scores, despite research illustrating a link between teacher *collaboration* and school performance (including student achievement and teacher retention⁴).

We strongly urge you and your colleagues to discuss these points and reject the proposal to incorporate student test score data into teacher evaluations. Thank you for taking the time to read and share this correspondence.

¹Weiss, Elaine. "Mismatches in Race to the Top Limit Educational Improvement: Lack of Time, Resources, and Tools to Address Opportunity Gaps Puts Lofty State Goals Out of Reach." *Economic Policy Institute*. 12 Sept. 2013.

² Schaffhauser, Dian. "Survey: Teacher Quality, Not Testing, the Best Way to Improve Education. *THE Journal*. 26 Aug. 2015

³ Jones, M. G., Jones, B. D., & Hargrove, T. *The unintended consequences of high-stakes testing*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

⁴ McClure, Carla. "The Benefits of Teacher Collaboration." *District Administration Magazine*. 1 Sept. 2008.