

March 15, 2015

Dr. Richard Ross  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Ohio Department of Education  
25 S. Front St.  
Columbus, OH 43215



Dear Dr. Ross:

The Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) shared with the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) the recent Testing Report and Recommendations provided by your agency. The Testing Report has much merit, and SAPEC would like to share what we found to be strengths, concerns and recommendations as they pertain to students with disabilities.

SAPEC members agreed that there are several strengths for students with disabilities, which include acceptance that:

- A reduction in testing time is needed.
- A reduction is needed in the time and length of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), as ½ day Kindergarten programs struggle to meet the new testing requirements for training and administration.
- Maintenance of local control over curriculum, monitoring and testing children should be maintained.

SAPEC members also had some concerns for students with disabilities which include:

- The percentage of student time in testing was provided in this document, however the impact of building-wide resources was not considered. Approximately 78 days include some kind of testing, which can impact the availability of special educators to provide services to students with disabilities (e.g., providing the necessary accommodations and modifications).
- If teacher evaluations are tied to testing outcomes, perhaps this will actually increase time spent on test preparation despite attempts to limit it, as the stakes are high for teachers.
- At the start of Kindergarten, many students with disabilities are not yet identified. Keep this in mind when decreasing the amount of time for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Some students with disabilities may need the extra time as an accommodation.
- Many students, both typical and exceptional, need more practice time with technology (computers). What adaptations will be provided by the state as far as needed adaptations to computers?



## State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

- How can we make sure that students with disabilities are still getting the mandated time and services in the IEP while testing is going on?

SAPEC members generated the following recommendations:

- Ensure that accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities are included with the testing documents.
- Define what “practicing” for tests means.
- Provide professional development and training in advance of testing implementation.
- Include the Office for Exceptional Children in the team reviewing the tests each year to ensure that students with disabilities are represented.
- If STEM waiver/Innovative Schools are allowed to create alternative methods of assessing students’ learning, the Office for Exceptional Children must be included to ensure that children with disabilities are getting appropriate representation.
- Various assessments and documentation are needed to fulfill the federal mandate of a comprehensive Evaluation Team Report/Multi-factored Evaluation for children with disabilities. This time also needs to be accounted for in the report.

As your State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children we are making our recommendations for your review of the current testing protocol to ensure Ohio's 250,000 students with exceptionalities obtain the appropriate representation when it comes to assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Bauer".

Mary M. Murray, Ed.D.  
Chair, State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children

William Bauer, Ph.D.  
Vice Chair, State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children