

Further, we remain concerned the legislation will not change the current STATE testing disruption. The inflexible requirements that all state testing be online will continue to deprive students of meaningful instructional time because schools are turned into testing centers for nearly two months of each year. Students and schools lose quality instruction time through numerous issues from the increased use of substitute teachers, time lost repeating material for students pulled out for testing and students taking classes that require the use of the media centers and computers are continually displaced. So much of this loss could be mitigated by the simple use of paper and pencil testing until such time as all schools truly have reliable, one-to-one technology capabilities.

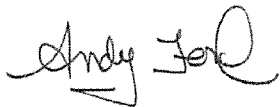
Another consequence of our current testing regime is the failure to return useful information to educators and parents in a timely manner. As you so rightly stated, "Teachers, parents and students deserve to know how well students are grasping the content they are taught." This means that detailed data must be returned more quickly. Our current statewide assessments fail to provide this timely information.

Governor, we know you and your State Board are aware of the problems arising from the impact of ever changing standards and tests. We hope you will continue to keep a keen interest in ensuring that no student, teacher, school or district suffers penalties for the failures of the accountability system design. The systemic issues of transition, technology, training and time should not become reasons to penalize people.

Finally, I also strongly call on you to abide not just by the letter but the intent of the legislation regarding test validity. This validity study must include more than just content. We must ensure that the administration of the tests is equally valid as it is critical to the quality of the data returned.

In short, we support this legislation as a first step, but hope that you will continue the effort to make sure that Florida's education accountability is built to serve the learning needs of children and the legitimate data needs of the adults that serve them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Ford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ford".

Andy Ford
President
Florida Education Association