

Shelby County Schools Board Discusses Standardized Testing in Schools

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The debate over standardized testing in [Shelby County Schools](#) was a topic discussed in the Shelby County School Board meeting on Oct. 26 at the Board of Education building after three parents raised concerns about the tests.

The concerns centered on how students take too many standardized tests, are not given enough time to take these tests, and how these tests should not be a major determining factors for college acceptance. One parent even suggested that the board should focus more on the community instead of standardized testing.

As a board member, [Mike Kernell](#), a representative of District 9, which includes the Kirby and Airways area, listened to the concerns that were mentioned during the meeting.

This wasn't the first time Kernell was informed about students struggling with test taking, and he was previously addressed by teachers over the issue.

"Teachers told us that students wouldn't have enough time and we have complained about that to the administration. Teachers have been complaining that they can't give these tests with the time allotted," he said.

He said the pressure that standardized tests bring to a classroom setting.

"The basic assumption is that when you have a standardized test, your learning is matched up with other students in the state, and if your scores aren't as good, then it falls on your teacher, and an intervention has to be arranged," he said.

Kernell said how standardized tests affect classrooms in two ways.

"First of all, now they are being de-emphasized as college acceptance standards, and second, too much standardized testing interferes with the learning environment," he said.

He also said how tests don't fully measure students' intellect.

"Standardized tests have some impact on how well a student performs, but not all," he said.

Kernell defended the board for its efforts in providing quality education, stating that although it is responsible for meeting the needs of the community, it is not necessary responsible for making changes to policies.

“We tell parents they need to talk to the state legislature because many of the requirements are coming from the state,” he said.

Besides the importance of standardized tests, Kernell said that that there is a higher priority he has as a Board member that he is right now more focused on in order to improve academic performance in SCS schools.

“Parents have told us that their main concern is the learning climate. Climate is essential first in order for students to become well-rounded young men and women. I am focused more on the school climate,” he said.

In the end, Kernell said he felt a huge responsibility in making sure there are proper solutions to problems faced by students and parents.

“The people are my bosses because they voted for me and I’m there to serve them,” she said.