

Questions to ask your board of education:

- How much does this district spend on test prep materials for state-mandated tests?
- How much time do students spend in class preparing for standardized tests?
- How much time do students spend taking standardized tests each year?
- How many school days are interrupted by standardized testing?
- What rights do parents in this district have if they believe that too much standardized testing is harming their children's education?

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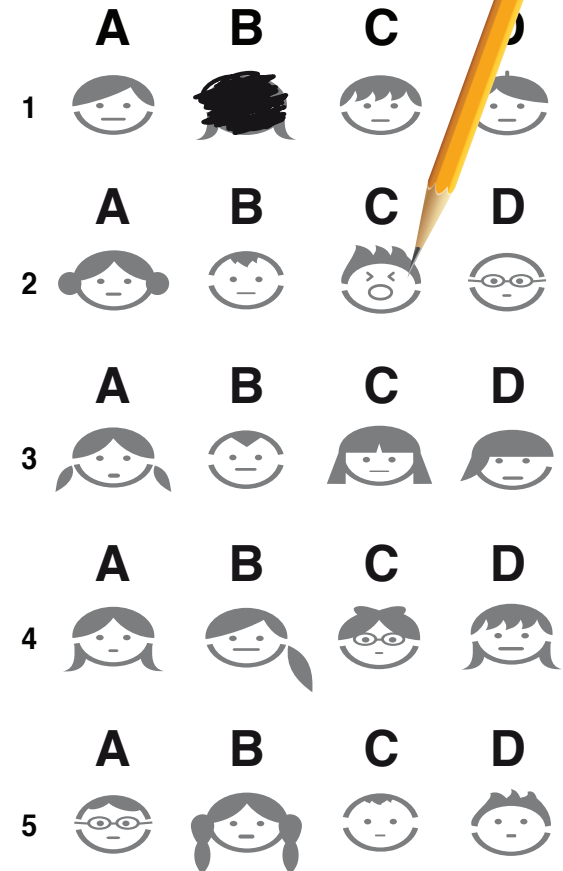
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My fourth-grade daughter was completely upset because she didn't think she did well on the practice NJASK. Her teacher saw her crying and called me. - K.F., parent

Again?



Standardized testing doesn't help my child learn.

So why is there so much of it?

High stakes



Since the beginning of No Child Left Behind in 2002, states and the federal government have put an increased emphasis on standardized testing in public schools. Now with the coming PARCC assessments, testing and the stress that goes with it for students and teachers will only increase.

With dramatic punishments for schools that don't post high enough test scores, teachers and administrators have been left with no option but to focus on getting students ready to take tests, even if that means sacrificing other valuable educational opportunities.

While everyone wants accountable, high-quality schools, more and more parents are starting to question whether test scores are the best way to measure school quality and whether so much high-stakes testing is in their children's best interests.



There are no more class trips or subject-matter enriching assemblies because there is not enough time in the day. If it's not on the test, we are not doing it. -K.E., teacher

Costly



The increase in testing has led to an explosion in profits for the companies that create the tests and sell them to states. Those companies have a strong financial interest in ensuring that more students take more tests.

Those same companies also sell test-prep materials to districts. The tests are supposed to measure learning, not test-taking skills. But the testing companies offer schools an opportunity to give their students a test-taking edge, for an additional price.



I feel that my child's educational experiences and opportunities are absolutely limited by the focus on high-stakes testing. -K.M., parent

Unreliable



A growing body of research questions whether standardized test scores are an effective way to measure how much students are learning and how effectively schools are teaching. Policymakers looking for an easy way to rate schools often latch onto test scores as a simple way to know which schools are succeeding and which schools aren't, but those scores are unreliable.

With powerful interests lined up in support of high-stakes standardized testing, it is up to parents to take a stand if they believe too much standardized testing is harming their children's education.



I fear future generations of students will have no love of learning because it was not nurtured due to the pressures of performing on standardized tests. -E.H., teacher