

FairTest

National Center for Fair & Open Testing

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REFORM LEADERS ENDORSE SEATTLE TEACHERS' SCHOOL TEST BOYCOTT; CALL FOR MORE EDUCATORS, PARENTS TO "JOIN IN"

The country's leading testing reform organization today announced its support for the boycott of Seattle Public Schools' Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam launched by teachers at Garfield High School. National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest) Executive Director Dr. Monty Neill said, "Children across the U.S. suffer from far too much standardized testing that is misused to judge students, teachers and schools. We applaud Garfield High educators who refused to administer these useless exams and urge others to join in."

Dr. Neill explained, "Seattle requires administration of the MAP tests three times per year. This eliminates days of valuable teaching time and ties up the school's computer labs for weeks. The tests are used to judge teachers even though they are not aligned with the state's standards and not instructionally helpful. The Northwest Evaluation Association, which makes the test, says the MAPs are not accurate enough to evaluate individual teachers. No wonder some Seattle parents began opting their children out of these pointless tests even before the teachers' boycott."

"Nationally, students are inundated with tests far beyond the 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) requirement to assess students annually in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school," Dr. Neill continued. "States and especially large city districts have piled on many more tests. For example, Chicago tests kindergarteners 14 or more times per year. Many of these tests were added to obtain federal NCLB waivers, which force states and districts to impose more exams so they can judge teachers by student scores."

According to FairTest, the high stakes attached to tests have led to narrowing curriculum, teaching to the test, score inflation and cheating scandals. Despite the focus on tests, scores gains on the independent National Assessment of Educational Progress have slowed since the 2002 start of NCLB and are well below pre-NCLB score increases. Score gaps between whites and African Americans and Latinos have stopped narrowing.

"High-stakes testing is undermining the quality of U.S. schools and the education our children deserve," Dr. Neill concluded. "Teachers and parents who boycott standardized exams are taking the lead to reduce over-testing and the consequences attached to it. President Obama, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the Congress, governors, state legislators, and local school officials need to heed these voices and stop imposing unnecessary and educational harmful testing."