

Testing Reform Victories: The First Wave



FairTest

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing

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by Lisa Guisbond

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Cover Photographs, from left: Students protest Testing overkill in Los Angeles (credit: [Progressive Educators for Action](#)); Brooklyn, NY, parents refuse testing for their children (credit: James Lane); striking Chicago teachers (credit: Chicago Teacher Solidarity Campaign).

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Executive Summary

Teachers, parents and students head back to school this year buoyed by the knowledge that the national test resistance movement is growing rapidly and already producing victories against standardized exam misuse and overuse (FairTest, 2013). The past few years have seen [an explosion of resistance](#) to testing overkill in every region of the country. Parents, educators, students, administrators, community activists and taxpayers have found creative and effective ways to say, “Enough is enough!” Like a majority of [Americans](#), they agree that it is long past time to significantly cut the volume of standardized testing, end high-stakes uses, and invest in better ways to assess students, teachers and schools.

The emerging movement’s victories include:

- States ***repealing high school graduation requirements and rolling back other test requirements***. Exit exam repeals or delays have been adopted in Minnesota, South Carolina, Alaska, Nevada, Arizona, Texas and Rhode Island. Virginia reduced the number of state tests, and Oklahoma, North Carolina and New York City reformed their test-based grade promotion policies.
- States ***postponing the consequences of Common Core testing*** include Oregon, Colorado, Nevada, Washington, DC, and New Jersey.
- ***Successful, high-profile protests in the form of opt outs, boycotts and other actions***, from Seattle to Providence and Chicago to Austin and Lee County, FL.
- Opinion polls showing ***shifts in public attitudes against high-stakes testing***, with PDK/Gallup (2014) reporting that 68 percent of the public school parents think standardized tests are not helpful.

- ***Teachers unions pushing back on test abuse*** with campaigns and resolutions. The National Education Association has launched a campaign against “Toxic Testing” and called on Education Secretary Arne Duncan to resign. The American Federation of Teachers voted to put Duncan on an “improvement plan.”
- In Seattle, Denver, Long Island, Los Angeles, Newark, and Michigan, ***candidates winning office by speaking out clearly against high-stakes testing.***
- ***More colleges joining the test-optional admissions trend.*** There are now more than 830 accredited, bachelor-degree granting colleges and universities that do not require all or many applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores.

Even Secretary Duncan echoed the voices of the resistance when he announced “flexibility” for states in using test results for teacher evaluation. Duncan said, “Where tests are redundant, or not sufficiently helpful for instruction, they cost precious time that teachers and kids can’t afford. Too much testing can rob school buildings of joy, and cause unnecessary stress.” Unfortunately, his administration has done nothing to undo the damage of NCLB. Instead, his policies have intensified the law’s widespread destruction. Resisters will, however, use Duncan’s evidence and arguments to fight his destructive test-driven policies. Buoyed by the victories already achieved, they will continue to push until they achieve the ultimate goals of less testing, more learning and assessments that support high-quality schooling for all.

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The past few years have seen [an explosion of resistance](#) to testing overkill in every region of the country, from New York to Texas and Portland to Florida. Parents, educators, students, administrators, community activists and taxpayers have found creative and effective ways to say, “Enough is enough!” Like a majority of [Americans](#), they agree that it is long past time to significantly cut the volume of standardized testing, end high-stakes uses, and invest in better ways to assess students, teachers and schools.

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- Opinion polls showing ***shifts in public attitudes against high-stakes testing***, with PDK/Gallup (2014) reporting that 68 percent of public school parents think standardized tests are not helpful.

¹ See FairTest’s weekly [Testing Resistance & Reform News](#) for examples of test resistance victories around the nation.

- **Teachers unions pushing back on test abuse** with statements and resolutions. The National Education Association has launched a campaign against “Toxic Testing” and called on Education Secretary Arne Duncan to resign. The American Federation of Teachers voted to put Duncan on an “improvement plan.”
- In Seattle, Denver, Long Island, Los Angeles, Newark, and Michigan, **candidates winning office by speaking out clearly against high-stakes testing.**
- **More colleges joining the test-optional admissions trend.** There are now more than 830 accredited, bachelor-degree granting colleges and universities that do not require all or many applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores.

I. THE TIDE BEGINS TO TURN AGAINST HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAMS



Texans rally to save their schools from overtesting.

For years, evidence has accumulated that high school [exit exams do not improve academic performance or educational equity](#) (Hout and Elliott, 2011). They fail to fulfill their stated goals of better preparing students for the workforce, closing achievement gaps and eliminating the

connection between a student’s ZIP code and their educational attainment. Despite this solid research base, states continued to impose graduation tests throughout the past two decades. But in the last few years, activists have used the data and an array of tactics to persuade legislatures

and governors to halt this destructive practice. Repeals or delays have recently been adopted in Minnesota, South Carolina, Alaska, Nevada, Arizona, Texas and Rhode Island. For example:

- **South Carolina** lawmakers voted to repeal the state graduation test in April 2014. They ended the High School Assessment Program and prohibited the use of any future test for graduation. The law applied retroactively to students who had been denied diplomas because they failed the exam, going back to the Class of 1990. “This primarily has affected some students with special needs,” said Dr. Randy Stowe, the Aiken School District’s director of administration. “The biggest criticism I’ve always seen is that a single test means so much and can keep a student from graduating.”
- In May, **Alaska** Governor Sean Parnell signed a bill to repeal the state’s High School Qualifying Exit Exam. Hundreds of students who failed or did not take the exam from 2004 to 2014 will now be eligible for a high school diploma.

- After a sustained and creative campaign by the Providence Student Union, aided by the American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island and an array of other allies,



Providence Student Union members rally against the NECAP graduation test. Photo Credit: [Providence Student Union](#)

Rhode Island

approved a three-year moratorium on using standardized tests as a graduation requirement. If the law had not passed, this year’s seniors would have been required to pass the New England Common Assessment Program exam. Critics argued successfully that the test would have disproportionately harmed students

who are low income, have learning disabilities or are learning to speak English. Then, in a dramatic reversal of her previous position, state education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist recommended a further delay, from 2017 to 2020.

- **Texas** parents, backed by educators, led a successful 2013 campaign to prevent an increase in mandated end-of-course exams to 15, rolling the requirements back to 5. Advocates plan to continue their fight to end high-stakes test uses.
- In 2013, **Minnesota** repealed its graduation exam after a coordinated effort by educators and civil rights organizations.

II. MORE TEST-BASED REQUIREMENTS ARE ROLLED BACK

In addition to the trend away from high school exit exams, foes of standardized test misuse saw progress in other areas. Under pressure from parents and teachers, laws and regulations were passed to reduce the number of required tests (as in Texas), to eliminate the use of test scores for grade promotion, and to roll back test-based teacher evaluation and the use of standardized testing with children as young as kindergarten. For example:

- After hearing mounting concerns about too much teaching to the test, **Virginia** lawmakers passed legislation to reduce the number of state tests from 22 to 17 in grades 3 through 8. “Overwhelmingly, we heard concerns that the ‘teaching to the test’ mentality was depriving students of the opportunity to derive substantive value from the material as opposed to memorizing factoids and regurgitating information without having synthesized it,” said Mike Webert, a Virginia legislator. A state task force is considering further reductions.
- In the face of overwhelming pressure from **Tennessee** teachers, Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill to undo a policy introduced last summer. The new law, passed with large margins by the Tennessee legislature in April, says that student growth on standardized tests cannot be used to revoke or prevent renewal of a teacher’s license. The Tennessee

Education Association had launched a petition drive to revoke the policy and claimed the new law as a major victory.

- Former **Florida** Governor Jeb Bush accelerated an unfortunate trend by states to use standardized test scores to determine whether students would advance to the next grade or be held back. About 15 states and Washington, D.C. followed suit between 2002 and 2012. Florida studied retention most thoroughly. The evidence confirmed that apparent benefits fade away after a few years. Substantial research has existed for decades showing a range of negative consequences to retention, including a greatly increased likelihood of dropping out of school. Now some states are reversing this harmful and ineffective policy.
- **Oklahoma** legislators changed the law (over the governor's veto) so that third graders may advance to 4th grade based on the judgment of educators and parents.
- **North Carolina** gave districts more flexibility in determining grade promotion, while **New Mexico** legislators blocked the governor's efforts to introduce test-based promotion.



Rally in support of Chicago teachers and parents boycotting the Illinois State Achievement Test. Photo Credit: [More than a Score](#)

- In April, **New York City** Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina announced that test scores would no longer be a major factor in determining grade promotion. The state had passed a law stating tests could not be a primary factor.

III. COMMON CORE TEST CONSEQUENCES POSTPONED

As states prepare to roll out Common Core testing for the 2014-15 school year, there is widespread pushback against the new exams or their high-stakes consequences from many quarters, including parents, teacher unions and activist groups. As a result, many states delayed test-based consequences for teachers and schools. Colorado, Ohio, New Jersey, Florida, Nevada and Connecticut are among the states whose legislatures voted to hit the pause button. Among the significant state moves to postpone Common Core test consequences were these:

- **Washington's** legislature refused to allow the use of student scores to judge teachers, leading Duncan to end the state's No Child Left Behind waiver.
- **Colorado** Governor John Hickenlooper signed a bill preventing school ratings this school year from being affected by test result changes from the previous year. A second bill signed by the governor allows districts to determine how much student test score growth will count in teacher evaluations.
- **Ohio** legislators passed similar legislation, voting to hold schools harmless based on 2014-15 test results and permitting flexibility for districts on the use of student test growth scores in teacher evaluations.
- Citing concerns about fairness and the legality of using student test score data in teacher evaluations, **Nevada** lawmakers voted in July to delay for a second year a new statewide performance evaluation system for public school teachers and administrators.
- Meanwhile, after years of hype about **Washington, DC's** test-based teacher evaluation system, Superintendent Kaya Henderson announced a one-year hiatus on test-based evaluations to deal with any complications brought on by the shift to Common Core tests. "I want my teachers focused on teaching and not worried about whether or not the hiccups that come with implementing a new test are going to impact their livelihood," Henderson said.

- **New Jersey** Governor Chris Christie, a staunch high-stakes testing proponent, bowed to increasing pressure from New Jersey teachers and parents and allowed a rollback in the weight given to student test results in teacher evaluations, from 30 to 10 percent. (The weight could increase to 20 in the next two years.) Christie also established a commission to investigate the effectiveness of K-12 testing, but put no parents on it. Ridgewood, NJ, parent activist and school administrator Jean McTavish observed, “Ultimately, I don’t think this is going to change much, but it’s a good thing people are going to learn more,” she said. “I anticipate this is going to be a long conversation about how best to educate our children.”
- Even the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, having spent hundreds of millions of dollars promoting the Common Core, announced in June that it supports a two-year moratorium on using Common Core test results for teacher evaluations (as well as student promotion decisions). **Education Secretary Arne Duncan** then declared that jurisdictions granted waivers from certain No Child Left Behind requirements before 2012 (33 states and Washington, DC), would have until 2016-17 to use student test score growth in teacher evaluation decisions. (States without waivers are not obligated to use student scores to judge educators.) Support for a moratorium by Gates, Duncan and their allies seems designed primarily to prevent an all-out collapse of their pet Common Core project. However, many parents and teachers seek to use a moratorium to develop better forms of assessment.

IV. SUCCESSFUL PROTESTS: OPT-OUTS, BOYCOTTS

[Opting out](#) is among the most powerful tools to disrupt the high-stakes testing enterprise; in 2014, the nation saw how much can be accomplished by outraged parents and teachers armed with organizing skills, social media and energy. New York State was an epicenter, with the state estimating 60,000 students refused to take its exam. Many



Brooklyn, NY, parents stood together to refuse testing for their children. Photo Credit: [James Lane](#)

were from suburban districts, especially on Long Island and Erie County, but some parents in the more racially and economically diverse New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx joined the boycott. Parents also opted out in states as diverse as Texas, New Jersey, Missouri, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Colorado, and Massachusetts. Teachers boycotted tests in Chicago and New York this year, as their colleagues in Seattle did last year. Educators were backed by parents who opted out their children. Parents and teachers rallied, held community forums, launched petitions and educated their neighbors with house parties, flyers and lawn signs. Groups also made extensive use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, websites and listservs to organize supporters. Here are some notable examples of the range of successful protests around the nation:

- Small numbers of parents and students had opted out of testing in past years, but this year the movement achieved a scale that politicians and school officials could no longer ignore or trivialize. **New York** was a model for the breadth and depth of the movement

and its impact. Among the snapshots: A Brooklyn school had 80 percent of students refuse testing after a yearlong parent-led high-stakes testing awareness campaign. Testing was called off at Castle Bridge Elementary in New York City because so many parents refused it for their children. Teachers boycotted Common Core tests at Brooklyn's Prospect Heights International School, where 95 percent of students were English language learners. Half of the school's parents refused to have their children tested. The refusal rate reached two-thirds at one Plattsburgh school, with the boycott totaling half the district's students in the tested grades. Buffalo-area school officials said poor spring test results were significantly affected by large numbers of test refusals: "We know that the data we are receiving is about half of our students," said Lake Shore Superintendent James Przepasniak. "So we have to take into consideration that a large portion of our students at each grade level did not take the assessment." Following the



Chicago student Asean Johnson emerged as an eloquent voice against testing and for public schools. Photo Credit: Bianca Tanis

mass parent boycott of the state exam, at least 20 New York *districts* boycotted the administration of Pearson's "Common Core" field tests. Activist leader Lisa Rudley observed, "In five years, looking back, we will see it as key moment in the pushback."

- Borrowing a page from the Seattle teachers, teachers at **Chicago's [Saucedo Scholastic Academy](#) voted unanimously to boycott the Illinois State Achievement Test** (ISAT), which is being phased out by the state. The majority of teachers at the Drummond School also boycotted. As in Seattle, parents supported the boycott: "Most of the students were opted out even before teachers voted to boycott. This wasn't teachers working in isolation – this was a whole community

effort," said Erin Franzinger, [CORE testing committee member](#). The action was backed by

the Chicago Teachers Union, parent groups such as More than a Score and Parents for Teachers, and citywide student groups. Hundreds of university professors nationwide released a statement of support. The professors wrote, "Over a decade of research shows that an over emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing narrows curriculum, creates social and emotional stress for students and families, drives committed teachers out of the profession, and turns schools into test-prep factories with principals forced to comply as overseers – especially in low-scoring schools."

- In the first such action in the nation, the Lee County, Florida School Board voted 3-2 to opt out of state-mandated exams.

After threats that the district risked losing \$280 million in state funds, the vote was reversed. However, all five Board members pledged to oppose testing overkill. Several other Florida districts may follow Lee's lead. As Palm Beach County School Board Member Karen Brill said: "Sometimes it takes an act of



Parent activist Stefanie Fuhr and her daughter ready to rally in Denver. Photo Credit: Stefanie Fuhr

civil disobedience to move forward. We must explore the consequences, but we cannot allow fear to hold us back."

- Organizing efforts led by **Texas** Parents Opt Out resulted in parents pulling their students out of testing in 30 districts across the state. In one response, the Waco Independent School District changed its policy to allow students to attend school and receive "meaningful activities." (The previous policy said parents' only option was to keep students home if they were opting out.) A number of Texas superintendents wrote to parents before the state released test results. In his letter, Paris ISD Superintendent Paul Jones challenged the role of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

tests. “These assessments ... reflect a punitive, one-size-fits-all test-driven system,” he wrote. “Our students are much more than a once-a-year pencil and bubble sheet test. Your child means immeasurably more than just a number generated in Austin. There is no test that can assess all of what makes each child unique.” A year ago, some 85 percent of Texas schools boards approved a resolution against high-stakes tests saying, “standardized testing is strangling our schools.”

- In **Colorado**, a steadily growing opt-out movement reached new heights as the state said 1,412 students refused to take the reading test.
- The resistance has begun to reach state education leaders. The **Vermont** State Board of Education approved [a strong resolution](#) against the misuse of standardized tests. Principals in **New York** and superintendents in **Texas** released statements of opposition. A **Colorado** superintendent has called for a three-year moratorium.
- Finally, local and state organizations could turn to national networks for support. The [United Opt Out](#) organization and its affiliates across the country have become vital hubs of state-specific information and support for parents interested in opting out. The [Badass Teachers Association](#) and its state affiliates also emerged as a national vehicle for protests, particularly through social media, while linking up activist teachers, and some parents, across the nation. And organizers relied on FairTest’s large selection of fact sheets and other [resources](#). The organization also served as a key voice of the movement in national and local media.

V. PUBLIC OPINION SHIFTS AGAINST HIGH-STAKES AGENDA

In addition to the growing numbers of parents, teachers and students actively resisting high-stakes testing, public opinion surveys show significant shifts in attitudes against high-stakes testing and the Common Core.

- A poll released in August 2014 by **Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup** found that 54 percent of the general public said standardized tests are not helpful; the rate for public school parents was even higher, at 68 percent. In last year's survey, in answer to a different question, fewer than one in four said increased standardized testing has helped improve local schools. The 2014 poll also found that more parents oppose using student standardized test scores to evaluate teachers, increasing from 47 percent in 2012 to 61 percent this year. Nearly half of those who said they were very familiar with the No Child Left Behind law agreed it made public education worse.
- A survey by the **Times Union/Siena College** (2014) mirrored the growing New York State test resistance movement. A whopping 82 percent of those polled said the implementation of Common Core standards and tests has been too rushed and led to widespread confusion. The study also found a plurality, 44 percent, of those with children in public school oppose the current use of standardized testing. And 62 percent overall agreed that "the only ones that will benefit from Common Core are the companies marketing the textbooks and tests."
- A recent national poll by **Education Next (2014)**, a group that supports current education "reforms," found a drop in overall public support for Common Core-based accountability, from 65 in 2013 to 53 percent in 2014. Teacher support for the Common Core dropped dramatically, from 76 to 46 percent.
- And in **Texas**, the birthplace of No Child Left Behind-style test overkill, new surveys find the public ready to leave high-stakes testing behind. A June 2013 poll from the University

of Texas/Texas Tribune showed broad, bipartisan support for the legislature's move to reduce state exit exams from 15 to 5, with 60 percent expressing support. Then in February 2014, 64 percent said reducing the amount of standardized testing would be a good way to improve public education, again with broad support from both Democrats and Republicans.

VI. ANTI-TESTING CANDIDATES WIN AT THE BALLOT BOX

High-stakes testing policies have always been about politics, not education. Pushing test-based “accountability” has been a quick and dirty way for politicians to look like champions of educational quality without making substantial investments in public education essentials. Now, activists are increasingly focusing their efforts on electing candidates who support investing in



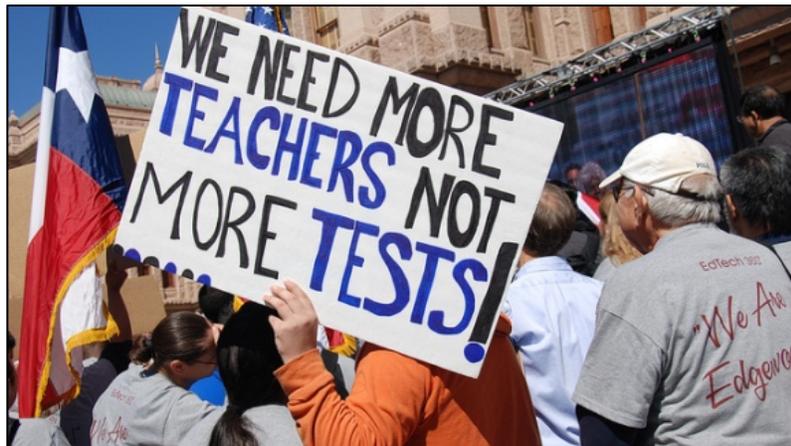
Chicago students march against high-stakes testing. Photo Credit: sarah-ji

public schools, reducing the amount of testing, and lowering stakes. The Network for Public Education (NPE) formed in 2013 to counter the influence of big money on races for state and local school board and other elected office. As Diane Ravitch, an NPE founder, put it, “We

believed -- and continue to believe -- that an informed public will not give away its public schools to amateurs, hedge fund managers, rock stars, for-profit corporations, athletes, fly-by-night entrepreneurs, and religious groups." The efforts of NPE and others are starting to pay off, as the following examples show.

- Among the winning candidates vetted and supported by NPE are **Seattle** School Board candidate Sue Peters, **Los Angeles** Unified School Board candidates Monica Ratliff and George McKenna, and **Newark** Mayor Ras Baraka.
- NPE-supported Valarie Wilson won the Democratic primary for **Georgia** State Superintendent. In August, former middle school teacher Sherry Gay-Dagnono won the Democratic primary for **Michigan's** 8th House district. NPE endorsed her because of her "strong stand against over-testing and privatization."
- In addition to its hugely successful opt-out campaign, **Long Island** Opt Out supported 21 successful school board candidates in May elections for 14 district boards. Six were challengers who ousted incumbents.
- Valentina Val Flores,

a supporter of testing reform, won the race for **Denver's** seat on the state board of education, defeating a well-funded "reformer."



Teachers rally in Texas to put resources into education, not tests. Photo Credit: National Education Association

- **Oklahoma's** incumbent Superintendent of Schools, Janet Barresi, lost the Republican primary in large part due to her incessant boosting of tests, such as the grade promotion exams. (Joy Hofmeister won the primary.)

VII. TEACHERS UNIONS PUSH BACK

Emboldened by the increasing anger and frustration of their members, national, state and local teacher unions are making strong statements against the misuse and overuse of testing. The National Education Association's 2014 Representative Assembly launched [a new campaign against "Toxic Testing,"](#) which aims "to end the high stakes use of standardized tests, to sharply reduce the amount of student and instructional time consumed by tests, and to implement more effective and responsible forms of assessment and accountability." The NEA delegates also passed a resolution calling on Arne Duncan to resign, while the American

Federation of Teachers

members passed a

resolution at its summer

conference calling on

Obama to put Duncan on

an "improvement plan."

The plan would obligate the

education secretary to

resign if he fails to meet

targets, such as enacting

the recommendations of

Congress's Equity and

Excellence Commission, which included school funding equity and the end of the "test and

punish" accountability systems of No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. Other union moves

include:

- The **AFT** announced it would give \$30,000 grants to members for the purpose of critiquing and rewriting Common Core Standards. And a resolution passed at the AFT convention criticized Pearson's edTPA performance-based licensing exam: "The AFT believes that neither edTPA nor any other performance assessment should be tied to a



Students from Cleveland High School in Portland, OR, protest standardized testing. Photo Credit: [Nicole Dungca/The Oregonian](#)

high-stakes testing regime and the outsourcing of evaluation, especially to for-profit corporations such as Pearson, as it is not an appropriate assessment of teacher education programs and teacher performance."

- The votes at the summer conferences of the two national unions followed a string of strong statements and actions by local union affiliates across the country. In May, the 110,000-member **Massachusetts** Teachers Association elected insurgent candidate Barbara Madeloni president, largely on the basis of her strong stand against high-stakes testing, including a call for a three-year moratorium on standardized testing. The **Oregon** Education Association, representing more than 40,000 teachers, also called for a three-year moratorium on Common Core math and reading exams. Both seek to use the pause to overhaul state assessment programs, not just delay high-stakes uses of standardized tests. Locals in Colorado, Delaware, Maine, and New York similarly pushed back on testing and test-based teacher evaluation.
- The **NEA** is strongly backing legislation introduced by Reps. Chris Gibson, R-N.Y., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz. The bill would reduce the number of federally mandated standardized reading and math tests from 14 to six, requiring the tests in just three grade spans (in effect, elementary, middle and high school).
- The **AFT**, joined by the NEA and other groups, has launched a campaign to [Reclaim the Promise of America's Schools](#). The platform calls for a major overhaul of testing. The campaign unites dozens of community and education organizations around the nation.

VIII. TREND TOWARD TEST-OPTIONAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

ACCELERATES

The FairTest-led movement toward test-optional university admissions has [accelerated](#). Currently, more than 830 accredited, bachelor-degree granting colleges and universities do not require all or many applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores.

- Already this summer, nine additional schools -- Wesleyan University, Old Dominion University, Hofstra University, Temple University, Montclair State University, Beloit College, Bryn Mawr College, Plymouth State University and Emmanuel College -- dropped test-score requirements. At Bryn Mawr, Professor Marc Schulz, a member of the admissions committee, said, "We looked not just at the national data but also took a very hard look at our own data over the last several years. It was clear that the standardized tests added very little predictive information after accounting for the strength of the applicants' academic work in high school and the admissions staff's review of the whole application."
- Hampshire College has long been test-optional. This year, the school announced it would become "test-blind," meaning it would no longer consider students' admissions test scores for admissions or financial aid.
- A study released in February 2014 shows that ACT/SAT-optional schools increase campus diversity without harming academic performance. [Defining Promise: Optional Standardized Testing Policies in American College and University Admissions](#) analyzed the records of 123,000 students at 33 institutions. Among the findings were that students admitted without regard to their ACT or SAT scores do as well academically as those entering under regular criteria. Also, test-optional admission is particularly valuable for first-generation, minority, immigrant, rural and learning-disabled applicants.

IX. TIME TO OVERHAUL ASSESSMENT

Secretary Duncan echoed the voices of the resistance when he announced “flexibility” for states in using test results for teacher evaluation. Duncan said, “Where tests are redundant, or not sufficiently helpful for instruction, they cost precious time that teachers and kids can't afford. Too much testing can rob school buildings of joy, and cause unnecessary stress.” Unfortunately,



Seattle teachers boycotting district-mandated MAP tests. Photo Credit: Scrap the Map.

Duncan’s proposals fail to address these real problems. They merely offer the possibility of temporarily suspending testing consequences for educators. But they do nothing for students and schools that will still be judged by the same tests.

The Administration has not recognized its own role in promoting test misuse and overuse through requirements in its “Race to the Top” and waiver programs, which double down on the failed test-and-punish policies of “No Child Left Behind.” Duncan’s “crocodile tears” statement contains nothing substantial enough to stop the growing pressure for real change. Instead of minor concessions, the nation needs an indefinite moratorium on high-stakes tests and consequences to allow the development of new assessment practices that actually support learning and teaching.

Resisters will, however, use Duncan's evidence and arguments to fight his destructive test-driven policies. Buoyed by the victories already achieved, they will continue to push until they achieve the ultimate goals of less testing, more learning and assessments that support high-quality schooling for all.

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- To order T-shirt shown on p. 14, go to <https://www.etsy.com/shop/OptOutTshirts>. They were created by two activist mothers.*

Note: Some information in this report was obtained through interviews with movement leaders by FairTest staff.