

Stories from today's press conference

Parents and Teachers Protest Bubble Tests

December 17, 2008

Wade Tillett

Wade is a CPS teacher and the parent of a CPS third grader who is scheduled to take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for the first time this year. Philosophically opposed to high-stakes testing as a teacher, Wade has decided to exercise his rights as a parent and opt his child out of the ISAT this year.

Wade believes that bubble tests are harmful and that we need to return bubbles to their rightful purpose – as a joyful experience for children, a potentially engaging science experiment, and other positive uses. He encourages people to join the cause by going to www.bubbleover.net.

Jackson Potter on behalf of CORE

The Caucus of Rank and File Educators has called for an end to high-stakes testing as an element in the next Chicago Teachers Union contract. They consider high-stakes testing to be “an inaccurate and biased tool that is too often used to berate and dismiss teachers and denigrate their students.”

Sue and Jim Gill

Sue and Jim are parents from Oak Park who have been opting their two children out of the state tests since they entered school. In 2006, a change in District 97 administration resulted in their children being barred from school for two full weeks while tests and make-up tests were being administered. The Gills were able to enlist the help of PURE, ISBE and a state legislator to get the school to back down in 2007 and allow their children to attend school during the hours that tests were not being given – those times, they say, “when teachers are teaching and children are learning.”

Julie Woestehoff on behalf of Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)

PURE has officially opposed high-stakes testing since 1996 when the first students affected by the Chicago Public Schools' new promotion policy were summarily flunked based on a single Iowa test score. In 1999, PURE filed a discrimination complaint with the U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights citing the disparate impact of the policy on African-American and Latino students. The resolution of this complaint forced CPS to modify the policy to include other measures in promotion and retention decisions.

PURE has been in the forefront of efforts to include high-quality multiple measures in state testing and in the implementation of NCLB.