

I Have the Right to Opt Out of ISTEP

I OBJECT to ISTEP, because it is an inaccurate, insufficient and culturally biased way to assess learning AND because high stakes testing harms children and destroys schools.

I OBJECT to ISTEP according to my rights protected by the Constitution: the 1st Amendment, which protects free speech, and the 14th Amendment, which protects religious and spiritual freedom.

I OBJECT to ISTEP, knowing that parent rights are broadly protected by Supreme Court decisions, especially parent right to “direct the upbringing and education of their children.”

I OBJECT to ISTEP on the grounds that it violates the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, because student performance on ISTEP provides catalyst for teacher pay. Using one annual student assessment is an unfair judgment of teacher performance and jeopardizes student well-being and educational opportunities.

I DIRECT all school or district staff that they may **NOT** administer ISTEP or IREAD-3 to my child or any standardized test preparation. Furthermore, I **DIRECT** my child’s school to provide free and appropriate instruction for my child during testing and test prep periods.

I DIRECT all school, district and state personnel that there can be **NO** repercussions against my child or his/her school, because we Opt Out of standardized tests and test prep. Opting Out of ISTEP and/or IREAD-3 must **NOT** impact his or her academic or attendance record, advancement to the next grade, gifted program or Honor Roll status OR participation in school or district celebrations or honors, etc.

Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____

What if they gave a test and nobody came?

Teachers would focus on children instead of test scores. School curriculums would grow richer. We would make schools truly accountable--not to tests and government--but to students, parents and whole communities. We would talk about what it really means to be educated. We would reform public education. Really.

Learn more:

Facebook: OPT OUT of the State Test: Indiana Coordinator Matthew Brooks at 317-502-5084
matthew@brookspublications.com

OR

www.unitedoptout.com
<http://fairtest.org/get-involved/opting-out>

Tell Dr. Tony Bennett, Indiana’s elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, you are opting out of high-stakes testing for your child:
317-232-6665

Indiana doesn’t have an Opt Out law yet, but Opting Out is still YOUR right!

OBJECT to ISTEP

A Guide for Indiana Parents To Opt Out of High-Stakes Testing



High-Stakes Testing

...is neither meaningful nor fair

- Measures student ability to memorize information—in an age when technology puts information at our fingertips 24/7
- Can't assess the skills that are most needed today, like the ability to work in teams, solve problems, conceptualize, analyze, innovate, criticize, be a leader and question leaders
- Reflects the abilities of test creators and graders (paid about \$12/hour!), not students
- Doesn't align with our diverse student population

...causes anxiety in children

- Kills curiosity in students as "learning for life" is reduced to "drilling for tests"
- Makes students pawns between teachers and bonuses, schools and funding
- Halts growth, because children are NOT challenged to move *ahead* of the test

...destroys public schools

- Narrows the curriculum to tested subjects (math and language arts), especially so in schools with low income and minority student populations
- Creates hostile work environment and demoralizes teachers and support staff
- Enables community to label schools as "bad" without investigating their complex problems or potential solutions

How the Stakes Got So High

No Child Left Behind: The 2002 Federal Law and Indiana's Response

NCLB's Noble Goal: To close the "achievement gap" between middle income and low income students, whites and minorities

NCLB's "Method": Tests and Sticks

All states must test their public school students in math and language arts and sort test scores by subgroups (**African-Americans and other minorities, low income students, new English learners, special education students**). ALL students must pass the state test by 2014. IF not, schools with high percentages of "subgroup" students (Title I schools) will lose federal funds set aside for them.

Why does the federal government punish schools instead of helping them? Schools that don't have subgroups are NOT punished. Is that fair?

NCLB Result: FAILURE

NCLB has failed by its own measures. Test scores have flattened. The achievement gap has widened. Today, 50% of American schools have failed NCLB. By 2014, it will be 80%. Even top-performing schools fail NCLB, if they can't get their scores even higher.

In Indiana...

Teacher evaluation and pay are tied to ISTEP scores and schools are graded A-F, depending on their progress toward the **impossible** NCLB goals. Using these unfair grades, the Indiana Department of Education has begun moving management of low-graded schools away from publicly elected school boards to private corporations.

Indiana third graders must pass the new IREAD-3 test in order to advance to fourth grade, without regard to parent or teacher input.

The Indiana DOE now proposes to measure yearly student growth "on a curve," which means **66% of students won't—and can't—make the grade.**

The Indiana DOE compares your school's test scores against the scores of private schools that are not subject to state budget cuts or rules—and do NOT admit ALL children, regardless of learning ability or socioeconomic status.

OPT OUT!

- Indiana standardized tests are tied to unreasonable and unattainable school accountability goals.
- There are many ways to learn and many ways besides ISTEP to assess learning.
- Real reform won't begin until education leaders work with students, parents and teachers to identify and fix *real* problems in Indiana schools

