

PURE *Tip Sheet*

Sample Testing Opt Out letters

From Sharon and George Schmidt, Chicago (Substance Newspaper)

Please be advised that my child, _____(name)_____, will not be participating in the Scantron Performance Series testing during the current school year.

I understand that the Chicago Board of Education provides the parent or guardian the right of choice regarding this standardized testing. In my opinion, such testing is not in the best interests of our children since it promotes competition instead of cooperation, and blunts, not stimulates, our children's curiosity.

Instead of testing, my child will engage in a silent, self-guided activity. This is according to information provided by the CPS Chief Education Officer, Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, who wrote in March 2010 that "(I)f parents choose to exclude their children, the school has no obligation to provide an alternative activity. Your child will be asked to engage in a silent, self-guided activity."

Other children who have opted out of tests in Chicago public schools have sat in the hall or the main office during testing. I understand that my child will be placed in the appropriate setting where he/she may engage in his/.her own silent, self-guided activity,

From "Object to ISTEP: A Guide for Indiana Parents to Opt out of High-Stakes Testing"

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 _____

Template from United Opt Out National:

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that our child will not be participating in state standardized testing during the current school year. Furthermore, we ask that no record of this testing be part of our child's permanent file, as we do not wish our child to participate in standardized achievement testing for promotion, graduation, or school/state report cards.

We believe the following of forced, high-stakes testing:

- Is not scientifically-based and fails to follow the U.S. Government's own data on learning
- Fosters test driven education that is not meeting the individual/intellectual needs of students
- Presents a racial and economic bias that is beneficial to white middle/upper class students and detrimental to second language students, impoverished students, and students of color
- Is in opposition to the corrective action in gaps in opportunity and resources sanctioned by the Fiscal Fairness Act.
- Supports complicity of corporate interests rather than democracy based on public concerns
- Fosters coercion over cooperation with regards to federal funding for public education
- Promotes a culture of lying, cheating, and exploitation within the school community
- Has used the achievement gap to foster a "de facto" segregation that has resulted in separate and unequal education for minorities.

We understand that federal law provides the parent or guardian the right of choice regarding standardized testing when such testing violates spiritual beliefs. In contrast to our spiritual beliefs, which are firmly rooted in a moral code that embraces equity and fairness, we believe such testing is not in the best interests of our child since it fosters competition instead of cooperation, contributes to separate and unequal education for minorities, and belies our child's intellectual, creative, and problem-solving abilities, while presenting a fictitious picture as to the impact of the pedagogy provided by our child's individual educators.

Ultimately, our state is required to provide our child with an education in a least restrictive environment that does not force us to go against our spiritual beliefs. My child should proceed to learn and develop at an individual pace following education standards that are imparted under the guidance of education professionals, not market-based reformers, who are able to provide quality pedagogy without fear of reprisal if students - who mature at vastly different levels and come from diverse backgrounds that may or may not be supportive of intellectual pursuit - do not hit the bulls' eye of a constantly moving achievement target.

Therefore, we request that the school provide appropriate learning activities during the testing window and utilize an alternative assessment portfolio or concordant college testing score to fulfill promotion and or graduation requirements, as our child opts out of standardized testing.

Sincerely,

Your Name

More letters at <http://unitedoptout.com/united-opt-out-national-toolkit-opt-out-of-high-stakes-testing/>
More at www.pureparents.org and www.fairtest.org.

Parents United for Responsible Education
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