

10 REASONS TO BOYCOTT THE NEW YORK STATE TESTS

1 **When students, teachers and schools are rewarded for high test scores and punished for low ones, the tests themselves become the focus of education.** Class time is devoted to worksheets and test prep, which rob children of their natural desire to learn.

2 **The exams' focus on math and English undermines other important learning.** That encourages schools to give less time to social studies, music, art, world languages, physical education, and even science.

3 **State exams are loaded with poorly written, ambiguous questions.** A recent statement signed by 545 New York State Principals noted that many teachers and principals could not agree on the correct answers.¹

4 **New York's testing system is part of a massive industry promoted by politicians and billionaires, not educators.** Common Core-backer Bill Gates and Joanne Weiss, Chief of Staff to United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, have promoted national standards and tests by touting that they "will unleash powerful market forces" and create a national market for vendors.²

5 **While New York State is paying testing companies millions of dollars, it is massively underfunding New York City public schools.** This is part of a national trend: states cut funding to schools while pouring millions into new materials and computer systems designed for standardized tests.³

6 **High-stakes tests don't help students learn or teachers teach.** The results come in too late to help a child's teacher differentiate instruction. The tests have little diagnostic value and are used primarily to punish teachers and schools that don't perform.

7 **High-stakes testing is a political tool to evaluate teachers.** Though using state test scores to rate teachers has been temporarily suspended, half of teachers' ratings will still be based on standardized test scores (on different tests). And when the moratorium ends in 2019, state scores will once again constitute half of teachers' evaluations--this, despite studies showing that these measures are unreliable.

8 **High-stakes testing undermines teacher collaboration and strains teacher-student relations.** Teachers are judged on a curve, which discourages them from helping students in another teacher's class and undermines the trust needed for healthy student-teacher relationships.

9 **One-size-fits-all tests punish and discourage students who are already vulnerable,** including students of color, English-Language Learners, children with special needs, and students from families living in poverty.

10 **High-stakes testing is not supported by research.** In its 2011 report to Congress, the *National Academy of Sciences* reviewed America's test-based accountability systems and concluded, "There are little to no positive effects of these systems overall on student learning and educational progress."⁵

¹ www.newyorkprincipals.org/letter-to-parents-about-testing

² gatesfoundation.org/media-center/speeches/2009/07/bill-gates-national-conference-of-state-legislatures-nctl

³ salon.com/2014/03/12/public_schools_under_siege_diane_ravitch_warns_salon_some_cities_soon_will_have_none/

⁴ nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/caldas20132014growthmodel.pdf

⁵ statesman.com/news/news/opinion/standardized-tests-with-high-stakes-are-bad-for-1/nRk77/

