

Less Testing/More Learning

Parents, students and educators in Massachusetts and across the country are pushing back against high-stakes standardized tests. Teachers assess students all the time to guide instruction. Teacher-developed assessments are not the problem. Rather, concerns involve the excessive amount of time and money spent on externally created standardized testing and the punitive high stakes attached to the results.

Students in low-income communities of color are hit the hardest. A disproportionate amount of time is spent on test prep in these communities. The consequences are also more severe, including school closures and the loss of teacher autonomy to provide students with the education they deserve.

- **Reduces time to teach.** Standardized tests and test preparation take time away from students' learning. Educators know their students, their content and how to teach. We need to let teachers teach. We can't allow bureaucrats and corporations to dictate what's taught in our schools.
- **Narrows the curriculum.** These tests are narrowing the curriculum by forcing teachers to teach to the test and spend less time on important subjects and skills, such as history and the arts or working collaboratively on group projects. They narrow our sense of the purpose of school.
- **Misuses scarce education dollars.** Instead of paying millions of dollars to corporations to produce these tests, we should be spending money on strategies that teachers and parents know improve our schools, such as smaller class sizes and a rich and varied curriculum.
- **Adds stress; reduces creativity.** High-stakes standardized tests are taking the joy out of learning and the creativity out of teaching. Students are experiencing incredible stress and getting a message that they are failures when education should be building on their strengths.