

# Less Testing = More Time For Teaching and Learning



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**Testing takes time from learning and narrows our curriculum. We must restore the approach known as “grade-span” testing: student should take standardized tests once in elementary, once in middle, and once in high school. This will allow our students to focus more on developing critical thinking skills and less on rote memorization and will give educators more time to connect one-on-one with each student, especially those most in need of extra help.**

## TOO MUCH TESTING

- ▶ No Child Left Behind **more than doubled** the number of high-stakes tests in reading and math—in these subjects alone, K-12 students now take 14 federally-mandated tests, compared to 6 before the law was enacted.
- ▶ On average, teachers report that nearly a third of the school year is lost to testing and test-related tasks. (Source: NEA survey, [NEA Today, November 2, 2014](#)).
- ▶ Mounting opposition among **parents and communities** has led to rollbacks in testing requirements in more than a dozen states. (Source: [Testing Reform Victories: The First Wave](#), Fairtest, 2014)
- ▶ **77 percent** of Americans believe increased testing has either hurt or made no difference in improving schools, according to the [2013 PDK/Gallup poll](#);

## TESTS ARE MISUSED

- ▶ What students are being taught and what is being tested are often **not aligned**, especially since states are still developing curricula to match new, higher standards.
- ▶ Standardized testing costs states **\$1.7 billion annually** (Source: [Strength in Numbers: State Spending on K-12 Assessments Systems](#), Brookings Institution, 2012)—money that would be better spent on proven strategies like high-quality early childhood education, after-school programs, good nutrition, health care, and community support services.
- ▶ **Parents and the public are increasingly wary of how tests are used.** In the [2014 PDK/Gallup poll](#), 68 percent of Americans opposed using student test results in teacher evaluations.

## EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

- ▶ The federal government must uphold its responsibility to ensure **equal educational opportunity**—the original focus of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- ▶ A child’s chances for success should not depend on **living in the right zip code.**
- ▶ **Less federally-mandated testing** would free up time and resources, allow students to focus less on rote memorization and more on critical thinking and problem solving skills, and allow educators to connect one-on-one with students, thus fulfilling their most important job: instilling a love of learning in their students.