



Fact Sheet: **Standardized Testing**

1. **High-stakes standardized testing does not improve student achievement.**

There is a clear scholarly consensus on the limits of standardized testing. For example, a comprehensive, nine-year study of testing and evaluation commissioned by the National Academy of Sciences recently concluded that: "available evidence does not give strong support for the use of test-based incentives to improve education."

2. **High-stakes standardized testing does not improve teaching.**

Another National Academy report questions using test scores to evaluate teachers, as scores "have not yet been adequately studied for the purposes of evaluating teachers and principals," and "face substantial practical barriers to being successfully deployed in a personnel system that is fair, reliable, and valid."

3. **Standardized tests cover a limited range of material.**

Standardized tests do not cover many skills that parents want their children to develop while at school, including teamwork, creativity, how to ask good questions, how to persist with difficult projects and how to apply skills to real-world challenges. According to the National Academy, standardized tests also generally omit "the portion of the curriculum that deals with higher levels of cognitive functioning and application of knowledge and skills." Although criticism of standardized testing has led to much talk about "better assessments," no one has yet succeeded in creating such assessments.

4. **High-stakes standardized tests warp educational experiences.**

The focus on high-stakes standardized tests prompted by No Child Left Behind has had a set of well-documented negative effects on American education, including a narrowed curriculum, widespread teaching to the test, increased stress on staff and students and a growing number of cheating scandals.

5. **"Multiple measures" do not reduce the negative impact of high-stakes testing.**

If standardized test scores form an integral part of a evaluation system, students will have to take the same number of tests, and will likely experience the same amount of teaching to the test, whether test scores play a large or small role in the overall evaluation.

6. **A focus on standardized test scores can hide achievement gaps.**

Because standardized tests do not generally cover higher-level skills, they do not effectively measure the "achievement gap" among racial, economic or other groups.

7. **Far richer evaluation measures are available.**

Students, teachers and schools should be evaluated by a rich set of measures that does not require extensive standardized testing and which covers multiple skills as well as the full range of teaching and learning.



References: **Standardized Testing**

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