

Questions to ask your board of education:

- In the last several years, has the district shifted resources away from non-tested subjects to focus on tested areas?
- How much does the district pay each year to administer standardized tests?
- How much does the district pay each year for test prep materials?
- How much will the district have to spend on technology to implement the PARCC exams?
- How much time is spent in district classrooms to prepare for and administer standardized tests?

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Students just don't seem to be enjoying their days the way they used to because they don't have too much of a creative outlet anymore. - J.P., teacher

How Much?!

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What is the true cost of standardized testing?

Money



Standardized testing is big business.

From the cost of the tests themselves, to the cost of test prep materials, to the huge investment in new technology required by the incoming PARCC assessments, the money adds up quickly.

Districts and the state are currently trying to figure out who will bear the staggering cost of implementing and administering the new tests across the state. But wherever the bill is sent, taxpayers will ultimately pay it.

With real questions about the educational value of all the testing in our schools, parents have a right to ask whether the money spent on testing should instead be used to strengthen schools and provide better, broader educational opportunities for students.



There are no more class trips or subject-matter enriching assemblies because there is not enough time in the day.

-K.E., teacher

Opportunity



Beyond the financial costs of standardized testing, there are significant educational costs as well.

Parents who remember the field trips, class projects and exploratory learning of their own childhood wonder what has happened to those things in their children's schools.

The answer isn't hard to figure out. With resources diverted to testing and test preparation, there isn't much left over for things like educational field trips. And even when the money is available, the focus on test preparation leaves schools afraid to use limited class time for other, more creative learning.

That approach may raise test scores, but it does so at too high a price.



The lack of depth with which I can focus on a book or play is evident to me when I stop and realize all the fun, creative lessons that I have had to eliminate from my classes.

-E.H., teacher

Purpose



Perhaps the most important thing all this standardized testing has cost schools is their sense of purpose.

With so much riding on test scores, it's easy for schools to fall into the trap of thinking their job is to help students increase those scores. But that's not the purpose of education.

Schools should be focused on developing a deep love of learning. They should broaden students' horizons and give them the tools to explore whatever subjects spark their interest.

That can't be measured by a standardized test. But it's far too important to lose.



The PARCC, along with a barrage of other forms of standardized tests being hurled at students and teachers, is building a wall of conformity that will be tough to dismantle.

-L.C., teacher