

AN APPEAL TO CONCERNED PARENTS

Forcing teachers and schools to focus more and more instructional time on preparing students for meaningless high-stakes tests is an educationally unsound practice that has been condemned by educators, education experts and a growing number of concerned parents.

Even if these tests were well designed – which clearly they are not – they serve no educational purpose because the results are not known until after the school year ends, the test questions are kept secret and there is no way to use the tests to help improve your child's learning.

Many parents have seen the negative effects of this obsession with testing and test preparation on their own children in the form of increased anxiety about the tests and decreased enjoyment of school and learning.

The emphasis on high-stakes testing, primarily in ELA and Math, has forced schools to reduce educational opportunities for children in other academic and extracurricular areas. This diminishes the overall quality of children's educational experience.

While educators are outraged about the "reforms" that place even more weight on these developmentally inappropriate and poorly designed high-stakes tests, the simple fact is teachers' annual evaluations will now be based primarily on students' test scores. If they want to keep their jobs teachers have no choice but to focus inordinate amounts of instructional time on joyless, meaningless test preparation.

Ignoring the clear wishes of parents and the advice of educators and education experts, the governor and the legislature have increased the already excessive weight given to high-stakes tests. Now there's only one force that can stop this insanity – **YOU!**

The more parents that opt their children out of the Common Core tests, the less viable the tests become. Last year, some 60,000 students were opted out. The greater that number grows the closer we come to putting an end to the tyranny of testing.

Opting out has no negative consequences for your child's education and will not result in a loss of state aid for your school district. Anyone who tells you otherwise is simply lying to try to scare you into doing what you know is not in your child's best interests.

As the parent or legal guardian of your child, this decision belongs to you and no one else. Please consider joining the growing legion of concerned parents who are fighting to protect the quality of their children's education by choosing to

OPT-OUT!

The refusal letter must be submitted prior to the administration of the first part of the exam (April 14 for ELA, April 22 for Math and June 1 for Science).

Find out more information about opting out at www.nysape.org.