

Lauren Miller, Parent

"The problem is not one of communication.

The majority of those that opted-out are not against standardized testing in general.

What we are against is: The content and make-up of these particular tests and the way in which the results are used.

The wording of the questions, (often awkward and strange), what the questions ask (strained comparisons between passages, details that don't seem important or relevant, etc), answer choices on math that are so similar that they really are "trick" questions, as well as a too high reading level (for both English AND Math) necessitate a massive amount of test prep. We all want a high quality education for our children. We do not believe the amount of time used prepping for these tests gives us that. This poor use of teaching time will continue until the content of the tests is changed. This does not mean we should go back to the days where everyone could get a "4". However, a meaningful, fair standardized test would only require the curriculum to be taught, with the most minimal amount of time allotted for prep. The purpose of the prep would be mostly to ensure that students had some basic familiarity with the way the test will look.

The tests are far too lengthy. 6 days of testing, for 3-5th graders seems extreme and unnecessary for the goal of determining whether our children are "college and career ready" (if you even believe a test can do that - which many of us do not.)

We do not want these tests to have such a substantial effect on our teachers' evaluation. We do not believe that test scores accurately convey the effectiveness of an individual teacher. (Please also see testimony from NYSED's Learning Summit this past spring.) The only actual effect this policy has is to increase the amount of test prep in the classroom. We do not believe using test scores to grade teachers will improve education in any meaningful way. In fact, it will likely harm education, as many experienced teachers may choose to leave the public sector, and many prospective teachers will choose not to go into public education because of the capricious way in which they will be evaluated.

We do not believe these tests benefit our children's education in any way. We cannot see what questions our children struggled with and where they did well. We believe the teachers that teach them every day know them, and know their strengths and deficits and will communicate that with us."