

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

### GET INVOLVED!

*Research the impact of the EOCs and EOGs at your school!*

- Ask students and parents what they think about the tests, whether the curriculum is engaging and challenging, and whether they think the tests do a good job of measuring what students learn.
- Ask students and parents whether it makes sense to use tests to determine grade promotion and graduation.
- Ask teachers and school administrators whether it makes sense to use tests as the sole factor for determining salary bonuses and whether they should be hired or fired.
- Ask teachers how tests affect their classrooms and how much instruction time is spent on test preparation.
- Talk to other students, parents, friends, and neighbors about what you find out.

*Speak out and demand change!*

- Talk to your principals, superintendents, School Boards, and legislators. Tell them what is happening and what kind of education you want.
- Contact **Advocates for Children's Services** of Legal Aid of North Carolina at 919-226-0052, or **Parents Supporting Parents** at 336-508-1356- we can help.

**Together we can build a movement that protects every child's right to a high-quality education!**

**We can make sure that students are taught to be thinkers, not just test-takers!**

## DEMOCRACY IN DECLINE

### HOW NORTH CAROLINA'S HIGH-STAKES EOC AND EOG TESTS HARM OUR CHILDREN AND VIOLATE THE STATE CONSTITUTION

*Does your local school spend more time preparing students for tests than preparing them to think?*

*Has your school cut back on classes like social studies, art, and music to focus more on test preparation?*

*Are the EOCs and the EOGs turning students in your community off to learning and driving them away from their education?*

All North Carolina youth have a constitutional right to a high-quality education that prepares them to be full participants in our democracy. That means learning to solve problems, communicate and collaborate effectively, and engage with the community. It means learning to be critical thinkers.

Unfortunately, students are not learning these skills because their schools have been taken over by the End of Course (EOC) and End of Grade (EOG) tests. In fact, North Carolina students may be the most heavily tested students in the country. And these test results are used to determine everything from who graduates, to teacher salaries, to which teachers and administrators get hired and fired.

The EOCs and EOGs have shifted the focus of school from great teaching and learning to test preparation. The result is a narrow, low-quality education for our children.

**North Carolina's Testing System  
Violates Students' Civil Rights!**

## HOW DO THE EOCs AND EOGs HARM YOUTH AND SCHOOLS?

### **They Lead to a Narrow and Weak Curriculum**

If it isn't on the test, it often isn't taught. And instead of learning the skills they need to become well-rounded adults, students spend their days filling in bubbles.

### **Teachers are Forced to Teach to the Test**

With so much riding on the outcome of the tests, schools often feel forced to spend their class-time preparing students to score well through rote memorization and "drill and kill" techniques.

### **They Drain the Joy Out of Teaching and Learning**

Because of the shadow these tests cast over classrooms, teachers cannot tailor their teaching to meet student needs and offer individualized instruction. This prevents students from being engaged and discovering the joy of learning. Thus, teachers are turned off from teaching and students are turned off from learning.

### **They Punish Students and Label Them as Failures**

Students are punished harshly for low scores, such as by being held back in a grade or not being allowed to graduate. Students with low tests scores are also labeled as "low-achievers" (or "Level Ones" or "Level Twos") even if they are making academic progress. This often subjects young children to shame and ridicule from peers and low expectations from schools.

### **They Make the Education System Less Fair**

While all North Carolina students and communities are harmed by the current testing system, students of color, low-income students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities are hurt the most.

### **They Have Not Improved Academic Achievement**

*Testing* academic achievement is not the same as *improving* academic achievement. In North Carolina, tests have too often been used as substitutes for meaningful education reform.

### **They Lead to an Over-Use of Suspensions and Other Harsh Disciplinary Measures**

Students who are bored and alienated by their test-focused curriculum are more likely to "act out." At the same time, teachers who are under pressure to raise test scores are more likely to remove challenging students from the classroom. As a result, the number of long-term suspensions statewide has risen a shocking 91% over the past six years.

### **They Lead to Students Dropping Out**

High-stakes tests like the EOCs and EOGs push students out of school. Not surprisingly, North Carolina has one of the lowest graduation rates in the country, an abysmal 63%. For Black, Latino, and Native American students, the situation is even worse: their graduation rates are 45%, 50%, and 44%, respectively.

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*These tests have pitted communities and schools against each other, eroding the trust that is at the very heart of god schooling.*

## ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES THAT NORTH CAROLINA COULD USE?

### **Yes There Are!**

It is important to know how well schools are educating our children, but a system based on just test scores does more harm than good. We should be judging students, teachers, and schools not just on test scores, but on a combination of factors that can tell us how well our young people are truly being educated, not just how well they fill in bubbles. Many other states do it, and it is time for North Carolina to learn from them and create a system that provides *meaningful* accountability.