

## **Rethink Reliance on High Stakes, Unproven Standardized Tests**

**We are for high academic standards and for reliable and valid measurement of teacher performance and student achievement; but state law must hold the State Education Department accountable for the credibility of its measures and methods.** We therefore urge your immediate action to:

**1) Suspend tying teacher and principal ratings to student test scores.** The Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents recently commissioned an [independent assessment of the NYS Annual Professional Performance Review](#) system which points out serious flaws with the validity of NYS tests and their ability to be used for teacher evaluations. It is counter intuitive that NYS tests are being used to evaluate teacher performance when doubts about the validity of these same tests caused a moratorium on the use of student test scores for student decisions. Further, there is a [looming teacher shortage](#) in New York State that will only be exacerbated by unfair teacher evaluation methods. State law should:

- Prohibit the State Education Department from tying New York teacher and principal evaluation ratings to student test scores until the reliability and validity of a standards-based evaluation method can be independently established.

**2) Create high quality tests that are proven to be reliable, valid and transparent before administering to students.** New York State must moderate the amount of testing and create focused, improved, flexible testing that can be used to guide teaching in schools. New laws should require:

- Independent expert review of state-contracted vendor-designed tests to certify their worth as measuring instruments before they are administered to our students. Only after this has happened should the moratorium be lifted on score usage for student decisions.
- The proposed independent reviews and the tests themselves should be made transparent and readily available to the public.
- Teachers should know what questions their students got right and wrong on the test in a timely manner, so that the tests can be used to inform teaching.
- High performing districts should be able to "place out" of testing so that precious resources can be used for the most needy schools.
- And, finally mandatory field-testing should be rejected until NY has reduced the over testing currently endured by our students, and until all the testing issues discussed above have been resolved.

Respectfully,