

<http://www.parentvoicesny.org/>

## **Parent Voices NY**

We are public school parents determined to make our voices heard in the debates around our children's education. We are a grass-roots democratic organization, committed to bringing together diverse parents, taking action together and using our power as citizens and voters to influence policy around public education.

We think the emphasis on high-stakes testing is out of control. Already our children spend too much of their education taking tests and preparing for tests. And it's getting worse. The tests are not being used for instructional purposes, as they were designed, but for evaluating teachers and schools. They are faulty measuring tools, as even their proponents admit, and the higher the stakes, the worse impact they have on our children. Studies have consistently shown that there are much better ways to do assessments and evaluations, ways that do not distort the curriculum or waste the human and financial resources of our schools. We believe education should focus on developing the imagination of a child, not on putting them through stressful and mind-numbing standardized tests, day after day.

They are planning to start **standardized testing for Kindergarten-2nd grade** by 2014 in New York State.

New legislation from Albany makes **these tests even more consequential for teachers** – driving away good teachers and destroying the quality of our children's education.

They have turned over control of our educational system to Pearson, a billion dollar company whose interest is in maximizing their profits, not educating our children.

**Big business is using public money to make a fortune on our children..** Public money pays testing companies hundreds of millions of dollars while we must cut basic services in our school.

We are here to say: ***Stop messing with our kids!***

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<http://gemnyc.org/about/>

## **Grassroots Education Movement**

The Grassroots Education Movement (GEMNYC) educates, organizes, and mobilizes educators, parents, students and communities to defend public education. Too many current corporate and government policies seek to underfund, undermine and privatize our public school system. GEM advocates around issues dealing with the equality and quality of public educational services as well as the rights of teachers and school workers. These issues include the incessant push for charter schools, the attack on union rights, the focus on high-stakes standardized testing, school closures, and the failure to address the racism and inequality that exists within our schools. As the attacks on public education and teachers grow more vicious, the collective organization of those who directly

face these attacks at the grassroots level becomes all the more essential, and in fact constitutes the most effective potential resistance. GEM advocates for a positive vision of education reform by building alliances with other activist groups and organizing and helping coordinate the struggle at the grassroots school and community level, with a focus on school-level organizing.

Our vision of a fully funded, democratic, public education system that is accountable to the public it is intended to serve includes the following real reforms:

Reform #1: Smaller Class Sizes

Reform #2: Excellent Community Public Schools for ALL Children

Reform #3: More Teaching – Less Testing

Reform #4: Parent and Teacher Empowerment and Leadership

Reform #5: Equitable Funding for ALL Schools

Reform #6: Anti-Racist Education Policies

Reform #7: Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Real Reform #8: Expand Pre Kindergarten and Early Intervention Programs

Real Reform #9: Qualified and Experienced Educators and Educational Leaders

Real Reform #10: Democratic and Social Justice Unionism

We hold general meetings/educational events once a month. As attacks on teachers and public workers are ricocheting all over the country, it is increasingly important for all of us to join forces and fight back. We are evolving and we invite you to participate in our growth. Please read out [points of unity](#) and join us for our next meeting.

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<http://www.fairtest.org>

## **FairTest**

**The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest)** advances quality education and equal opportunity by promoting fair, open, valid and educationally beneficial evaluations of students, teachers and schools. FairTest also works to end the misuses and flaws of testing practices that impede those goals.

We place special emphasis on eliminating the racial, class, gender, and cultural barriers to equal opportunity posed by standardized tests, and preventing their damage to the quality of education. Based on [Goals and Principles](#), we provide information, technical assistance and advocacy on a broad range of testing concerns, focusing on three areas: [K-12](#), [university admissions](#), and [employment tests](#). FairTest publishes a regular electronic newsletter, [The Examiner](#), plus a full catalog of materials on both K- 12 and university testing to aid teachers, administrators, students, parents and researchers. FairTest also has numerous [fact sheets](#) available to educate you on standardized testing and alternative assessment.

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<http://www.aqeny.org/#>

## **Alliance for Quality Education**

Founded only in 2000, the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) has quickly become New York state's lead community-based organization in the fight for high quality public education. A statewide non-profit, AQE unites a coalition of parents, children's advocates, schools, teachers, clergy, and others.

AQE believes it will take fair funding and smarter spending to support better schools and give every child in New York State a quality education from pre-K to high school graduation. Truly statewide, AQE has active community-based education coalitions in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, the Capital District (Albany), New York City and Long Island.

Working with all stakeholders, but emphasizing the involvement of parents and youth, AQE combines leadership development, community organizing, electronic activism, extensive media relations, policy work, and lobbying within a cohesive campaign for fundamental education reform. This recipe has successfully made adequate funding to create quality schools for every child a high profile issue throughout the state.

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<http://timeoutfromtesting.org/>

## **Time Out from Testing NY**

Time Out From Testing is a statewide coalition of parent, educator, business, community, and civil rights organizations in New York State committed to a "time-out" from excessive and high stakes exams. We call for a comprehensive review of the Regents exams and state-initiated standardized tests and the impact they have had on our children, our schools, and our communities.

Other means of evaluating student performance:

Using assessment methods developed from those first pioneered by [Deborah Meier](#) and her colleagues at the Central Park East Secondary School in the 1970s. These days, each consortium student must complete "an analytic literary essay, a social studies research paper, an original science experiment, and the application of higher-level mathematics," Foote said.

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<http://changethestakes.wordpress.com/about/>

## **Change the Stakes**

What we believe:

New York's high-stakes testing policy is damaging children, teachers, and schools. Policymakers are destructively using unreliable standardized state test scores to rank and label our children as 1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s, deny them promotion and graduation, fire teachers and principals, and grade and close schools.

A relentless focus on "THE TEST" distorts classroom curriculum and denies students the opportunity to engage in the deep, rich learning experiences that foster an ability to think critically across a full curriculum, explore new and exciting ideas and develop high-level skills needed for future success. Instead, our children engage in mind-numbing test preparation, answering superficial multiple choice questions and writing formulaic essays day-in and day-out.

When a standardized test score is used to brand a student, a teacher, a principal, or a school as either a success or a failure, with high-stakes consequences, that single snapshot bears an unwarranted amount of power. As a result, our children are no longer taught to think; they are taught to take standardized tests because so much is riding on the test results. Furthermore, standardized tests have been shown to be both racially and class biased, with scores reflective of a student's socioeconomic status rather than actual achievement.

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