



ASCD®
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REDUCE THE RELIANCE ON STANDARDIZED TESTING

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA: The existing state testing requirements are woefully inadequate to determine whether students possess the knowledge, skills, and traits needed for school and career success. State test scores provide an incomplete appraisal of student achievement and by themselves often offer a misleading depiction of student performance and school quality. Standardized tests alone should never be used for high-stakes purposes, and neither students nor educators nor schools should be ranked or rated based on test scores.

KEY POINTS

PROMOTE assessment systems that recognize the limitations of using test results to determine overall student performance.

- Assessment systems must recognize that there are a multitude of additional factors that influence student learning, such as socioeconomics; family influences; educator experience and effectiveness; and the mental and physical health of the student.
- Results from state-required standardized tests do not provide educators with the information they need to effectively differentiate and personalize student instruction.

ENSURE that measures of school performance take into account a variety of factors.

- Defining a high-quality school is a complex process that is dependent on a wide array of indicators, only one of which is student performance on state tests.
- States and districts should develop, identify, and hold schools accountable for other indicators such as school culture and climate; educator effectiveness; access to challenging education experiences; staff satisfaction; and parental and community engagement.

REDUCE the overreliance on standardized tests, which leads to a narrowing of the curriculum.

- The narrow, regimented approach to accountability under NCLB has led to an increased focus of time and resources on instruction and test preparation in English language arts and math and a reduced focus on foreign languages; physical education; art and music; and civics and history, all of which are important in preparing students for life beyond high school.

ENSURE standardized test results are used appropriately.

- Standardized tests help to provide a snapshot of student performance and results should continue to be disaggregated and reported publicly. However, they should not be the sole measure of a student's overall academic growth, the quality of a school, or the effectiveness of an educator in the classroom.
- Results from such tests alone should not be used for high-stakes purposes, such as student promotion, personnel decisions, or school closings, and no one test should be used for all three purposes.