



TESTING TIME



The amount of time students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests has garnered both surging interest and growing pushback from parents, educators, and policymakers. We've compiled the latest data from the most recent assessment surveys and studies for a better understanding of how many tests students take, who requires the tests, and what purposes the tests serve.

The Scope of Testing



17 federally mandated tests

No Child Left Behind requires **17 tests** for accountability purposes over the course of a student's K-12 career. This does not include tests for special populations of students or practice assessments that many states and districts require in addition to the federally mandated tests.



Students take mandated state and district standardized tests an average of once per month, accounting for approximately **1.6 percent of instructional time per year**, according to a Center for American Progress (CAP) study of 14 urban and suburban school districts.¹



Students take an average of **113 standardized tests between prekindergarten and 12th grade**, according to a survey of large school districts conducted by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Council of Great City Schools.²



Eleventh grade students undergo the most testing, with one surveyed district reporting that its students spend up to **27 days of the year taking tests**.²

Reasons for Testing

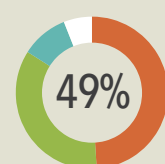
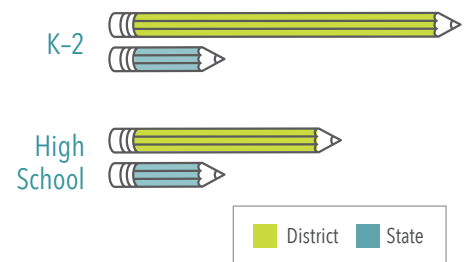
The survey of large districts shows at least **23 distinct purposes for tests**.²

- ✓ state and federal accountability
- ✓ grade promotions
- ✓ English proficiency
- ✓ program evaluation
- ✓ teacher evaluation
- ✓ diagnostics
- ✓ end-of-year predictions
- ✓ fulfilling the requirements of specific grants

On average, districts require more tests than states, according to the CAP study.

Districts often mandate benchmark exams to improve teachers' instructional practice and monitor student academic achievement prior to state assessments.¹

K-2 students take three times more district exams than state exams, and high school students take twice as many district exams as state exams.¹



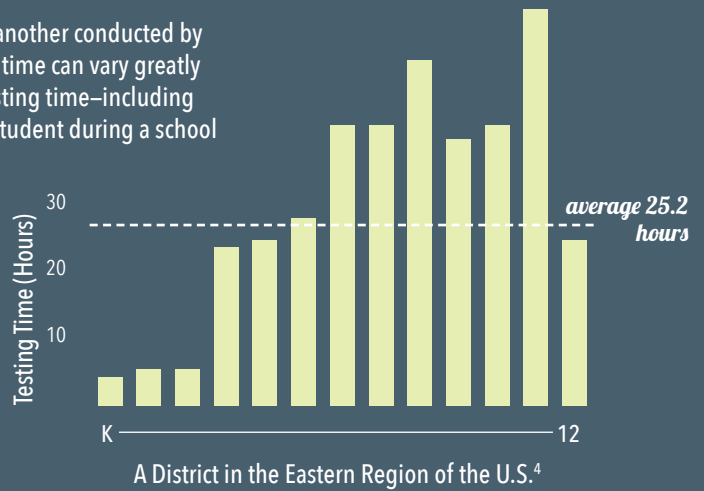
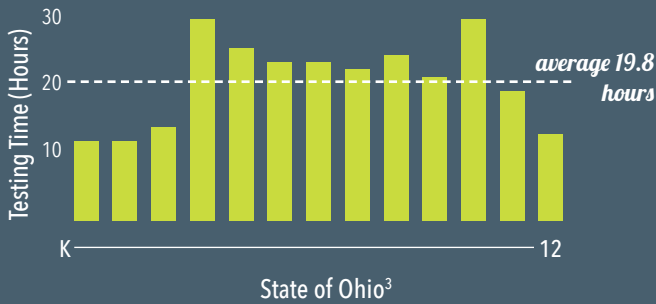
Too much testing?

49 percent of U.S. parents think their children take too many standardized tests.¹

- Too Much
- Right Number
- Too Few
- Don't Know

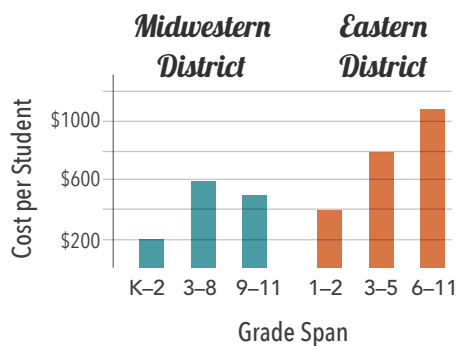
Testing Time Profiles

Two studies—one conducted by the Ohio Department of Education, and another conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)—indicate that average testing time can vary greatly depending upon where a student lives. Both studies examined total testing time—including tests mandated at the district, state, and federal levels—for the average student during a school year.



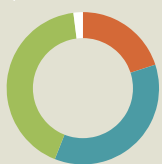
Testing Costs

An AFT report profiled two U.S. school districts to examine the annual cost of standardized assessments per pupil, including the cost of lost instructional time.⁴



Consortia Costs

Two multistate consortia—The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)—are each developing a set of assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards. **The PARCC assessment will cost \$29.50 per student—less than the current rate paid by roughly half of the consortium’s states for state assessments. The SBAC cost estimate is \$27.30 per student, less than the current rate paid by two-thirds of the consortium’s states.**

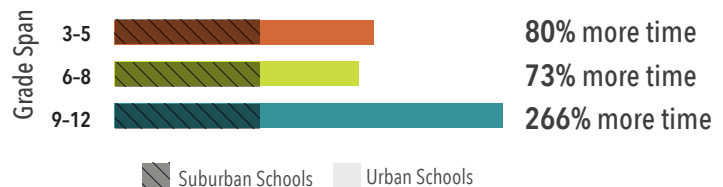


According to an *Education Week* analysis, 10 states will use the PARCC assessment during the 2014–15 school year, 18 will use the SBAC test, 21 will use other vendors’ tests, and 1 state remains undecided.⁵

■ PARCC
 ■ SBAC
 ■ Other
 ■ Undecided

Testing Inequalities

Urban students spend more time taking district-mandated exams than their suburban peers, according to a study of 14 urban and suburban districts.¹



SOURCES

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