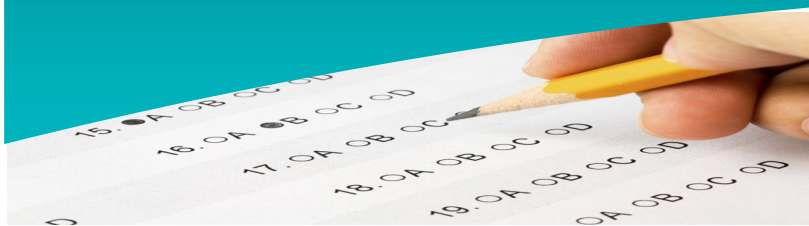


# What's the IDEA?

A publication of the Georgia Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education



## Putting Multicultural Education To the Test

Today in education, we are experiencing many tests—one of which is a large test of will. Will teachers make it through the din of negativity that pervades their profession? Will students be able to recover from policies and practices that constrain their learning potential and dehumanize their sense of being? Will education reformers reexamine the assumption that standardized learning and assessments are synonymous with standards, high expectations, and student achievement?

The seemingly enduring quest for standardization and the influx of untenable accountability measures (See Teacher Evaluation Concerns, p.5) has put Multicultural Education to the test. This is to be expected, but not accepted. Multicultural educators have a history of challenging standardized tests as the only indicator of student (and teacher/leader) success. It is not acceptable that standardized testing consumes so much of teachers', students', and administrators' time and energy at the expense of other learning opportunities.

Although testing has its uses, the issue is whether or not educators have the resolve to provide authentic learning assessments. Multicultural educators must test their will to ensure that students' build skills for maintaining a thriving viable democracy such as discerning information, understanding multiple points of view, and presenting, testing and contesting ideas. However, given the prevailing discourse these days, such hallmarks of democracy appear to be in question. So we are left to consider if in this high stakes environment, whether multicultural educators will be able to withstand the test of current education reforms? Will they be able to craft lessons for students to test the accuracy of information, test prevailing notions of "common sense," and test their abilities to have informed thoughts of their own about various topics? Such learning is not always quantifiable yet it is no less valuable. As Albert Einstein has been quoted as saying, "everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." Regardless, we need to be able to count on educators to have the will and support to do our students justice.

### Inside this issue:

A Letter from the President	2
Community Focus: MAPS	3
Georgia Educator Spotlight	4
Concerns regarding Teacher/Leader Evaluation System: The GREATER Effort	5
News Watch: The Testing Industrial Complex	6
Testing 101: A Teachers' Guide to Understanding the Test Development Process	9
English Language Learners and NCLB	10
Advocacy for the End of Early Grades Testing	11
Book Review	13
Students' Opinions on Taking a Test	14
Resources	15
Past Highlights/Upcoming Events	16
Submission Guidelines	20

GA NAME seeks to Inform, Dialog, Engage, and Advocate for a critical education for all.  
To learn more about GA NAME, go to [www.ganame.org](http://www.ganame.org) or email [www.ganame2010@gmail.com](mailto:www.ganame2010@gmail.com).

# A Letter from the President

Dear Educators,

I was in second grade. I remember the question: How many moons does the earth have? The question was followed by a series of choices: (a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 5 (e) none of the above. I had to choose the correct answer among the given options. I knew the answer to the question but one letter in the question confused me. It was the “s” on moon. The Earth only has one moon (to date) so why was I being asked how many *moons* when the plural, in my mind, assumed it had more than one. I “reasoned” that (d) was too far from the truth as I knew it and so I convinced myself that the desired answer must be (c) even though I was sure it was (b). And that, I believe, was the beginning of my unsuccessful record with taking such types of tests. (Come to think of it, that test question might also have been a reason why I double majored in English and Astronomy, but I’ll leave further contemplation on that for another time.) My point in sharing this experience is to dialog a bit with you about (standardized) testing and high stakes education.

The rise in use of standardized tests as the primary marker of success (or failure) of a student’s overall potential is disheartening. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and merit pay systems are part of the trend to use standardized tests as benchmarks for student and teacher success. It certainly is easier to administer and calculate than other forms of evaluation and assessment; and its rise in prominence to a level of “high stakes” has been viewed as problematic. It has also been viewed as necessary to improve the quality of public education and students’ basic skills and knowledge base. The debates pro and con for standardized tests are copious (a good SAT\* word), in the meantime, let’s consider what is really at stake and why so high?

“High stakes,” usually a term reserved for places like Las Vegas casinos, has found its way into the education lexicon (another good SAT word). Perhaps “high stakes” is appropriate given the gamble involved in receiving a high quality education and the odds against such an occurrence for certain students. On the other hand, it is clear that communities place a high value on a quality education because they know what is at stake without one. Fortunately, my standardized test-taking performances were not the only indicator of my potential (as a learner) that my parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, and employers have had to base my value and capacity for success. Others have not been so fortunate and our level of expectation, overall, seems low. I think of this every time I hear the phrase “statically improbable” to describe student academic gains that appear to exceed a level of likelihood. Perhaps such gains are improbable but we must also remember that we set the expectation of likelihood.

When it comes to high educational expectations, I recall hearing teacher, scholar, and advocate Dr. Asa Hilliard III say that “our ceiling is where our floor ought to be” especially for those students who have been systematically marginalized and disenfranchised. Right now our ceiling is falling in on us and the floor on which we stand is shaky. Now what? Where are you going to place your bet? Is it worth the gamble? The consequences are high and we all have a stake in the outcomes.

*Vera Stenhouse*

\*The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is given in high school and test-takers receive a verbal and mathematics aptitude score that is used as a criterion for college admittance.

# Community Focus



## About Us

**Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS)** are a network of progressive public school employees, parents, students and allies who believe that public education should be democratic, well-funded, and community-supported. We are opposed to the privatization of public education that is occurring at a rampant rate in the United States today. We use a list serve and website to keep ourselves updated on current issues in public education.

We meet with others in a safe space for discussion of topics such as: contracts under question, the lack of democracy in decision making in the education system, budget cuts, increases in class size, furloughing and reductions in force. We are a resource space for people interested in bringing more unity and action to the struggle to save public education.

## Events and Opportunities

**MAPS INQUIRY TO ACTION GROUPS (ItAGs)** . A study group with the added goal of developing and implementing one or more actions reflecting what the participants have learned on a topic consistent with MAPS Guiding Principles. Recently a Social Justice in the Classroom ItAG completed a *Social Justice in the Classroom Resource* Booklet that can be downloaded for free from our Website.

MAPS also hosts **FILM SHOWINGS AND DISCUSSION** (See "The Inconvenient Truth behind Waiting for Superman" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUgrpjMjsyY> ); **WORKSHOPS** focused on helping teachers relate their classroom activities to the circumstances and concerns of their students' communities; and **PRESENTATIONS** on Teacher's Rights led by education lawyer, Borquaye Thomas. See Website for upcoming events.

## Contact Information

**Website:** <https://sites.google.com/site/metroatlantansforpublicschools/>

**Article discussion blog:** <http://metroatlantansforpublicschools.blogspot.com/>

Find us on **facebook:** [Atlanta Schools](http://www.facebook.com/maps.atlanta)  
<http://www.facebook.com/maps.atlanta>

**Email** MAPS for more information and/or to be added to our announcement list: [mapsgeorgiaeducation@gmail.com](mailto:mapsgeorgiaeducation@gmail.com)

**MAPS Resources:** <http://maps.school.wikispaces.com/>

## We Stand For:

1. **Community controlled public schools with collaborative decision-making** rather than schools implementing a top-down corporate model that serves the interests of private business. We define community as school employees, parents, students, administrators, and others who support public education;
2. **Education that treats each child as a human being** and not a standardized test score;
3. **The human right to a quality education** that is accessible to all students, including those who are undocumented. We believe it is the government's obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill our human rights;
4. **Hate-free public schools** which reject bullying and various forms of racist, sexist, homophobic, and other types of discrimination;
5. **Fully funded public schools** which truly leave no child behind rather than our underfunded and understaffed schools which all too often fail to address the needs of children of color, impoverished students, English Language Learners, and those who are facing various physical, mental, and emotional challenges which may result in their being pushed out of our schools and into the juvenile justice system;
6. **Equitable distribution of all funds for education** that do not force states and districts to compete for funds such as Race to the Top;
7. **Development of innovative public schools** instead of further expansion of the charter school movement that too often allows private interests to control public schools with little community oversight;
8. **Evaluation and training that support the professional development of all teachers**, as opposed to compensatory and certification systems based on unreliable test scores, such as pay for performance;
9. **The right of all public employees to organize, bargain collectively, and obtain due process;** and
10. **An end to privatization** that transfers our public wealth into private hands and the current dismantling of our entire public sector.

# Doing The Work: Georgia Educator Spotlight

## Jen Sauer, Druid Hills Middle School

### Jen Sauer

#### Druid Hills Middle School/ Co-founder of MAPS

Ms. Jen Sauer studied education and Women's Studies at the University of Memphis and, later, science education at Georgia State University. She has taught English to students ages 2-50 in Japan; middle school math, science, and social studies; and in out-of-school settings like an outdoor center, science museums, and a botanical garden.

#### What made you want to be a teacher?

It was the many bad experiences I had as a student from middle school on that made me want to teach. I thought I could do a better job, which sounds arrogant, but I thought I could at least try to make school interesting, relevant, and have students join the discussion, as opposed to just listening to my lectures. I just felt so disengaged as a student and I wondered why it took college for me to finally take a science course where we went outdoors and actually saw what we were studying! I remember my 11th grade high school science teacher yelling at me for reading a college level book, he said, "School is not for reading, put your book away!" I didn't want to be that kind of teacher.

I also met some really wonderful people in college who were thinking about learning as liberation like I was and we used to get together and discuss what learning would look like if it could be free

of coercion and truly democratic.

#### What is your favorite thing about teaching science?

I like the hands-on nature of science and that it naturally invites students in to question and investigate a topic or experiment. I am not a scientist,



but I love to learn about why or how something works or lives or changes. Our world is such an exciting place, how could anyone be bored! Science can allow a student to be a child again and let their natural curiosity lead them to a deeper under-

standing of their world. Science is also deeply political and it can lead students to great discussion and action, like why do I have to breathe in the toxic fumes from cars when I breathe in twice as much as adults and asthma is on the rise!?

#### How did you get involved with teacher activism? Why is it important to you? How did MAPS come about?

I had been involved in activism before, like anti-war and poverty issues, so it seemed natural to look at where I teach and who I teach and ask myself why it is that every year the higher level students are whiter and richer than my "general" classes? The very nature of public education from the county to the local school is very anti-democratic. I think and MAPS believes that if we had

more democracy in decision-making then things could be better in our public schools. Those who are directly affected by teaching and learning should be the ones directly involved in making decisions in how schools are run and who gets the resources.

MAPS came about 4 years ago when the three original members of MAPS met at a charter school workshop at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta. We were looking for teachers like ourselves who thought that teachers should be at the table when all these crazy decisions like privatization of our public schools and defunding our schools are made. We were/are analyzing the bigger picture of what ultimately affects us in the classroom. MAPS really helped me see that public education is one of the biggest civil rights issue of our time as most of our kids have no choice but to be in these defunded schools. MAPS has helped me stay strong in my will to do justice to my students in teaching and keep trying to find ways to get all my students to learn.

"Even though public education looks bleak, we don't, can't give up. It takes all of us—the teacher, parent, student, staff, administrators, community—we all need to be working for a more fair and just public education system."  
~Jen Sauer





## GREATER

## Georgia Researchers, Educators, and Advocates for Teacher Evaluation Reform

In June 2012, a consortium of researchers from multiple universities in Georgia, *Georgia Researchers Educators, and Advocates for Teacher Evaluation Reform (GREATER)* consortium, signed an open letter of concern regarding GA's new teacher evaluation system, *Teacher/Leader Keys*, to Governor Nathan Deal, State Superintendent John Barge, and other key educational decision-makers in the state.

The GREATER consortium concludes that hurried implementation of teacher evaluation using student value-added growth (standardized test score) models will result in inaccurate assessments of our teachers, a demoralized profession, decreased learning, and harm to the children in our care. Further, it is fiscally irresponsible with our state's increasingly limited resources to widely implement a program that has not yet been thoroughly piloted or fully strategized. GREATER put forth 4 main concerns and 3 recommendations:



**Concern #1: Validity** – Educational researchers strongly caution against teacher evaluation approaches that use Value-added Models (VAMs).

**Concern #2: Feasibility** – The evaluation model is not the most responsible use of state funds and human resources.

**Concern #3: Unintended consequences** -- Students and teachers will be adversely affected by the heavy focus on test scores.

**Concern #4: Timing** -- Georgia is not ready to implement the proposed teacher/leader evaluation model.

### Recommendations

(1) "opt out" of Race to the Top (RT3) as have other states, or at a minimum GREATER encourages: (2) further piloting and evaluating of the new system before large-scale implementation\* and (3) drastically reducing (or eliminating) the percentage of student growth as a measure of teacher or leader effectiveness.

GREATER states that The Teacher and Leader Keys evaluation systems are *not* the key to lasting school improvement in Georgia. Research clearly shows that an overemphasis on test scores will *not* result in increased learning, increased well-being, or greater success.

A copy of the letter, including endnotes and research supporting GREATER's concerns and recommendations about pending implementation of the new teacher/leader evaluation system, can be found at <http://greater2012.blogspot.com/>

\* The Atlanta Journal Constitution (9/3/12 p. A10) reported that state officials were still waiting a final report on the pilot results, nevertheless, they are moving forward with an expanded pilot roll out of the evaluation system affecting 50,000 teachers in 50 school districts. Also, because of RT3 and agreeing to the federal NCLB waiver, the state must require all 180 local districts to use the new system.

### GREATER by the numbers

40: The total number of professors currently signed  
33: Number of additional signers representing concerned citizens, educators, professors, student candidates, parents  
3, 269: Number of views on the Blog, <http://greater2012.blogspot.com/>

### GREATER in the news

Georgia Needs GREATER Education Reform (GREATER Letters) EmpowerED Georgia <http://www.empoweredga.org/Articles/greater-support.html>

Georgia Needs GREATER Education Reform (GREATER OpEd) EmpowerED Georgia <http://www.empoweredga.org/Articles/GREATER/greater-reform.html>

GREATER's Open Letter on Teacher Evaluation in Georgia! (7/4/2012) (Kevin Kumashiro) NAME-MCE Digest Volume 1910, Issue 2 (NAME List Serv)

Georgia Department of Education Says Evaluation Plan Won't Work But Will Implement it Anyway?

By Jack Hassard | July 8, 2012 The Art of Teaching Science <http://www.artofteachingscience.org/2012/07/08/georgia-department-education-evaluation-plan-work/>

### Professors blast teacher evaluation system

by Valerie Strauss Washington Post (7/10/12) [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/georgia-professors-blast-teacher-evaluation-system/2012/07/09/gJQAFhSbZW\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/georgia-professors-blast-teacher-evaluation-system/2012/07/09/gJQAFhSbZW_blog.html)

Georgia Department of Education Says Evaluation Plan Won't Work But Will Implement it Anyway by Jack Hassard (7/8/12)

[http://susanohanian.org/outrage\\_fetch.php?id=1366](http://susanohanian.org/outrage_fetch.php?id=1366)

Georgia Department of Education Says Evaluation Plan Won't Work But Will Implement it Anyway?

By Jack Hassard July 9, 2012 National Education Policy Center (NEPC) <http://nepc.colorado.edu/blog/georgia-department-education-says-evaluation-plan-won%E2%80%99t-work-will-implement-it-anyway>

Education group: Let the feds take back Georgia's Race to the Top millions 1:02 pm July 13, 2012, by Maureen Downey (The Atlanta Journal Constitution blog).

[http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2012/07/13/education-group-let-the-feds-take-back-georgias-race-to-the-top-millions/?cxntfid=blogs\\_get\\_schooled\\_blog](http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2012/07/13/education-group-let-the-feds-take-back-georgias-race-to-the-top-millions/?cxntfid=blogs_get_schooled_blog)

Georgia's GREATER efforts followed researchers and educators in Chicago, IL and New York State where similar evaluation methods are being implemented. In Georgia, local teachers have been putting forth their own efforts and demands. Chamblee Charter High School teachers in DeKalb County wrote to Superintendent John Barge regarding the Student Learning Objective (SLOs) aspect of the Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems and their concerns. Go to: <http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2012/09/26/the-more-time-spent-by-teachers-on-measuring-their-own-effectiveness-the-less-effective-the-teachers-become/>

Also, Mr. Felts from Riverdale has launched a petition: Georgia Department of Education: Withdraw the Teacher Keys Evaluation System. Go to: [http://www.change.org/petitions/georgia-department-of-education-withdraw-the-teacher-keys-evaluation-system?utm\\_source=supporter\\_message&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.change.org/petitions/georgia-department-of-education-withdraw-the-teacher-keys-evaluation-system?utm_source=supporter_message&utm_medium=email)

# News Watch

## The Testing Industrial Complex by Mari Roberts



While reading a recent article about the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and marveling at the ramifications and effects of its carefully constructed system of chattel slavery, its similarity to the experiences that students are currently having in US public schools suddenly struck me. The hard truth is, that in a neo-liberal, market-driven framework disturbingly parallel to the PIC, the oppressive, overuse of high-stakes standardized testing has virtually imprisoned students, teachers, and school curriculum. Thus, feeding the PIC through the equally greedy machinations of what I call the *Testing Industrial Complex* (TIC).

The similarities found between the structure, outcomes, and intentions of the PIC and the analogous TIC; are disturbing at the least and Machiavellian at worst. So which you may ask, is the more appropriate description of our U.S. TIC - disturbing or actually Machiavellian? The information that follows will briefly outline the similarities between the two and, if you find yourself as disturbed as I am by the similarities, there are also resources to promote change.

The PIC	The TIC
<b>Definition</b> <p>The U.S. Prison Industrial Complex is "a set of bureaucratic, political, economic, and [racialized] interests that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need. [...] It is a confluence of special interests that has given prison construction in the United States a seemingly unstoppable momentum" (Eric Schlosser in "The Prison-Industrial Complex" <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>, December 1998).</p>	<b>Definition</b> <p>The U.S. Testing Industrial Complex is a set of bureaucratic, political, economic and racialized interests that encourage increased spending and focus on testing, regardless of the actual need or benefit to student achievement. It is a confluence of special interests that has given test construction and test preparation in the United States a seemingly unstoppable momentum.</p>
<b>Other PIC Facts</b> <p>The United States incarcerates a greater share of its population, 737 per 100,000 residents, than any other country on the planet.</p> <p>"Since 1991 the rate of violent crime in the United States has fallen by about 20 percent, while the number of people in prison or jail has risen by 50 percent" (Schlosser, 1998).</p> <p>South Africa under Apartheid was internationally condemned as a racist society.</p> <p>*South Africa under apartheid (1993), Black males in prison: <b>851 per 100,000</b></p> <p>*U.S. under George Bush (2006), Black males in prison: <b>4,789 per 100,000</b></p>	<b>Other TIC Facts</b> <p>Since the advent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the rate of standardized testing in U.S. public schools has increased dramatically.</p> <p>A national 2007 study by the Center on Education Policy reported that since 2001, 44% of school districts had reduced the time spent on science, social studies and the arts by an average of 145 minutes per week in order to focus on reading and math. A 2007 survey of 1,250 civics, government, and social studies teachers showed that 75% of those teaching current events less often cited standardized tests as the reason.</p> <p>Under NCLB, every US public school student must be tested annually in grades three through eight and at least once in high school in both reading and math. Many High schools have also instituted annual EOCT (end of course tests) and graduation tests to ensure their students are familiar with standardized testing methodology.</p>
<b>Who Benefits from the PIC?</b> <p>The rapidly growing industry of private prison companies.</p> <p>Rural areas where the construction of prisons fuels economies and provides employment.</p> <p>Politicians who instill fear of crime in voters to get elected on platforms that promise greater crack-downs on crime.</p>	<b>Who Benefits from the TIC?</b> <p>A rapidly growing industry of private standardized testing companies.</p> <p>Large publishing and "tutoring" companies where the construction of tests has fueled economies and provided employment.</p> <p>Politicians who instill the fear of "failing schools" in voters to get elected on platforms that promise greater crackdowns on "unionized teachers with tenure".</p>

# News Watch

## The Testing Industrial Complex by Mari Roberts

The PIC	The TIC
<p><b>At Whose Expense?</b></p> <p>"Although the prevalence of illegal drug use among white men is approximately the same as that among black men, black men are five times as likely to be arrested for a drug offense. As a result, about half the inmates in the United States are African-American. One out of every fourteen black men is now in prison or jail" (Schlosser, 1998).</p> <p>*U.S. incarceration rates by race, June 30, 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <b>Whites:</b> 409 per 100,000</li> <li>o <b>Latinos:</b> 1,038 per 100,000</li> <li>o <b>Blacks:</b> 2,468 per 100,000</li> </ul> <p>"About 70 percent of prison inmates in the United States are illiterate. Perhaps 200,000 of the country's inmates suffer from a serious mental illness" (Schlosser, 1998).</p>	<p><b>At Whose Expense?</b></p> <p>In addition to direct individual harm, high-stakes testing is far more likely to lower the quality of curriculum, instruction, and school climate in schools serving low-income children and children of color.</p> <p>Plunging SAT results show that NCLB and state high-stakes testing programs are undermining school quality, even when measured by other standardized exams.</p> <p>Since NCLB, SAT test score gaps between Whites, Asians, and historically disadvantaged African-Americans and Hispanics have been growing larger. ACT scores have demonstrated similar patterns; thus, narrowing the possibility of college admission for underserved populations.</p> <p>High stakes testing causes additional damage to the many students of color who are English language learners (ELLs). The tests are often inaccurate and inappropriate measures of the knowledge of ELLs, leading to misplacement or retention.</p>
<p><b>Consequences and Repercussions</b></p> <p>After exposure to the PIC, inmates, regardless of prior guilt, often replicate the very behaviors and mind-sets that will keep them imprisoned.</p> <p>62% of parents in state prisons and 84% of parents in federal prisons are held over 100 miles from their last residence, and consequently, their children. In federal prisons, about 43% of parents are held over 500 miles from their last residence.</p> <p>African American children (7.0%) were nearly nine times more likely to have an incarcerated parent in prison than white children (0.8%).</p> <p>Similarly Latino children (2.6%) were three times as likely as white children to have a parent in prison. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, Incarcerated Parents and Their Children Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, August, 2000).</p> <p>Due to felony convictions, one in 10 African American men have lost their right to vote. Thomas, "Study Suggests Black Male Prison Rate Impinges on Political Process," <i>The Washington Post</i>, January 30, 1997).</p>	<p><b>Consequences and Repercussions</b></p> <p>TIC inmates, such as principals, try to address punitive sanctions handed down by politicians, pundits, and upper-level school administration through imposing similar sanctions on teachers who, in turn, respond, through pedagogical apathy or falsification of student records.</p> <p>"The scandals in Atlanta, Baltimore, Washington DC, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and many other jurisdictions are just a start. Across the nation, activities that boost scores without improving learning, including narrow teaching to the test and pushing out low-scoring students, are spreading rapidly. Widespread corruption that undermines educational quality is an inevitable consequence of the overuse and misuse of high-stakes testing" (Fairtest.org).</p> <p>Other inmates, students, fall along the wayside by dropping out, being pushed out, or failing out of school.</p> <p>The effects of dropping out of school in an America where demand for low-skill workers is waning can be dire. On any given day, about one in every 10 young male high school dropouts is in jail or juvenile detention, compared with one in 35 young male high school graduates. [<b>Thus, feeding the PIC with inmates from the TIC</b>] (Dillion. <i>New York Times</i>, October 8, 2009).</p>

# News Watch

## The Testing Industrial Complex by Mari Roberts

The PIC	The TIC
<p><b>Or, you can make some international comparisons:</b></p> <p>The U.S. has, 2.3 million criminals behind bars, more than any other nation, according to data maintained by the International Center for Prison Studies at King's College London. Many insist that this methodology results in lower crime rates. However, the U.S. has higher levels of violent crime than many economically-privileged nations and Canada, whose incarceration rate has grown much more slowly, has a crime rate similar to that of the U.S. (<i>New York Times</i>, April 23, 2008).</p>	<p><b>Or, you can make some international comparisons:</b></p> <p>The U.S. insists on the idea, practiced by no other economically-privileged nation, that annual standardized testing of each child will lead to good education. Nations that perform better on multiple indicators of educational quality (For example Finland) test much less and have fewer stakes attached to the testing.</p> <p>Standardized testing has not improved student achievement. After NCLB passed in 2002, the US slipped from 18th in the world in math on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to 31st place in 2009, with a similar drop in science and no change in reading.</p>
<p><b>So, what's the take away here?</b></p> <p><i>Prisons and the fear of crime are becoming some of America's biggest growth industries.</i></p>	<p><b>So, what's the take away here?</b></p> <p><i>Standardized testing and ancillary testing support <u>are</u> some of America's biggest growth industries.</i></p>
<p><b>To Become More Informed about the Prison Industrial Complex and How to Act Against It See:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schlosser's article in <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>:</li> <li><a href="http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1998/12/the-prison-industrial-complex/4669/">http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1998/12/the-prison-industrial-complex/4669/</a></li> <li><a href="http://www.criticalresistance.org">www.criticalresistance.org</a></li> <li><a href="http://www.prisonsucks.com/">http://www.prisonsucks.com/</a></li> <li>*Statistics as of June 30, 2006 from Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2006, Table 14. The "rates by race" statistics are calculated from the component parts of Table 14. South Africa figures from Marc Mauer, <i>Americans Behind Bars: The International Use of Incarceration</i>. All references to Blacks and Whites are for what the Bureau of Justice Statistics and U.S. Census refer to as "non-Hispanic Blacks" and "non-Hispanic Whites".)</li> <li><a href="http://www.prisonpolicy.org/factsheets.html#Families">http://www.prisonpolicy.org/factsheets.html#Families</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>To Become More Informed about the Testing Industrial Complex and How to Act Against It:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Fair Test Fact Sheet – <b><i>What's Wrong With Standardized Tests</i></b> and many other testing Facts at The <b>National Center for Fair &amp; Open Testing</b> <a href="http://www.fairtest.org">www.fairtest.org</a></li> <li>Read Deborah Meier and George Wood (2004). <b><i>Many Children Left Behind: How the No Child Left Behind Act is Damaging Our Children and Our Schools</i></b>.</li> <li>View the <b>Save Our Schools</b> Website - A national movement of teachers and parents to end punitive educational policies across the US. <a href="http://www.saveourschools.org/march.org/">http://www.saveourschools.org/march.org/</a></li> <li>Visit <b>Opt Out of the State Test</b> - A national parent's movement to end high-stakes testing. <a href="http://optoutofstandardizedtests.wikispaces.com">http://optoutofstandardizedtests.wikispaces.com</a></li> <li>See Op cit. FairTest. (2010). <b>"How Testing Feeds the School to Prison Pipeline."</b> <a href="http://www.fairtest.org/how-testing-feeds-school-to-prison-pipeline">http://www.fairtest.org/how-testing-feeds-school-to-prison-pipeline</a>.</li> </ul>



## Testing 101: A Teachers Guide to Understanding the Test Development Process by Aminah Perkins

Accountability has quickly developed into the cornerstone of U. S. education. Somehow testing has become the answer to the question: How can accountability be determined in our schools? As educators, it is our responsibility to understand the purpose of the tests our students take, how these tests are created, and how the results of these tests should and should not be used.

Those who study educational measurement will usually tell you that the primary purpose of testing is to improve student learning. However, here are other reasons for tests we are familiar with:

- ◆ To measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in the Georgia Performance Standards. (Georgia CRCT);
- ◆ To find patterns and trends in student learning within and across states.(NAEP); and
- ◆ To assess academic readiness for college. (SAT)

Determining the purpose of the assessment is the first of many steps that are taken during the test development process.

### The Test Development Process in a Nutshell

Once the purpose of the test is defined, a table of specifications is outlined to show the connection between the test content and classroom objectives. This process typically involves an expert panel of individuals with intense content knowledge often times including teachers. Next, test questions are written by these individuals. Remember that these questions will represent only a sample from all the knowledge the student has acquired. After questions are developed they are reviewed by a panel

of judges who assess the questions for their adherence to the content and purpose of the assessment. Reviewers also assess the test for culture and gender bias. This panel should consist of a diverse population of individuals with a proven knowledge base concerning sensitivity to gender-related, cultural-related, and socioeconomic-related issues. Test questions that survive this process are then administered to students as pilot questions embedded within the larger assessment. Data is collected from student performance on pilot questions to determine how trustworthy the measurements are (reliability) and if the test measures what it intended to measure (validity). Test developers then review the pilot questions in conjunction with the data collected to evaluate if student performance met expectations and if there was any indication that an item was impacted by sensitivity related issues. This process is commonly completed using statistical analysis for assessing bias as well as qualitative appraisals of test questions. However, many believe that it is impossible to develop an assessment that is indeed free of bias. It is at this point that the best test questions are chosen and retained for use on future administrations of the assessment.

Many organizations contract the test development process to testing companies such as Pearson. Therefore, these companies often recruit test question writers and fairness panels (teachers may apply for these positions) to per-

form this process independent of the institution seeking the assessment.

### Interpreting Results

Every large scale test will have an accompanying technical manual which details the intended use and purpose of the exam that also outlines how results should be interpreted. I recommend that every teacher become familiar with technical manuals, which can be found on the developer's website or requested directly from the developer. Any deviation from the intended use of test results as stated by the test developer should be avoided. Teachers should also feel free to question the validity of these assessments.

Given that we know the purpose of tests in general are to increase student learning, variations from this purpose such as evaluating teacher performance should be avoided or considered with extreme caution. Furthermore, test results are not intended to be used as sole determinants or even the main factor in determining student progress.

### For More Information

2009 Evaluation of the NAEP:

<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/naep/naep-complete.pdf>

SAT Test Development Process:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/highered/recruitment/sat-test/dev>

*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, AERA, APA, and NCME

*Talking Back to Data: Comments on a Framework for Data Use in Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*, Aminah Perkins and George Engelhard

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-A-014.asp?pri=01&cat=A&pol=014&acr=HSP>

<http://scoring.msu.edu/writitem.html>

<http://education.pearsonassessments.com/pai/ai/about/testdev.htm>

[http://datacenter.spps.org/sites/2259653e-ffb3-45ba-8fd6-04a024ecf7a4/uploads/Test\\_Bias\\_Paper.pdf](http://datacenter.spps.org/sites/2259653e-ffb3-45ba-8fd6-04a024ecf7a4/uploads/Test_Bias_Paper.pdf)

## English Language Learners and NCLB: An Introduction to Testing

by Erica Dotson

*Imagine being new to your school. Everything is different. The way the building looks, the way the kids dress, even the smell of the food. What's worse; you don't know anyone. Your parents drop you off and an adult leads you to your new classroom. You walk in and see a crowded room of children and one adult. The adult in the classroom comes over, smiles and says something you don't understand. There are a few pictures on the walls, including a map. You want to sit close to the map because it reminds you of home and it's the only familiar item in the classroom. You see the shape of your country on the map and wish you were back there. For now you sit and listen to the Charlie Brown teacher voice droning on and on "Wah wah wah wah." Of course, that's not what she's saying, but that's how it sounds to you.*

English Language Learners (ELLs) face unique challenges when they arrive in US schools. There is well-founded and growing concern among teachers and stakeholders beyond the classroom about how to meet the social, linguistic, and academic needs of this burgeoning group of learners. Further, promoting the success of ELLs in the current climate of high-stakes testing yields further difficulties as classroom teachers, schools and school districts are held accountable for their ability to pass standardized tests.

Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that ELLs meet the same standards for reading and mathematics as native English-speaking students after being in the United States for three years. Often ELLs do not have sufficient linguistic proficiency to meet these requirements. Empirical research indicates that ELLs may need

between two and ten years of intensive instruction in English to reach readiness for norm-referenced tests (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Pierce, 2003). As outlined above, Title I requires that ELLs are tested much sooner than the lowest threshold of this range of readiness. At the same time, Title I allows for some accommodations for ELLs such as use of bilingual dictionaries, additional time for testing and testing in learners' native languages. Funding and the multiplicity of native languages make some accommodations impractical. As a result, the availability of accommodations varies widely and may be non-existent in many states.

Thus, in effect, NCLB requires ELLs to test in a language in which they are not proficient. Simply put, ELLs may be asked to take a test that they literally cannot read. It is quite possible that ELLs score poorly, not because they do not actually know the correct answers, but because they are unable to read the questions. As a result, high-stakes tests become assessments of ELLs' knowledge of English in addition to their knowledge of content areas such as math, science or social studies. (Gandara & Baca, 2008; Menken, 2008a). Additionally, tests such as the CRCT are normed on native English-speaking students, replete with vocabulary and cultural references that might be unfamiliar to ELLs.

Teachers, researchers, and educational equity advocates do not propose that ELLs should not be tested. On the contrary, it is important to understand what linguistic and academic gains ELLs make annually and longitudinally. Instead it is important that assessments actually measure what ELLs know. A more valid assessment of ELL performance might include the use of native language tests in locales where language groups exceed 10 percent of ELL students, or the use of tests normed on ELLs. Though Title I has brought much-needed attention to the educational attainment of ELLs, it has not generated the impetus to create assessments and testing accommodations that would allow ELLs to demonstrate the knowledge they have indeed acquired.

### References

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- Ovando, C. J., Combs, M.C., & Collier, V.P. (2006). *Bilingual & ESL Classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.
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- Thomas, W.P., & Collier V.P. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

# Advocacy for the End of Early Grades Testing in Georgia

By Caitlin McMunn Dooley

Anyone noticed that in April, the first and second graders no longer have to endure three (+) hours of CRCT testing? Since the 2010-12 school year, Georgia's youngsters have been spared this pain and it *looks like* it's not coming back.

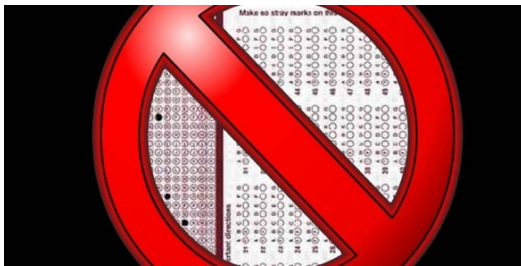
I would like to take credit for this, but the truth is, this feat was achieved as most political feats are: With the convergence of many people who share an idea.

It all started one fall morning when I was walking my youngest son to his first grade classroom. He was getting ready for the ITBS test—and getting nervous. Normally, he loved school but this morning he was nearly crying. He had heard that this test was really boring BUT he had also heard that there was another one—the dreaded CRCT—that was “even more boring!” His nerves had got the best of him—he was breaking down.

I talked with his teacher to alleviate some worry. She assured me that she would try to decrease the tension about test-taking. I talked to the principal about what to expect in the spring. He put me in touch with the district testing director. I asked him if what I had heard was true: Really?! Three days of 175 minutes of test items read aloud to six year olds? How could this standardized test be reliable at all? I was pretty sure that most of the six year olds that I knew would fall out of their chairs from boredom after about 15

minutes! This was not a test of knowledge or skill—it was a test of endurance!

So I contacted my legislator, Stephanie Benfield of (then) district #86. You see, I had some insider knowledge: I worked for the (then Governor) Bush administration in Texas in the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency (the state Department of



Ed). Yes, I made tests. And I knew that no psychometrician in his or her right mind would EVER advocate for a

teacher-read test that was 175 minutes long! Much less, three days of it!

I presented the issue to my legislator who then took our show on the road. She (and sometimes we) spoke with stakeholders, from the district superintendent, state school board members, and all the way to the State Department of Education. In each of these talks, sharing the research was essential:

- ◆ Early grades CRCT was a *state* decision and is not required by NCLB. Thus, it was up to the state to reverse this decision.
- ◆ Georgia was one of six states that tests children prior to grade 3.
- ◆ The other state tests averaged about 20 minutes, compared to Georgia's 175 minutes each day for three days.
- ◆ The tests cost about \$7 million to construct and grade annually (not

counting the actual cost of administration).

- ◆ Most research on testing children prior to grade 3 suggests that it is fraught with reliability and validity issues (all of which were ignored in the creation of the early grades CRCT).
- ◆ Although some people believed that kids need practice before they take the third grade CRCT (considered “high-stakes” because its results can determine retention), the early grades CRCT is nothing like the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade test; therefore, it provides neither preparation nor any kind of diagnosis of reading or math problems.

While we gained supporters by sharing this research, the research was not enough. We needed political will.

We created a House Bill laying out the elimination of the early grades CRCT test.

Shortly thereafter, House Bill we created to eliminate early grades testing was rolled into another House Bill that dealt with other education issues (not all of which I agreed). Then, after this new House Bill was revised in the Education Committee, things were looking rosy. But when it got to the Rules Committee—the one that schedules votes on the floor—it hit the skids. After all that work, the Rules Committee stalled the Bill, not allowing it to go to the floor for a vote (rumor was that the Governor was against the Bill, so the Republican-led Rules Committee was killing it). So “change-over day”—the day when all Bills besides the budget have to go to vote or be killed for the session—came and went without our Bill passing.

We thought all hope was lost.

## Continued

By Caitlin McMunn Dooley

There was a thin thread of hope that we were holding onto as the whole initiative seemed to unravel: The budget would need to be slashed to the bone because tax revenue had declined dramatically. At this point, a critical mass of Republicans and Democrats had heard of our research. They knew the monetary costs as well as the human costs of early grades testing.

So when the budget bill passed on the last day, there was a stipulation that the Department of Education cease spending on Early Grades CRCT testing. Hooray! We did it!

Yet one final hurdle arose: The Governor amended the budget with a line-item veto of the elimination of early grades test, suggesting that the Department of Education determine how best to spend their available funds.

I immediately emailed the (then) Acting State Superintendent, Brad Bryant. I had spoken with Mr. Bryant before and believed he was on our side. But I wanted to know that his stance had not waivered. He assured me that the early grades test would indeed be cut, saying that he doubted that the Department would bring it back even after the next school year.

YES! Finally, a reason to celebrate! I withdrew my son during the end of his first grade year so that he would not have to endure the first grade testing (during the time all of this was going down). And I was so relieved that I didn't have to withdraw him

during second grade. He was spared that "boring" test!

And so it goes—our first and second graders no longer have to endure a poorly constructed, invalid, unreliable, time-wasting test. And the teachers who REALLY care about their students' learning can explore more reliable and valid assessments (both formal and informal) that can provide useful diagnostic information that can inform instruction.

### Tips for Advocates:

- ◆ Find out who the state-holders are related to an issue (your district directors? District superintendent? Community leaders? State-level leaders? Professional organizations?)
- ◆ Find out who your representatives are and ask for their assistance.
- ◆ Present the research related to the issue in clear, concise ways; this is a good time to use graphics and one-page summaries.
- ◆ If you are presenting any article-length research, summarize it for your audience in a paragraph or less and give the reference.
- ◆ Communicate with as many groups as you can—this is not a time to take ownership of information, share and encourage others to take ownership.
- ◆ Know the legislative calendar: Most bills get started right away in January, so there's a lot of legwork

to be done in the fall. Don't wait until late Feb/early March to get started—by then few new bills will be introduced.

- ◆ Attend to the legislative session schedule. All bills that are presented will be scheduled to go to committee before going to the floor. When a bill is in committee, you can attend and speak up.
- ◆ Be aware of the nature of party politics. It's best to get bipartisan support for your bill. Ask your legislator how to do that.
- ◆ Don't give up hope. It's rare that a bill will make it to law the first time it's introduced. Sometimes it can take years for an issue to finally build the support necessary to become law.

***And so it goes—our first and second graders no longer have to endure a poorly constructed, invalid, unreliable, time-wasting test. And the teachers who REALLY care about their students' learning can explore more reliable and valid assessments (both formal and informal) that can provide useful diagnostic information that can inform instruction.***



## CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

### Testing

by Regina L. Meeler

As a parent, college professor, and an elementary teacher, children's literature is and has always been an integral part of my life. In spite of my children being in high school and college, I still can not relinquish my treasured collections by great authors such as Margaret Wise Brown, Tomie de Paola, Mem Fox, Patricia Polacco, etc. When I was asked to write a review on children's books on testing, my excitement quickly turned to concern. Usually, I am quick to provide a list of books that can be used to teach a topic, but locating quality children's literature book on the topic of *testing*? I was stumped. To my defense (I thought)...really, how many books were there on testing that that children would really enjoy? Children hate tests....Adults hate tests...I hate tests. Yet, there are some really great books worth sharing with children and adults alike. I hope you enjoy the books I chose to review.

#### First Grade Takes a Test

By Miriam Cohen and Illustrated by

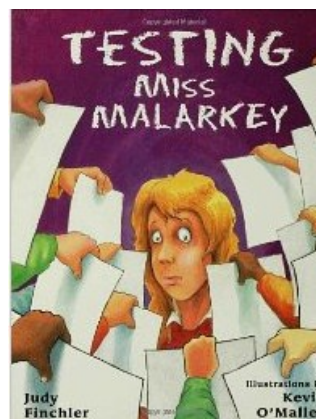
Ronald Himler. ISBN: 978-159572055-9. New York: Star Bright Books, 2006. 32 pp. \$5.95

*First Grade Takes a Test* is about the experiences and emotions students in a 1st grade classroom have while taking a high-stakes test. Out of the entire classroom, one student, Anna Maria, does very well on the test and as a result, is sent to the "special" class. The rest of the students experience some heartfelt emotions of not being

"smart enough" to go to this class. The teacher quickly intervenes helping the children to understand this is just one test and it does not show everything about them like being a good friend or creative. Meanwhile, Anna Maria is feeling her own pains. She really misses her classroom and friends prompting her to make the decision to quit going to the special class and returning to her "regular" classroom.

This story provides a good example of the current test-taking process and level of frustration experienced by many students and teachers. One can relate to how easy it is to answer a question inaccurately by the humorous examples of students' attempts to comprehend and answer typical test questions. Then, there are those typical feelings associated with the public knowledge of the test results. Many of the examples in this book are great discussion opportunities for complex issues associated with high-stakes testing.

While I really enjoyed the book and recommend it highly, one concern I do have is when Anna Maria decides that she does not want to go to the "special class" anymore. With today's issues related to accountability, I am not sure how much control children and even teachers really have with



school-wide decisions made from the results of high-stakes test. In particular, how many children receiving services for special needs can just decide to "not go" to that class anymore because they miss their friends.

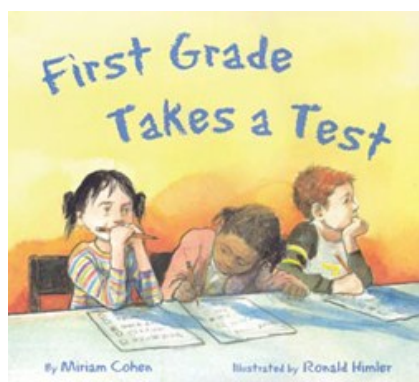
#### Testing Miss Malarkey

By Judy Finchler and Illustrated by Kevin O'Malley. ISBN: 0-8027-8739-8. New York:

Walker Publishing Inc., 2000, 32 pp. \$6.95

This humorous story is told from a student's point of view about how "things are getting pretty weird" around the school while they are preparing for THE TEST. Even though the teachers, staff, administrators and parents are stating, "the test does not really matter", their body language, actions and behaviors are sure saying another. For something not so serious, everything in the school has changed for THE TEST. From the test arriving in an armored truck, to the art teacher teaching them how to color in test bubbles, everything sure points to the importance of this test. However, once the test is taken, everything gets back to normal.

This story reveals how stressed and often ridiculous adults can become during the preparation for and administering of these high-stakes tests. While someone might not believe the lengths to what some people may go during test preparation, educators will secretly snicker and say, "Yes, it has almost gotten that bad."



# STUDENT'S POINT OF VIEW

## Testing: What do our children think?

I've been taking the CRCT since I was in first grade. Every year I get nervous, scared, and worried about my score, especially the math section. Last Friday when I took it, I was shaking like crazy. I could barely hold my pencil. I'm not quite certain it (CRCT) shows everything I know. Even though I passed with a "Meet or Exceed" every year, I still get freaked out.

K.J. S.  
6th Grade



I have had to take "stressful" yearly tests since 1st grade. I am really not sure why we really take these tests. I thought it was to report what I know on certain subjects. After years of taking these tests, I don't believe this is true. I say this because a lot of what I have learned during the year is not even on the test. Sometimes there is only 1 or 2 questions on something I know a lot about. Some questions are so confusing and could have two of the answers. I get really frustrated because the scores I get on these tests are supposed to determine how smart I am and my educational future. Will I be able to get into a college is supposed to represent how smart I am. A score determines if you get moved to another class or have to re-take the test. This is very stressful especially if you fail because all your friends know when you are pulled to go to "tutoring".

I remember one year the Social Studies CRCT asked many questions on topics I had never learned. I talked to my friends and they all said they thought the same thing. We tried to

tell the teachers, but they said they could not talk to us about it. Everyone was nervous and worried for months waiting on those scores. No one wanted to be laughed at or made fun of for failing. When the scores came in, the news reported many students all over the state did not pass it. We knew we were right. Yet, this score goes in all of our permanent folder. Huh?

The teachers and administrators are really stressed about "the" tests the students are taking. One of my teachers is so anxious about the test, she keeps saying, "We don't have time to discuss this, we have to move on to other things on the test." So, if I don't understand the topic, there is no time to ask questions, because we have to move on to learn other things on the test....that we won't have time to talk about. I have been told to go online and learn more about it on my own. Reminders are going to my parents to make sure I am reviewing and practicing online those things I don't truly understand. Huh?

I am glad that I do not have to take the CRCT anymore. However, I have EOTC and AP tests that cause the same craziness.

I don't know the answer, but I know the tests do not show people what I

really know and can do. I know they are making the students, teachers, parents, and community stressed. And I am extremely worried about what I have not learned because of these tests.

J.E.M.  
11th Grade

The CRCT is a test that the school uses to see how smart you are. It

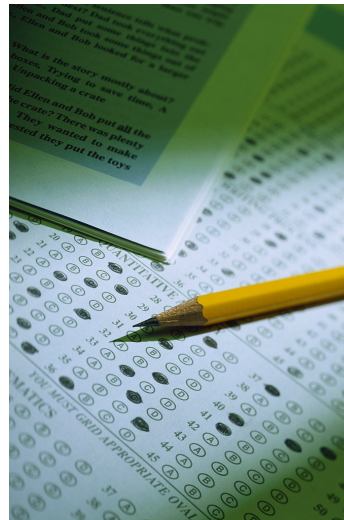


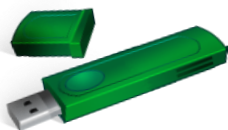
lets the teachers know if you can go to the next grade. Sometimes the test is easy, but sometimes the questions trick you and you have to sit and think about them. It makes me nervous when that happens.

I think we need more time to learn more things before we take the test because I feel uncomfortable that I might mess up on the test. If you mess up a lot you get a bad grade and you might not go the next grade.

All the teachers are allowed to say to us is, "You have your pencils and paper and your folder is up. You may begin." I get a stomach ache when it starts. I really wish I didn't have to take the test.

M.G.L.  
4th Grade





# Resources



## **Assessment Basics**

What is the Role of Educational Assessment in Education Today? McGraw Hill.

<http://www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/assessmentBasicsTabAction?p=underAssess>

Rothstein, R. (Winter 2004/2005). No child left untended: Testing tots: Why we need a better means of evaluating our nation's children.

[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special\\_reports/bushplan/tots192.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/bushplan/tots192.shtml)

## **Top 10 Issues to Watch in 2012**

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education

[www.gpee.org/fileadmin/files/PDFs/Top\\_Ten\\_2012\\_Final\\_01.pdf](http://www.gpee.org/fileadmin/files/PDFs/Top_Ten_2012_Final_01.pdf)

## **When Put to a Test, Testing Culture Fails**

By Robert Schaeffer

[www.ajc.com/opinion/when-put-to-a-1404596.html](http://www.ajc.com/opinion/when-put-to-a-1404596.html)

## **Georgia Department of Education – Assessments**

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>

**Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**

<http://parconline.org/>

## **American Federation of Teachers – The Appropriate Use of Assessments**

<http://www.aft.org/pdfs/teachers/assessmenttuse0607.pdf>

## **Huffington Post Standardized Testing**

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/standardized-testing>

## **In the Classroom**

**TeacherVision: Assessment Resources**

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/assessment/resource/5815.html>

## **Teach with Technology**

<http://www.4teachers.org/>

## **Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation: A Peer-Reviewed Electronic Journal**

<http://pareonline.net>

<http://pareonline.net>

## **Organizations**

**Fair Test: The National Center for Fair and Open Testing**

[www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)

It works to ensure that the testing and evaluation of students, teachers, and schools is fair, valid, and useful to all concerned. The site has information about K–12 and university testing, as well as a link to an Assessment Reform Network that provides extensive resources for educators.

**The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)**

[www.cresst.org](http://www.cresst.org)

CRESST researchers have conducted hundreds of studies on assessment, and reports on the findings of these studies are available at this Web site. For educators, the downloadable policy briefs and newsletters are valuable resources for understanding issues in standards-based assessment, the assessment of ELLs, the implications of No Child Left Behind for districts, and many more topics.

**WestEd Regional Educational Laboratory (Assessment, Standards, and Accountability Programs)**

<http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/area/1>

WestEd offers a range of services and products that can help educators evaluate their own assessment programs and design new practices.

**American Educational Research Association (AERA)**

[www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)

AERA, along with the National Council on Measurement in Education and the American Psychological Association, have crafted a statement of standards for educational and psychological testing. This Website publishes the standards and offers archived issues of *Educational Researcher*, which has published many articles on assessment in the past decade.

*What a shame it is that children are constantly being ranked and evaluated. What a shame it is that superior achievement of one child tends to debase the achievement of another.*

*~ Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*

## Past Highlights

### University of Georgia's (UGA) 7th Annual Diversity Conference "Mind the Gap: Collaborating for Action"

**By: Reisha Moxley**

The University of Georgia's 7th Annual Diversity Conference was held at the Gwinnett Campus on February 24, 2012. Hosted by the faculty of the UGA College of Education Department of Counseling and Human Development Services (CHDS) as well as the 2012 Ph.D. cohort of the CHDS, Gwinnett Campus, the theme for this year's sold-out conference was: "Mind the Gap: Collaborating for Action". The conference focus was not only to address the "gaps" or disparities in services and access to resources for certain student populations, but also how these same disparities impede the ability of practitioners to serve students adequately. Strategies for developing a social justice framework in various roles as advocate in professional practice were also offered as were invaluable resources for "minding the gap" in local, national and international education.

Ms. Patricia Martin, the Assistant Vice President of the National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, provided the keynote address and set the tone for a dynamic day. Sessions included topics such as advocacy for undocumented students, LGBTQ youth and the school counseling profession as a whole. Cultural competence issues were also addressed related to work with English language learners, academic preparation for African American students, Hispanic education and first generation students. Social justice discussions included addressing disparities within disability services, maximizing community resources through an interdisciplinary lens and career development, specifically related to the Bridge Act.

Mirroring these efforts, members of the 2012 UGA Gwinnett Campus Ph.D. cohort shined in their roles as hosts for the conference. In addition to their hard work in planning the day, they also shared their current research during the poster presentation portion of the conference. The 2012 doctoral candidates shared advocacy projects that they were responsible for implementing, addressing needs for special populations at the individual, community and national levels.

The end of the 7th Annual Diversity Conference, "Mind the Gap: Collaborating for Action" did not signal the end of work related to social justice and advocacy, but only the continuation of our challenge and commitment to not only effectively educate and counsel students from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds but to challenge others to join us in these efforts. We are already looking forward to next year's conference where we will report on the efforts initiated this year and, no doubt, challenge all involved to broaden their perspectives. If the 7th annual conference serves as any indication of the coming year's efforts, be sure to secure your place early as we plan to continue to support and challenge all involved!





## Past Highlights Continued

### April 9, 2012—Fighting to Teach:

#### Education Advocacy Panel @ Clayton State.

Members of GA NAME participated in a panel for pre and inservice teachers. Panelists included teachers teaching against the grain, local grass roots education advocates, a lawyer who specializes in legal representation for teachers, and teacher education advocates and analysts.

### April 27, 2012— Power of 10<sup>2</sup>

#### Vexation and Venture Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Pre-Conference.

This event built on last spring's Power of 10 Conference which featured members of 10 different local organizations from various educational and social sectors critically engaging with each other and synthesizing their viewpoints into a series of collective belief statements. This second iteration entailed deepening the work by collaborating with the Alonzo

Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence, inviting previous Power of 10 attendees, and extending invitations to additional individuals and organizations that have a stake in this work. Together we participated in a process called Vexation and Venture (used with permission. See Dr. Adam Johnston and Dr. John Settlage Science Education at the Crossroads [www.sciedxroads.org](http://www.sciedxroads.org)) compelled participants to pose challenges and solutions they were experiencing personally, professionally, and/or organizationally. Attendees offered critique, suggestions, and resources.

#### April 28, 2012 — Crim Center's 7th Annual Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference: Revive, Renew, Re-root: Evolving Solutions

Continuing a history of providing an affirming place and space to discuss urban education, the Sources Conferences featured presentations by teachers, graduate students, administrators, and professors working in and for urban education. Dr. Layli Maparyan, formally Core faculty, Georgia State University's Women's Studies Institute, now newly ap-

pointed Director, Wellesley Centers for Women (<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2012/4/prweb9429794.htm>), provided an inspired and thought-provoking keynote.

### May 29, 2012— Project South Midnight School Teacher Appreciation Dinner

Project South's Education Justice for Atlanta project and the Youth Community Action Program (YCAP) hosted a *South Atlanta Midnight School Teacher Appreciation Dinner*. YCAP youth leaders selected teachers to be appreciated and recognized for being a "good teacher" – those having a strong grasp of the content, maybe for being funny and engaging in the class, or a teacher who treated students with dignity and respect. What counted was that youth choose teachers who were significant and that deserved positive recognition. The celebrated teachers each received the Septima Clark Educator of Excellence award.

Project South, its youth members, their families, and com-



munities recognize that teachers have always been an integral part of the social fabric of a community. While South Atlanta has been rocked by economic crisis, a sensationalized testing scandal, budget cuts, dilapidated

infrastructure, the pending closure of seven APS schools, and subsequent teacher layoffs, Project South and YCAP know that the majority of teachers are committed to the dignity and positive development of our youth.

The *South Atlanta Midnight School Teacher Appreciation Dinner* was an opportunity for students, parents, community members, and community organizations to remember history, celebrate the teachers who have touched and enlightened us and, together, continue building the kinds of communities our youth deserve, now and in their futures.

*I believe unconditionally in the ability of people to respond when they are told the truth. We need to be taught to study rather than to believe, to inquire rather than to affirm.*

~ Septima Poinsette Clark



# Upcoming Events

## Conferences

### **The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence presents The 24th Annual**

#### **Benjamin E. Mays Lecture**

**Theme:** "Wisdom, Work, Will: Advancing Educational Excellence."

**Speaker:** Dr. Adelaide Sanford, educator, administrator, and former vice chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents.



**Date:** Thursday, Oct. 4, 2012  
**Time:** 5:30-6:15 p.m. Reception  
6:30 p.m. Lecture

**Location:** Georgia State University  
Speakers Auditorium  
44 Courtland St., Atlanta

**FREE and OPEN to the public.**

<http://education.gsu.edu/main/7675.html>

The annual Benjamin E. Mays Memorial Lecture Series, hosted by the The Alonzo A. Crim Center, is intended to encourage the discussion of issues facing urban educational leaders through a series of symposia, conferences and lectures. The Lecture Series not only honors the memory of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, but also promotes his philosophy of excellence in the education of those typically least well served by the larger society.

### *September, 2012*

**Georgia Association of Young Children (GAYC)**  
September 28-28, 2012

46th Annual Conference: Together for Children  
The Gwinnett Center/Duluth, GA  
<http://www.gayconline.org/images/2012%20GAYC%20Conference%20Flyer%20-%201%20page.pdf>

### *October, 2012*

**Georgia Educational Research Association (GERA)**  
October 18-20, 2012

37th Annual Meeting: "Education and Poverty: Theory, Research, Policy and Praxis".  
Georgia Coastal Center in Savannah, GA  
<http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/GERA.html>

### *November, 2012*

**National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

November 7-10, 2012

2012 NAEYC Annual Conference: Developmentally Appropriate Practices in the 21st Century.  
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA  
<http://www.naeyc.org/conference/>

**National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME)**

November 28-December 1, 2012

22nd Annual International  
NAME Conference:  
Realizing the Power of Movements in Multicultural Education  
\*\*\*Early Bird\*\*\*

**Registration until October 5th!**

<http://nameorg.org/name-2012-conference/>



### **SAVE-THE-DATE**

**Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference**  
**Atlanta, GA. — April 19-20th, 2013**



# TGFE: THANK GOODNESS FOR EDUCATORS

## Professional Development Series

Fall 2012 Sessions	Sign up and confirm your spot today!
<p><b>Legal Rights: What All Teachers Should Know (with Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS))</b> September 29</p> <p><i>@ Hayes Team Consulting, 6670 James B. River Drive Stone Mountain, 30083</i></p>	<p><b>Register on line at</b> <b>www.GANAME.org</b> <b>(Go to “Events” page)</b></p> <p><b>All workshops held</b> <b>10:00am – 12:30pm</b></p> <p><b>Light Refreshments/Materials provided</b></p> <p><b>Cost per session</b> <b>Regular: \$15</b></p> <p><b>Co-sponsoring organization member: \$5</b> <b>(includes current GA NAME members)</b></p> <p><b>Educators- Join GA NAME for \$40</b> <b>receive 5 total series sessions FREE</b></p> <p><b>For more information contact:</b> <b>GANAME2010@gmail.com</b></p> <p><b>PLUs Available</b></p> <p><b>For updates</b> <b>please check our website</b> <b>www.ganame.org</b></p>
<p><b>Teaching About and Teaching Beyond the Presidential Election (with Project South)</b> October 6</p> <p><i>@ Project South, 9 Gammon Ave. Atlanta, 30315</i></p>	
<p><b>Inspiring the “A-ha” Experience: Science in the Classroom</b> October 13</p> <p><i>Crim Center@ Georgia State University, 3<sup>rd</sup>. floor 30 Pryor St. Atlanta, 30303</i></p>	
<p><b>Wellness and the Classroom Teacher</b> October 20</p> <p><i>@ Hayes Team Consulting, 6670 James B. River Drive Stone Mountain, 30083</i></p>	
<p><b>Authentic Literacy Instruction Across the Curriculum</b> October 27</p> <p><i>@ Project South, 9 Gammon Ave. Atlanta, 30315</i></p>	
<p><b>Using Empathy to Move From Bystander to Upstander Behavior</b> November 3</p> <p><i>@ Ben Marion Institute, 985 Citadel Drive, Atlanta, 30324</i></p>	

# Submission Guidelines

## Submit to

ganame2010@gmail.com

**Subject line:** Newsletter Submission

Your submission will be reviewed and considered for the newsletter and subject to editorial edits by Newsletter Team members. The content will be vetted by several factors including alignment with chapter/national mission, quality of the representation of ideas, language bias, and length.

## Format

Submissions should follow the following format:

Include title of article, name of author(s), any affiliation(s), and contact information for lead contact person (email/phone)

Indicate section of newsletter for submission (See Sections for Submission.)

250-500 typewritten words (for written submissions)

12 point font (Times New Roman or Old Century Schoolbook)

Language/Terminology: Please refer to APA 6th edition for Reducing Bias in Language <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/14/>

Use of citations/References where appropriate (Include Reference list)

Prior permission must be secured for use of visual images

## Sections for Submissions

### News Watch:

Features commentary on current/timeless educational issues. Commentary must first include the various perspectives on the issues followed by the author's position and supporting argument.

### Doing the Work: Educator, Community, Research:

Spotlight on educators/teaching, organization in the community, or researcher(s) doing critical work on matters related to education.

### Visual Art:

Visual commentary on educational issues in the form of graphic art/cartoons.

### Additional Arts representation:

Arts-based commentary offered through including but not limited to poetry, monologues, written music/lyrics, and so forth.

### Book Reviews:

Reviews of books to inform and supplement understanding of ideas, concepts, and issues. Reviews should connect practice and theory.

### Resource Highlights:

etail resources for birth-5 and families, educators, and students relevant to Multicultural Education

### International/Global:

Address issues in global/international education that affect local and national education trends in the U.S.

## Content

Submissions should address the following considerations:

- ◇ Must speak to excellence and equity in education.
- ◇ May offer issues, concerns, or problems but must include solutions and problem solving ideas/initiatives or critical questions for further inquiry.
- ◇ Links to the genres of multicultural education within or cross your content area/sphere of influence.

## UPCOMING

### Submission Dates:

December 15

### Theme:

Culturally Responsive  
Pedagogy in Practice