

PASS BILL SB 3986 / HB 5285



TOO YOUNG TO TEST

PROHIBIT STATE TESTING FOR PREK-2ND GRADE

CHIEF SPONSORS: SENATOR CRISTINA PACIONE-ZAYAS AND REPRESENTATIVE LINDSEY LAPOINTE

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal government does not require annual math and reading testing below third grade. The only federally required testing under third grade is for English language learners (=ACCESS test). ISBE wants to increase 3rd-8th grade testing to three times a year rather than annually. As part of that proposal, ISBE also wants to **pay for schools to use those tests for kindergarten through second grade.**

WHAT'S WRONG WITH STANDARDIZED TESTING BEFORE THIRD GRADE?

Standardized testing in early childhood, birth to age 8, is not valid or reliable. Formal testing procedures aren't suited to measuring what young children know and can do. Before 3rd grade, children are developing rapidly, in fits and starts, so their test scores are not reliable. This is why the federal government has never required annual math and reading testing in the early grades. (References attached)

IS PROVIDING INTERIM TESTING AT NO COST TO DISTRICTS AN EQUITY ISSUE?

Assessment experts have found that interim (or 'through-year' testing systems do **not** improve educational outcomes. And, based on recent data from Chicago, Rockford, and Elgin, interim high-stakes testing—NWEA MAP—negatively impacted student performance on other more valid and reliable assessments. Test vendors market interim testing as providing teachers with detailed diagnostic information that can inform day-to-day instruction. But the reality is that the output of interim tests is no more fine-grained than other large-scale standardized assessments, and it leads to an emphasis on training students on discrete lists of skills. This is poor educational practice at any grade level. Since it is most commonly applied in classrooms of students of color and low-income students, it perpetuates inequity, rather than lessening it.

WOULD ANY ASSESSMENT IN PREK-2ND GRADE BE ALLOWED UNDER THIS BILL?

Yes, this bill would **not** restrict the use of **any** of the following:

- * **Locally-selected and funded assessments**, whether commercial or teacher-designed. Districts and schools will continue to be able to use any standardized tests they wish for PreK-2nd grade paid for with local funds.
- * **Assessments used in screening for or diagnosis of disabilities**, developmental delay or need for remedial services, or for identifying students with disabilities.
- * **Assessments of English language learners** required under federal law.
- * **KIDS observational tool** required for all kindergarten students in IL public schools.

WHY NOT LET THE STATE FUND OPTIONAL STANDARDIZED TESTING BEFORE THIRD GRADE?

High-stakes attached to upper grades testing has already pushed harmful, developmentally inappropriate curriculum and practices into the younger grades. When optional testing is thought to prepare students for later required tests, it becomes de facto required itself. This has long been the case with testing at the high school level. Using state dollars for unreliable, not valid tests with no evidence base in research is **not** a good use of Illinois' limited resources.

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