



2021 IL STATE TESTING UPDATE

What you need to know:

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is considering a proposal to replace the annual math and reading tests for 3-8th grade (IAR) with interim tests given **three times a year** and made available for **K-2nd** grade as well.

To meet federal requirements Illinois school districts will need to pilot this new test until 2024 or 2025. This means 20% of students would take *both* the IAR *and* these new tests until then. The expected cost of the new test is **\$228M** over the next 10 years on top of the cost for the remaining four years of IAR testing--yet there is no evidence these commercial interim tests increase student achievement.

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

- **This proposal would require high-stakes state tests three times each year**—adding even more time for high-stakes testing and test prep to the school year.
- Students in grades K-2 do not need the pressure of high-stakes state tests and standardized tests have little reliability or validity in early childhood. **The federal government does not require K-2 testing, why should Illinois?**
- **Commercial interim assessments are not designed to be used for high-stakes accountability and do not provide valid diagnostic information for day-to-day instruction.** But many schools continue to use them for that purpose. Using large-scale interim assessments as part of state testing puts the State Board's seal of approval on a practice that assessment experts do not endorse.

- **Recent research on growth and achievement in Illinois districts' use of commercial interim tests coincided with declines in academic growth** in grades four through eight. Chicago has now dropped the NWEA MAP test altogether.
- Federal law requires states to use test results to rate schools. **We know that when high-stakes ratings are attached to standardized tests, the result is often "teaching to the test,"** Increasing high-stakes tests from one to three times each year will exacerbate this problem, especially in underserved Black and Brown communities.

TIMELINE:

The State Superintendent initially asked the State Board to approve this proposal in May 2021. But intense push back from educators, parents, and assessment experts has put a pause on the vote. Stakeholder feedback sessions are now being scheduled and the Board is scheduled to consider the findings from those sessions in December.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can help by **calling your state legislators to tell them you oppose the proposal to increase state testing to three times a year and any expansion of state testing for grades K-2.** Urge them to ask ISBE to stop this proposal and work with assessment experts and all stakeholders to build a more balanced system of state and local assessments from the ground up.



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