

What OPT OUT is not –

by Chris Cerrone , New York

OPT-OUT is:

- 1. NOT an easy way out for students.** Opting out is not a method to go easy on our children to prevent failure in any way. Failing at a task can build character, look at some of our greatest inventors-they failed and tried and tried again.
- 2. NOT an attack on our children's teachers.** Boycotting high-stakes tests is not a way to hurt our teachers, in fact most teachers support opting out because they see the harm in the testing culture that is controlling our schools.
- 3. NOT an attack on our children's schools.** Opting out our children will save our schools from financial and educational harm caused by corporate high-stakes testing machine.
- 4. NOT a protest against using tests in our classrooms.** Tests given by our teachers, grade levels and schools are *one way* to assess our children. Evaluating our children properly requires a variety of methods that our teachers complete on a daily basis. Sadly the high-stakes state exams focus on one test score to determine the progress and quality of our children, teachers and schools.
- 5. NOT a way to avoid teacher evaluation.** As one test score should not judge a student, the same applies to our educators. Using a variety of methods with professional observation, peer mentoring and collaboration will help develop highly effective teachers.

Opting out IS a way to take back control of our schools. The latest policies such as Common Core and APPR teacher evaluations in New York State will lead to an explosion of high-stakes standardized tests. The time devoted to testing and test preparation will grow to previously unheard of levels in the next few years. Parents need to say no to the "testing culture" and say our children's education needs a diverse curriculum, creativity and critical thinking.

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