

# FairTest

## National Center for Fair & Open Testing

### HOW TO ORGANIZE AN OPT-OUT HOUSE PARTY

Adapted from Massachusetts Citizens for Public Schools

#### Before the party:

- Talk to your friends and neighbors who are parents of children in the tested grades. Get at least one other person to join you in sponsoring the party – preferably more.
- Write an invitation, signed by all those sponsoring the party. Make sure to mention you will serve refreshments.
- Ask each sponsor to invite other people to the party personally, one at a time. Individual emails work much better than emails to a group, and a personal talk works much better than an email.
- If you want to open the party to more people, ask each sponsor to put the invitation on Facebook, relevant email lists, and Twitter.

#### At the party:

- If the people coming don't all know each other, provide name tags.
- Serve refreshments.
- Have everyone introduce themselves, say who their children are and in what grades and school, and why they're thinking of opting their children out.
- Optional: Show the video at <http://bit.ly/optoutvideo>. (Watch it first to see if you think it will help.)
- Pass out copies of flyers such as an opt-out fact sheet and review it together.
- Ask whether people have had conversations with their own children or with school staff or other parents about testing or about opting out. It's important to get people participating in the discussion. People are unlikely to take action just because they've received information.
- If there are parents from more than one school at your house party, ask parents from each school to plan together what they will do. If there's a school with only one parent there, the first priority is to find more parents. It's very hard to act alone.
- Make specific plans (with deadlines) to:
  - Discuss opting out with your children
  - Inform school officials of your decisions
  - Reach out to other parents
  - Tell local media and social media what you're doing.
  - Create an email list or closed Facebook page for the group.
  - Perhaps organize a public meeting or community forum.
- Decide on a date to meet again, soon enough so you don't lose momentum, but with enough time to carry out many of the plans you've made before your next meeting. Two weeks may be a good interval.
- Think of organizing a community meeting/forum (for how to do this, see <http://www.fairtest.org/howto-guide-community-forums-testing>).

#### After the party:

- Set up the email group (such as a Google group) or Facebook page.
- Carry out plans. Each person should report what's been done and how it went to the email group or Facebook page.
- If you are part of a larger network, let them know what you are doing.

## Social Media

Sharing on social media about your house party or forum will encourage others to attend/host an event and will help spread the word that parents want Less Testing, More Learning!

Take a photo, tag yourself/others (with permission), write a sentence about why you're opting out. Use the hashtags #resistthetests and #optout16 on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram so that everyone can see all the amazing events that are happening!

If you are organizing a public event or opting out is happening, send a notice to [fairtest@fairtest.org](mailto:fairtest@fairtest.org) - and see more about the state-by-state action listings at <http://www.fairtest.org/testing-resistance>.

**Thank you** to Massachusetts Citizens for Public Schools, <http://www.citizensforpublicschools.org>.