

# FairTest

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## National Center for Fair & Open Testing

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### **MANY STATES, DISTRICTS ROLLED BACK TESTING THIS YEAR IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE FROM PARENTS, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS; NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 2017 “TESTING REFORM VICTORIES SURGE” -- NUMBER OF STATES WITH EXIT EXAMS CUT NEARLY IN HALF FROM PEAK**

Assessment reform campaigns rolled back the amount of testing and reduced high-stakes exams in many jurisdictions across the U.S. this year, according to a report released today. “*Testing Reform Victories Surge in 2017: What’s Behind the Winning Strategies?*” explains how and why local activists were successful. The report was produced by the non-profit National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest) based on interviews with groups around the nation.

The FairTest report shows how widespread opposition to the overuse and misuse of standardized exams is producing a marked shift in attitudes about testing. Increasingly the trend in public opinion is leading to changes in state and district policies. Assessment reform victories in 2017 include:

- ***Eliminating high school exit exams.*** The number of states with mandated graduation tests has been slashed by almost half. From 2012 to 2017, the number of states that had or planned to have high school exit exams plunged from 25 to 131. At least seven states have made rollbacks of graduation testing retroactive.

- ***Cutting the amount of state or district testing or the time spent on testing.*** Maryland capped the time districts can devote to testing and ended its requirement to test all Kindergarteners. New Mexico eliminated its requirement that ninth and tenth graders take at least three assessments each year in reading, English and math. West Virginia ended English and math tests in grades 9 and 10. Hawaii dropped three end-of-course high school exams along with the ACT in grades 9 and 10. Districts eliminating or significantly reducing local testing mandates include Las Cruces and Santa Fe, New Mexico; San Diego and Sacramento, California; Knox County, Tennessee; Clay County, Florida; Vancouver, Washington; St. Paul, Minnesota, and Jefferson County, Kentucky. Victories often occurred in districts with large percentages of low-income, African American or Latino students.

- ***Ending or reducing the use of student test scores to judge teachers.*** In 2017, Connecticut dropped this requirement. At least seven states have done so since the federal Every Student Succeeds Act replaced the No Child Left Behind law. New Mexico joined several other states in reducing the weight of test scores in teacher evaluations.

- ***Allowing students to opt out of tests.*** New policies in Idaho and North Dakota brought to 10 the number of states that allow parents to opt their children out of some or all exams.

- ***Implementing performance assessment.*** Half of New Hampshire school districts have replaced standardized tests in most grades with local, teacher-made performance assessments. Nationally, many districts that cut their testing mandates are joined by local unions in developing better assessments.

The report’s lead author, FairTest Executive Director Monty Neill, explained, “These wins often resulted from effective grassroots advocacy by parents, teachers, students and their allies. They reflect the growing public understanding of the damage caused by the overuse and misuse of standardized testing.”

Through case studies, the FairTest report details how assessment reform victories were won. It concludes with a questionnaire that local activists can use to survey stakeholders about the amount and consequences of standardized testing.

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- [Full report](#)