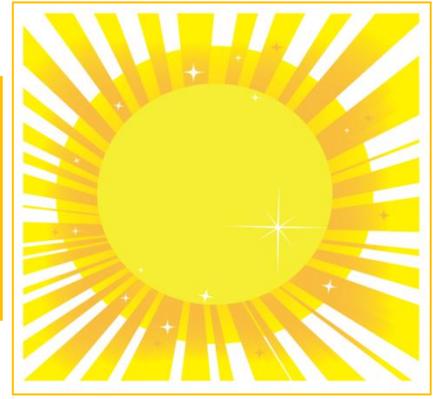


SUNSHINE
TRANSPARENCY
TRUTH -IN- TESTING



As parents, we all know that sunlight helps every living thing stay healthy and grow (unless you are a mushroom). We at Change the Stakes know daylight, warmth and fresh air not only nurture our children, but we want to be sure their schools also let the sun shine in.

Change the Stakes has spoken with parents who agree. They feel that they have been kept in the dark for too long by the New York State Education Department [SED] and the New York City Department of Education [DOE]. Many believe that policies and decisions that have an impact on their children come crashing down on them with little respect or attention given to their concerns. We want to ensure that We, the Public, are not left out of public education.

For that to happen, the top education officials in Albany and those following orders from City Hall must take actions in ways that are transparent to all individuals interested in quality schools for all children. These include policy-making and budget-making decisions that are equitable to everyone. They also include keeping parents (and teachers) informed in a timely way about new programs and seeking parental consent for children to participate in them.

Transparency means administrators need to work in ways that are obvious and free of deceit; that are readily understood and open to review and input from parents. They must act in the light of day—providing direct access to all evidence needed to evaluate their plans before and after they are approved and implemented.

Transparency comes before accountability. There is no real accountability without it. And *transparent* doesn't exist without each *parent* having a chance to be engaged in vital school-related matters.

Since so much (too much) time and worry revolve around testing children each year, perhaps, the best starting point to bring sunshine and transparency into the schools is with the state's ELA and math testing program. One of the reasons this program has been so harmful is because SED and DOE have not been required to give parents and educators information about how the tests were developed and that prove the results are valid for reaching high-stakes decisions about students, teachers and schools.

Change the Stakes is reaching out to parents and teachers to help us gain strength and bring the need for Truth-in-Testing to the attention of legislators and the media. Action is needed this year so we can review test material, check for scoring accuracy and see that the scores are used properly, fairly and within their limits. SED and DOE must be held accountable for disclosing the contents of exams, as well as data about their quality. A process must be put in place for test-takers to challenge errors and appeal decisions—many of which appear to be arbitrary.

Please join with us in our sunshine campaign: to insist on transparency in the way schools are governed and operate and to ensure that truth-in-testing becomes the norm for all aspects of test administration. Visit our website at www.changethestakes.org Thank you.