



**CHICAGO
TEACHERS
UNION**

Assessments

April 2019

Testing is out of control!

In 2005, CPS cut the number of required tests in half: from two to one. By 2014, CPS had a four-page assessment calendar, and every student took at least 11 tests. The networks also got into the act, requiring “progress monitoring” and other forms of additional testing. Our 2015-19 Contract Bargaining Team was determined to address over-testing in the contract. Like any contract demand, we got some of what we wanted and CPS got some of what they wanted. This is what our contract currently says.

44-32. Assessments

44-32.1. Required Assessments.

No later than June 30th of each year (or as soon as practicable after ISBE has published the state assessment calendar), the Board shall publish an assessment calendar for the subsequent school year, which shall consist of assessments mandated by the district for REACH, required to meet the mandates of state or federal laws and regulations, and mandated by a program (i.e., IB or any program that requires a test for student credit or program accreditation).

44-32.2. Additional Assessments.

Schools shall determine assessments to be administered in conjunction with the development of the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAA) which is currently known as the Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP). Each year in the spring, Teachers and the Principal will collaborate to develop a recommended plan for additional assessments, if any, per grade band or content area/department. Prior to voting, the CEO or designee, may review and revise the proposed assessment plan, which shall be presented to and discussed with the school faculty. Teachers and the principal will then vote on the adoption of the plan, which shall be adopted by majority vote. If the plan is not adopted, and the faculty and/or the CEO or designee cannot agree on an alternative plan, the Union or the CEO or designee may submit the matter for resolution at strategic bargaining. The assessment decision will be included in the school's PD plan and reviewed by the district.

44-32.3. Submission of Concerns.

The District shall provide a way that staff can submit any issues and/or concerns (e.g. dedicated assessment email box) to Central Office in a confidential manner. CPS and CTU will meet quarterly to review their concerns and/or issues that are submitted.

Many schools have been able to use this contract language to limit the number of tests they have to give to students. Others have faced push back from their principals and/or networks and have not prevailed.

Our testing demand for our next contract strengthens language considerably. This new proposal allows CPS to mandate tests required by laws or programs, but no others.

Teachers will determine what other tests, if any, they choose to give students. See the other side of this flyer for our proposed new language - and a **summary of your rights!**

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Created in-house
by union staff

Proposed new contract language - see *Italics* below:

44-32.1. Required Assessments.

Required assessments shall consist only of assessments mandated by the district for REACH, required to meet the mandates of state or federal laws and regulations, and mandated by a program that requires a test for student credit or program accreditation. No later than June 30th of each year (or as soon as practicable after ISBE has published the state assessment calendar), the BOARD shall publish an assessment calendar for the subsequent school year., which shall consist of assessments mandated by the district for REACH, required to meet the mandates of state or federal laws and regulations, and mandated by a program (i.e., IB or any program that requires a test for student credit or program accreditation). Whether or how progress monitoring shall be used shall be solely determined by the teacher. Administrators shall not dictate the particular tool or method of progress monitoring.

44-32.2. *[delete in its entirety]*

44-32.3. *(same)*

Know Your Rights!

Some parents have asked teachers and counselors about the state's IAR test and whether their students have to take it. Some are outraged that students new to the U.S., from non-English speaking countries, are being forced to take this test. Special education teachers are worried about the loss of even more precious instructional time when they are forced to give inappropriate tests to their students. Teachers throughout CPS object to taking so much time out of the school year for tests that give them no usable information about their students or their instruction.

Students have the most rights when it comes to refusing the IAR or other standardized tests. They do not have to worry about missing out on opportunities, because IAR scores are not used for decisions like promotion, graduation, or selective enrollment admissions. Their school's state rating may be impacted if large numbers refuse the test, but there is no punishment by state or federal governments for a lower state rating. CPS does not use IAR as part of its rating system.

State policies do not currently allow parents to opt their children out. Please think for a minute about how outrageous and insulting this is. Even after a student refuses, teachers are told to present the test to the student every day and require students to either take the test or refuse each day. So while state policies grudgingly allow students the opportunity to opt-out, they made it very difficult to do so.

CTU has taken our opposition to these policies directly to both CEO Janice Jackson and the new State Superintendent of Education, Carmen Ayala. We are still awaiting a response.

Educators have fewer rights when it comes to telling students or parents about the option to refuse the test. We are not allowed to advocate during work time or on school property. We are not allowed to refuse to administer the test. Educators **DO** have the right to tell students and parents what their rights are during non-school hours and off school property. Some administrators have threatened members who have done this, and the CTU has intervened to defend our members' rights.

If you are an educator who feels strongly that these tests are harmful to your students, you should consider several options. One option is to talk to parents privately about the test. Another would be to arrange for "exchange" fltering with a teacher at a nearby school. Also, you could weave an objective lesson about the pros and cons of standardized testing into your curriculum.

A few educators might feel strongly enough about this issue that they are willing to take a chance and flatly ignore what they are "allowed" to do. This was the case with educators who boycotted the ISAT **and won** in 2014.

If you are that person, know that the CTU will stand firmly behind you.