

ISTEP+ Results Do Not Define Indiana's Children or Its Schools

Over the next two months, Indiana public school educators will be required once again to implement the infamous ISTEP+. As Indiana continues to waste nearly \$100 million on this exercise of educational futility, Hoosiers should remember not to allow ISTEP+ results to define the children from and the schools of their respective communities. Standardized testing, specifically ISTEP+, will never provide a true picture of Indiana public schools or communities because of what it cannot measure. Here are some things that ISTEP+ can never measure:

1. A child's creativity;
2. The educational progress made by students over time due to their hard work and the hard work of their parents, teachers, and school support staff;
3. The educational impact arts, music, physical education, sports and academic clubs have on each student who participates;
4. The impact teachers, support staff and administrators have on the children they serve;
5. The post-secondary success public school graduates achieve;
6. The individual gifts of each child; and
7. A child's love of learning.

In Valerie Strauss' article "*The important things standardized tests don't measure*" (Washington Post, March 1, 2015), Arthur Costa, emeritus professor at California State University, provides a salient statement regarding what mandated standardized testing has done to the quality of public education. "What was educationally significant and hard to measure has been replaced by what is educationally insignificant and easy to measure. So now we measure how well we taught what isn't worth learning."

Strauss goes on to indicate that "using the scores on standardized tests to shape the life chances of students, determine the pay and reputation of teachers, gauge the quality of school administrators, establish the worth of neighborhood schools, or as an excuse to hand public schools over to private, profit-taking corporations is, at the very least, irresponsible." She goes on to say that it is also unethical.

Using appropriate tests to measure a student's academic progress over time is a worthy venture so long as the test is not used inappropriately to evaluate teachers, grade school corporations or determine a child's future. The things ISTEP+ cannot measure should be used to help determine a child's future, the effectiveness of a teacher and the quality of a school.

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