

# Students

## You Do NOT have to Take the STAR/CAT-6 Exams!

Facts the school does not want you to know...

**CA State Law allows your parent to exempt you from taking next week's tests.**

All you need to do is bring a parental note to school. (see back for sample)

**The tests have no affect on college admissions or high school graduation.**

Your test scores are confidential and not used by universities/colleges. The CAT-6 and SAT-9 (the old test) are not the same as the Scholastic Aptitude Test used for college admissions.

**The tests are rigged!**

The CAT-6 is a norm-reference test.

50% of all students who take the test *must fall below the norm.*

These tests were designed to sort & rank kids, not measure school quality. If every student answers a question correctly, that question is tossed aside. No matter how hard schools try, not every student can pass these tests.

**The tests waste class time!**

Besides the days wasted taking the test, valuable instructional time is wasted preparing for these dubious tests. Students worried about college preparation should be concerned by the learning time sacrificed for these tests.

**The tests cost a fortune!**

Tens of millions of tax dollars are spent administering these tests annually. One estimate put the total cost of standardized testing in California at nearly \$2 billion/year. The money spent by your school on test preparation materials might have been used to fund tutoring, field trips or needed classroom materials.

**The tests do not measure what is taught.**

The CAT-6 reduces all knowledge to a multiple-choice version of Trivial Pursuit. Employees of an anonymous corporation create the tests without any regard for what your teachers have taught you.

**Teachers are forced to "teach to the test."**

Outstanding teachers are required to abandon classroom creativity and productive learning activities in order to prepare for standardized testing.

**Standardized tests, such as the CAT-6, do not improve education.**

Teachers are prohibited from seeing the test and parents are not allowed to know which questions their student got right or wrong. How can a student learn from a secret test? How can a teacher teach better when it is illegal to see either the test or their students' errors?

**The tests are often scored incorrectly.**

Despite millions paid to the test creators, standardized tests have been plagued by scoring errors.

**Teachers and principals are rewarded for improved results.**

Cash prizes may be awarded to employees of schools showing dramatic test score increases. Students get nothing for their efforts. It is impossible for schools to win year-after-year since the rewards are based on percentage increases. Principled teachers in some schools have refused this "blood money" or used their bonus to educate the community about the dangers of standardized testing.

Choose the best answer

a teach

b test

For more information – [www.pencilsgdown.org](http://www.pencilsgdown.org)



**Parents**

**PencilsDown.org**

THERE'S NOTHING STANDARD ABOUT CHILDREN!

## **Why Excuse Your Child from Next Week's STAR Tests?**

California Law allows parents to excuse their children from STAR, the battery of standardized tests given every spring to all public school students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

The tests do not benefit your child. The scores are not used for college admissions or to improve classroom practice.

Private school students do not have to take these tests.

Teaching cannot improve since teachers are not allowed to see the tests or errors made by their students.

You have no right to see the questions your child answered correctly or incorrectly.

Your child will not be punished for opting out of testing. Your child may return to school at the end of testing each morning.

The tests are rigged. They are designed to make sure that some students score poorly and are labeled as below average. The tests are biased against students of color and low-income families. They are administered in English; no matter what language your child speaks.

Such tests do not trust teachers who know your children best to assess their educational progress.

Precious classroom time is sacrificed to *give* the tests and "*prep*" the children for them. Teachers are forced to throw out the best, most creative classroom activities, like field trips, hands-on science, music and art. Some schools have even cancelled recess to allow for more test prep time.

*Send a simple letter like the following to your school principal before testing begins.*

Dear Principal:

I do not want my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to take the STAR tests this spring.

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
parent's signature

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