

HIGH STAKES TESTING IN K-12 SCHOOLS AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS FOCUS

Introduction

This bibliography begins an ongoing effort to develop a resource for those interested in research on high stakes testing in K-12 schools. The bibliography is a work in progress, is not exhaustive, focuses primarily on empirical research, includes mostly references in the past decade, and includes multiple perspectives on the issues.

Feedback or suggestions for other entries (please send complete citation) for this bibliography should be sent to Sandra Mathison at smathison@louisville.edu.

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Bibliography

Ahearn, E. M. (2000). *Students with disabilities in state assessments: The NCEO state reports. Synthesis brief.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED445433).

This document summarizes the 1999 National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) report on special education outcomes and provides an overview of the changes in assessment policies and practices for students with disabilities over the past decade. The report focuses on three major issues in the assessment of students with disabilities: rates of participation in assessments, alternate assessments, and the reporting and use of assessment results. The report found that while states have made significant progress in all three areas, only 23 states were able to provide participation data for students with disabilities in 1999 and the rates of participation varied from 15% to 100%. Issues influencing participation include attaching high stakes to test performance and the lack of exposure for students with disabilities to the content of the tests.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Academic standards; accountability; disabilities; elementary/ secondary education; educational outcomes

Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. (1992a). Does high-stakes testing improve school effectiveness? *ERS Spectrum*, 10(2), 3 - 12.

The authors question the relationship between the increased uses of high-stakes testing and stronger accountability measures of school achievement. Part of the equation, they state, are other factors such as each individual school's retention and special education policies. To explore how these policies influence the reading achievement levels reported by schools on high-stakes tests, they conduct case studies of seven elementary schools in New York State. The study involves comparing students' reported achievement on the third-grade statewide reading test to the achievement of all students who would have taken the test if they had not been previously retained or identified as handicapped. The schools are further identified as having low, moderate, or high uses of retention and special education placements. The authors argue the reading achievement levels provided by the schools are not an accurate description of student achievement or reading levels. They suggest that the accountability profiles provided by New York State obscure and possibly reinforce questionable educational practices.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keyword: New York; accountability measures; reading levels; retention policies; special education placement; case study

Allington, R. L., & McGill-Franzen, A. (1992b). Unintended effects of educational reform in New York. *Educational Policy*, 6(4), 394 – 414.

New York State is one of the first states to provide a public report of the proportion of children in each school who have achieved the minimum proficiency level in tested areas. There is, however, little evidence reported of the effects of particular programs or reform strategies on test scores. This study looks at the relationship between retention, remediation, and the proportion of students identified as handicapped on test scores in eleven elementary schools. The authors found that during periods of high-stakes assessment there was a significant increase in students being identified as handicapped or retained at a lower grade level.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: New York State; Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR); student achievement; reading; retention; special education

Bernal, E. M., & Valencia, R. R. (2000). The TAAS case: A recapitulation and beyond. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 22(4), 540 – 556.

This is a review of legal decisions regarding the TAAS, especially the effects of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exit-level tests and on promotion and graduation decisions, especially for poor and minority students. The authors suggest much has been learned from the plaintiffs' positions and that proposals such as the Wellstone/Scott bill could curtail some of the problems associated with high-stakes testing. They offer concrete suggestions for creating fair testing and assessment practices, and question policy makers' agendas in using the TAAS for maintaining the value of a high school diploma but at the expense of poor and minority students.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts; Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: TAAS; retention; graduation; Senate Bill 4; Wellstone/Scott Bill; psychometrics

Camilli, G., & Bulkeley, K. (2001, March 4). Critique of "An Evaluation of the Florida A-Plus Accountability and School Choice Program." *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 9(7). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n7/>

The Florida A-Plus accountability system uses scores from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and student referral and dropout rates to assign schools one of 5 grades (A, B, C, D, F). An earlier evaluation of the accountability system, *An Evaluation of the Florida A-Plus Accountability and School Choice Program*, reported a high correlation between the threat of school vouchers and improved test scores. This critique takes a second look at that evaluation and suggests this correlation may be due to other factors such as sample selection, regression to the mean, how gain scores were combined across grade levels or how schools were used as units of analysis. These authors conclude that the evidence provided in the evaluation cannot support the conclusions that school vouchers are responsible for higher scores.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Test Development and Administration
- Keywords: Florida; FCAT; accountability; test results; validity

Carnoy, M., Loeb, S., & Smith, T. L. (2000, April). *Do higher state test scores in Texas make for better high school outcomes?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

This paper gives a detailed overview of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and evaluates the impact of the TAAS by examining trends in statewide test scores, as well as analyzing data from high schools to determine, among other things, if rising test scores coincide with rising dropout rates. Some of the patterns examined in this paper include: enrollment trends; 9th to 12th grade progression; 9th grade retention; and college plans (on the part of students.) The authors also look very closely at how the TAAS affects white students vs. minority students and how the TAAS affects districts depending on where they are located - urban, suburban, rural, etc.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; minority students; dropout rate; passing rate; enrollment rate

Catterall, J. S. (1989). Standards and school dropouts: A national study of tests required for graduation. *American Journal of Education*, 98(1), 1 – 34.

This study focuses on tests students must pass to graduate from high school and what effect they may have on reduced academic aspirations and drop out rates. Catterall attempts to bridge the gap between the teacher belief that the tests do not present much of a barrier to school completion because of their rudimentary nature and the student belief that test failure causes doubt about chances of graduating. The study is based on a series of interviews with educators and school administrators and on data collected face-to-face from over 700 high school students. The study found a correlation between failing the required graduation test and the raising of doubt about graduating.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: Dropout; Standards; exit tests; low achievers

Clark, R. W., & Wasley, P. A. (1999). Renewing schools and smarter kids: Promises for democracy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(8), 590 - 96.

This article explores some of the dilemmas faced by schools across the nation under two dominant reform approaches:

- (1) creating higher standards and aligning those to high-stakes assessments, and
- (2) promoting privatization by creating charter schools and/or contracting out to private management firms.

The authors discuss reasons why neither strategy will live up to proponents' ambitious claims and will not produce expected results in student learning and achievement. Standardized tests cannot uphold new performance goals and charter schools serve limited numbers of students siphoning off pedagogical reform energies that could benefit kids left behind. The authors argue in favor of rigorous, innovative performance assessments.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Student Populations
- Keywords: Educational standards; charter schools; privatization; reform; performance assessment

Clarke, M., Haney, W., & Madaus, G. (2000, January). High stakes testing and high school completion. *The National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy*, 1(3).

This report concludes that high stakes testing is associated with increased high school dropout rates. The evidence to support this claim ranges from examining historical data to studying ethnicity. The authors conclude that high stakes practices directly or indirectly effect dropout rates. But the authors say that more research specific to dropout rates and high stakes testing is needed to reach conclusive results.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Dropout; ethnicity; MCT (minimum competency testing); socioeconomics; Florida; Texas; retention

DeStefano, L., & Metzger, D. (1991). High stakes testing and students with handicaps: An analysis of issues and policies. In Stake, R. E. (Ed.), *Advances in Program Evaluation 1* (pp. 267 – 288). Greenwich, CT: JAI press.

This paper examines state-level policy concerning minimum competency testing programs and students with handicaps through an analysis of court cases. The paper finds two recurring themes: (1) the need for guidelines to promote consistency across teachers, schools, and districts, and (2) the need for research and evaluation to determine the impact of practices and policies on students and programs.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: Minimum Competency Testing (MCT); Individualized Education Plan (IEP); Legal issues in MCT; SSATI

Donlevy, J. (2001). High-stakes environments and effective student-teacher relationships: Some lessons

from special education. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 28(1), 1 – 9.

Discussed in this article is the nationwide proliferation of high stakes testing in public education. Three basic premises behind school and schooling are discussed: economic, developmental, and social necessity. The author believes public schools are now being driven by standardization, competition, and accountability, rather than student achievement. Donlevy also addresses how the high stakes movement is affecting students in special education classrooms.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: High stakes; standards; economy; development; social development; special education

Duron, S. (2000). *An annotated bibliography on assessment and LEP students*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) Center for the Study of Language and Education. <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/reports/highstakes/bibliography.htm>

An annotated bibliography on assessment and LEP students with a special focus on the issues surrounding the use of high-stakes tests. Eighty-six entries are included along with an index for search and retrieval purposes.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: Limited English proficiency; accommodations

Goodson, I., & Foote, M. (2001, January 15). Testing times: A school case study. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 9(2). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n2.html>

This article chronicles one alternative public high school's resistance to the imposition of mandated state standards and tests. The article outlines the school's argument for maintaining its alternative forms of assessment and the commissioner of education's response.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts; Curriculum and Instruction; Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: High school; resistance; alternative assessment; case study

Gratz, D. (2000) High standards for whom? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9), 681 – 87.

Gratz believes that if the standards movement is to last, it must serve to enhance educational prosperity rather than political. Gratz points to two historic trends that have fueled the standards movement: economic concerns and disparity regarding student achievement. He also addresses current concerns associated with the high stakes movement, including: competition; accountability; preventing students from graduating and being promoted; increased stress; high quantities of nightly homework; time constraints; and student inequity. He maintains that the increased negative consequences triggered by high-stakes testing may lead to jeopardizing student's developmental needs.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Negative consequences; politics; stress

Haney, W. (1993). Testing and minorities. In L. Weis and M. Fine (Eds.), *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race and gender in United States schools* (pp. 45 – 73). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Many studies have shown that minorities tend to do worse on standardized tests than majority individuals suggesting that they are somehow less able. Haney offers an overview of the history of standardized testing as well as studies pointing to differential performance between minority and majority individuals. After defining statistical bias and fairness, Haney shows how the tests themselves are not generally biased against minorities but that educational systems that promote differential tracks and expectations are. Relying solely on standardized tests for promotion or other educational systems is therefore biased against minorities. Haney suggests using a combination of course grades and tests for such purposes.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: Minorities; differential performance; test bias; fairness

Haney, W. (2000, August 19). The myth of the Texas miracle in education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(41). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n41/part1.htm>

Haney outlines evidence to show that the reported “miracle” of educational reform in Texas along with the implementation of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) testing system is in actuality a myth and illusion. Haney outlines in 8 parts the Texas story. After an introduction, part 2 provides an overview of educational reform in Texas from 1970 to the present. Part 3 provides an overview of reported positive results. Part 4 exposes several areas of negative impact of TAAS. Part 5 continues this analysis with a special look at the drop-out rates. Part 6 describes educators’ perspectives on the TAAS. Part 7 provides other compelling evidence on student achievement or lack of in Texas. Part 8 outlines several lessons learned for similar reform efforts in other states to be aware of. Additionally, the full text of Judge Prado’s ruling in a Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) lawsuit, *GI Forum v. Texas Education Agency*, is provided in the appendix along with documentation of summary arguments made by the two sides in the case. The author was an expert witness for MALDEF.

- Category: Curriculum and Instruction; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; legal issues; drop-out rates; teacher perspectives

Herman, J. L., & Golan, S. (1993). The effects of standardized testing on teaching and schools. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 12(4), 20 - 25, 41 - 42.

This study looks at the effects of standardized testing on teaching and learning processes in upper elementary classrooms in eleven districts in nine states. Survey responses received from 341 teachers on such items as the pressure teachers feel to improve test scores and the amount of time teachers spend on test preparation. The authors conclude that the presence of standardized testing has a substantial effect on the kinds of teaching and learning that goes on in schools especially in schools that serve low-SES students.

- Category: Teachers and Teaching; Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Curriculum and Instruction
- Keywords: Teacher attitudes; instructional practices; social class

Hesch, R. (2000). Mass testing and the underdevelopment of inner-city communities. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 46(1), 49 – 64.

Hesch argues that the standardized testing movement contributes to the decline of inner-city communities. He examines how mass testing reduces teachers’ ability to respond to inner-city students needs and to utilize effective culturally sensitive approaches to teaching and learning. Finally, he provides arguments for and against standardized testing as well as efforts by parents and teachers to resist standardized testing as a means to educational equality.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts; Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: Manitoba; social class; inner cities; student achievement; culture; resistance

Hess, F. M., & Brigham, F. (2000). None of the above: The promise and peril of high-stakes testing. *American school board journal*, 187(1), 26 – 29.

The authors believe that current accountability practices cannot coexist within the traditional culture of education. Hess and Brigham weigh the costs and benefits of instituting high stakes reform and consider the potential to increase equity, the impact on the curriculum, and the ability to track and evaluate teachers and staff based on student performance. They are concerned that though the standards may improve education as a whole, they may also negatively impact poor and minority students, detract from teacher morale, and waste educational resources.

- Category: Curriculum and Instruction; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Accountability measures; evaluation; poor students; minority students

Heubert, J. P. (2001). *High-stakes testing: Opportunities and risks for students of color, English-language learners, and students with disabilities*. The Civil Rights Project, Boston, MA: Harvard University. <http://www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights/conferences/SpecEd/moreinfo.html>

This article examines both the opportunities and risks inherent within the standards movement and high-stakes testing for students within specific populations. The extent of graduation and promotion testing in the U.S and of high-stakes testing is discussed. Norms of appropriate test use and elements of sound testing policies are described. The article concludes with recommendations regarding the use of tests for high-stakes purposes including: refrain from using high-stakes tests until schools are actually teaching relevant knowledge; ensure that the high-stakes test is valid for its intended purpose; and avoid “either-or” decisions through effective early intervention.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Standards movement; promotion; graduation; drop-out rates; “world-class” standards

Heubert, J. P., & Hauser, R. M. (Eds.) (1999). *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

High Stakes addresses how the testing environment is affecting students’ performance and achievement within a cultural context--socioeconomic and political. The book is divided into three parts: context, interpreting and assessing results, and ensuring appropriate uses of tests.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts ; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Tracking; assessment; policy; legality; special learners

Hollenbeck, K., Tindal, G., & Almond, P. (1988). Teachers' knowledge of accommodations as a validity issue in high-stakes testing. *Journal of Special Education*, 32(3), 175 – 83.

This pilot study determined the extent of knowledge possessed by general education and special education teachers regarding allowable accommodations on state assessment exams for students with disabilities. Also studied was “how accommodation choices influence the validity of decisions resulting from this assessment.” Test modifications and test accommodations are not synonymous according to the authors. Accommodations do not change the test, rather they are used as a tool for comparing students. Modifications on the other hand, do change the exam and the exam’s administration. The authors conclude that there is a need—at the local and state level—for pre-service and in-service training for educators regarding acceptable accommodations.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Accommodations; modifications; teacher knowledge; “teachers as measurement experts”; survey

Holman, L. J. (1995, April). *Impact of ethnicity, class, and gender on achievement of border area students on a high-stakes examination*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED384627)

This study explores whether student characteristics such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender are predictive of their status on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) competency exam. The sample for this study was 363 randomly selected 5th grade students from the El Paso Independent School District. The findings suggest that ethnicity and class are significant variables for predicting student test performance. Several recommendations are offered.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; ethnicity; socioeconomic class; gender; elementary students

Holmes, D. & Darmon, S. (2000). *LEP Students and High Stakes Assessment*. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/reports/highstakes/index.htm>

This report summarizes what tests are administered to limited English proficient students across the country, the challenges of including LEP students in mandated high stakes testing, the accommodations made for LEP students, and case studies of testing practices and issues for LEP students in many different states.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: limited English proficiency; testing accommodations

Howe, H. (2000). High-stakes trouble. *American School Board Journal*, 187(5), 58 – 59.

In this article Howe explains his response to an earlier published article regarding improving student performance for those children who come from poverty-stricken backgrounds. Howe believes that schools, by themselves, cannot increase performance through high stakes; education and attention relating to circumstances outside the academic arena must also be addressed.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Poverty; labeling

Johnson, E., Kimball, K., Olson Brown, S., & Anderson, D. (2001). A statewide review of the use of accommodations in large-scale, high-stakes assessments. *Exceptional Children*, 67(2), 251 - 264.

Current standards-based reform efforts aim to educate all children including special education students. Advocates for students with disabilities support the inclusion of students with disabilities in state-mandated assessments and while most states provide accommodations for such inclusion, the psychometric, legal, and practical challenges of such inclusion are not well researched. This review finds that accommodations are provided but in ways that are inconsistent across districts and/or states. Specifically, the accommodations procedures used for the Washington Assessment for Student Learning (WASL) for 4th and 7th grade in 1998 are examined. These researchers conclude that the accommodations provided do not appear to place students in need of accommodations at an advantage over other students but do raise questions for discussion as to the ways various accommodations are determined and implemented.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Test Development and Administration
- Keywords: WASL; students with disabilities; test accommodations; test bias

Ketter, J., & Pool, J. (2001). Exploring the impact of a high-stakes direct writing assessment in two high school classrooms. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 35(3), 344 - 393.

This study examines the impact of a direct writing assessment on two high school English classes. The Maryland Writing Test (MWT) has been a mandated graduation requirement since 1990. Through observations and interviews, this study examines how the test influences the teachers' beliefs about writing instruction as well as their strategies for teaching writing. It also explores how students who did not pass the test respond to these instructional strategies. The authors conclude that an emphasis on the test minimizes teachers' ability to respond effectively to individual students' inability to understand the test questions and reinforce a narrow, limited writing curriculum.

- Category: Teachers and Teaching; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Maryland; writing instruction; narrowing the curriculum

Klein, S. P., Hamilton, L. S., McCaffrey, D. F., & Stecher, B. M. (2000, October 26). What do test scores in Texas tell us? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(49). <http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa/v8n49/>

One of the reasons the high-stakes testing program in Texas, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) has received so much attention is because of the reported large gains made by students. This study examines to what extent these reported scores are providing an accurate picture of student achievement in Texas. Comparison with student gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is provided as one way to assess the validity of Texas students' achievement gains. The authors conclude by raising serious questions about the validity of the gains in TAAS scores.

- Category: Test Development and Administration; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; NAEP; gains; validity

Kohn, A. (2000b). Burnt at the high stakes. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(4), 315 - 327.

In this article Kohn examines: how and why standardized testing patterns have evolved, fairness concerns, as well as effects on instruction and students. Also studied are the different components of standardized testing: formats (norm-referenced and multiple choice); time constraints; frequency of exams; and age of students being subjected to high stakes testing environments. Kohn also takes an intensive look at the current system of rewards and punishments accompanying the high stakes movement by examining the outcomes and

repercussions associated with such a system. It is Kohn's contention that the standards movement is especially harmful to poor, minority students.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Curriculum and Instruction
- Keywords: Rewards, punishment, minority students, fairness

Koretz, D. M., Linn, R. L., Dunbar, S. B. & Shepard L. A. (1991, April). *The effects of high-stakes testing on achievement: Preliminary findings about generalization across tests*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED340730).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether an increase in achievement test scores extended beyond performance on that particular test to other comparable tests. The sample for this study is 840 third graders from 36 schools in a large, high-poverty and high-minority urban district. The districts' test score results for two tests in 1990 are compared to a third test given by the researchers. Overall, the results suggest that students do not generalize well from one test to another, but that they do so better in reading than in math. The study also raises concerns about the effects of high-stakes tests on the quality of instruction.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Curriculum and Instruction
- Keyword: Student performance; elementary; math; reading

Langenfeld, K., Thurlow, M., & Scott, D. (1997). *High stakes testing for students: unanswered questions and implications for students with disabilities. Synthesis report 26*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED415627)

This report addresses the current culture of high stakes testing—specifically how students with disabilities are effected. How high stakes testing effects curriculum, teaching, learning, and school environments are closely examined in this paper. Also included is a section comparing the costs and benefits associated with testing programs. The authors conclude that an increase in test scores does not automatically mean students are learning more.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Curriculum and Instruction
- Keywords: Students with disabilities; attitudes and school climates

Lomax, R. G., West, M. M., Harmon, M. C., Viator, K. A., & Madaus, G. F. (1995). *The impact of mandated standardized testing on minority students. Journal of Negro Education, 64(2), 171 - 185.*

This study, supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), sought to examine the impact of standardized tests and testing in math and science on minority students. The findings draw upon three data sources: 1) a national survey of teachers; 2) studies in six urban districts; and 3) an analysis of widely used tests and test material. The study includes content reviews of tests administered in grades 4, 8, and high school, national surveys sent to teachers of grades 4-12 (the surveys inquired about district demographics and asked for opinions regarding standards), and site interviews. Results of this study yielded a decisive disparity between both the quality and the delivery of instruction to minority students.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Educational inequity; minority students; math; science

McNeil, L. M. (2000). *Contradictions of school reform: Educational costs of standardized testing*. NY: Routledge.

Based on the premise that standardization reduces the quality and quantity of what is taught and what is learned in schools, this book traces the educational costs of reform on three Texas magnet schools. The impact of Governor Mark White's decision to involve H. Ross Perot in educational reform is viewed through the "collateral damage" to students and teachers. Curricular content is trivialized and teachers are de-skilled as a result of the emphasis on accountability, a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and a test-driven curriculum. While more and more students are passing the TAAS, fewer and fewer are actually reading. The gap between minority and privileged students widens. McNeil notes that Texas illustrates what can happen when good intentions, limited resources, and the desire for a quick fix intersect.

- Category: Curriculum and Instruction; Teachers and Teaching; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; magnet schools; accountability; inequity; proficiency; minorities

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1997). *High stakes assessment: A research agenda for English language learners. Symposium summary.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED417589)

High stakes assessment of English language learners (ELLs) was the subject of a symposium sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). The report covers several concerns around testing English language learners and addresses such questions as: At what point does testing a child in a second language yield meaningful results?; What accommodations are appropriate for testing ELLs?; and What is the role native language assessment plays in high stakes testing? Recommendations for research are proposed.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Conference; English language learners; English Second Language; elementary secondary education

Natriello, G., & Pallas, A.M. (1999, November). *The development and impact of high stakes testing.* Paper presented at the Conference on Civil Rights Implications of High Stakes Testing, sponsored by the Harvard Civil Rights Project, Teachers College, and Columbia Law School. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 443871)

In this paper, Natriello and Pallas review several reasons for the growth of the use of testing for high school graduation in the United States. Using New York, Minnesota and Texas as examples, they look at the impact of such requirements across racial and ethnic groups, including significant differences in passing rates for students from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. As a result they question whether the motivational consequences of high stakes testing are indeed uniformly positive across racial, ethnic, and class lines as some research as suggested. They offer some suggestions for improving the use of such tests for graduation purposes.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Historical/Political/Legal Contexts
- Keywords: Texas; New York; Minnesota; graduation requirements; ethnicity; disadvantaged youths; passing rates

Orfield, G., & Kornhaber, M. L. (Eds.) (2001). *Raising standards or raising barriers?: Inequality and high-stakes testing in public education.* Washington D.C.: The Century Foundation Press.

This edited volume brings together articles from a variety of researchers to explore critically and comprehensively the limits and consequences of test-driven reforms in education. The nine chapters challenge the assumptions made by policy makers in support of high-stakes tests and address such issues as: dropout and retention rates, the relation of tests to learning outcomes, student motivation, the impact of testing on curricular decisions and materials, and the impact standardized test use has on the civil rights of parents and students, especially minority parents and students.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts; Student Achievement/Special Populations; Curriculum and Instruction
- Keywords: Civil rights; dropout rates; promotion; graduation; policies; rhetoric; test use

Palmer, D. K., & Garcia, E. E. (2000). *Voices from the field: Bilingual educators speak candidly about proposition 227.* *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24(1-2), 169 – 178.

This paper addresses the findings from a mini-study on the reactions of California bilingual educators to the implementation of Proposition 227. Proposition 227 passed into law a series of mandates that directly effect language minority children. One of these is the imposition of English-only standardized testing. Discussions with teachers revealed a particular concern over the now-required SAT-9 test in English beginning in second grade. Administrators also expressed concerns over the consequences of requiring SAT-9 testing in English and tying that testing to school evaluation. The study found that standardized testing was a main concern of

all professionals, and they constantly connected testing and Proposition 227 as both being behind a statewide policy change toward English Only.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations
- Keywords: SAT-9; Proposition 227; bilingual education; English Only

Pedroza, A. (1998). *Bordering on success: Mexican American students and high stakes testing*. This paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED420713)

This study sought to analyze and assess the effects of high-stakes testing on students in a rural district along the Texas-Mexican border. The study focused on “patterns of change” among these students since high-stakes were implemented—including student achievement, student retention, placement of students in special education programs, and also the district’s response to promoting greater achievement within their schools. The author concluded that students living along the Mexican-American border may not be benefiting from standardization policies—policies that assume all American students are the same.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; Texas-Mexican border (district); promotion; retention; administrative response

Phillips, S.E. (1994). *High-stakes testing accommodations: Validity versus disabled rights*. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 7(2), 93 – 120.

It has become common practice to provide testing accommodations for persons with physical disabilities. Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, however, there has been an increase in requests for accommodations for people with mental and learning disabilities as well. This article looks at the validity and measurement problems that arise from granting accommodations for mental disabilities. At issue is the question of whether scores with accommodations for students with neurological and psychological problems are comparable to scores attained without accommodations. Several recommendations are provided for developing legally defensible accommodation policies.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Historical/Legal/Political Contexts
- Keywords: Students with Disabilities; testing accommodations; score comparison

Pitoniak, M. J., & Royer, J. M. (2001). *Testing accommodations for examinees with disabilities: A review of psychometric, legal, and social policy issues*. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1), 53 – 104.

The authors trace the history of legislation that relates to the testing of individuals with disabilities. They describe the types of accommodations provided in large-scale examinations as well as some of the legal concerns surrounding those accommodations. Accommodations alter the meaning of test scores and raise psychometric concerns around issues such as validity, reliability, equating, test items, and test constructs. The authors provide a detailed overview of the research on these psychometric issues as well as ideas for future research.

- Category: Student Achievement/Special Populations; Historical/Political/Legal Contexts
- Keywords: IDEA; individuals with disabilities; test accommodations; psychometrics; validity; reliability

Popham, W. J. (2001). *The truth about testing: An educator’s call to action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

It is Popham’s contention that the educational reform strategies being implemented nationally, specifically high stakes testing reform, are having deleterious effects on students. In this book he examines the current (mis)uses of high stakes testing and also offers possible solutions and methods for improving tests and testing programs. He also looks at ways to improve instruction and learning within the context of testing—that is, he looks at prospect of creating tests that are “instructionally illuminating” for both educators and students.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Assessment/measurement; classroom assessment; accountability; “instructionally

illuminating”

Potter, D.C., & Wall, M.E. (1992). *Higher standards for grade promotion and graduation: Unintended effects of reform.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED348750)

This paper looks at the unintended effects of reform when it comes to grade promotion and graduation. A detailed background and history is given about South Carolina’s Education Improvement Act (EIA) programs—including incentives and consequences associated with these programs. The data analyzed in this study shows modest increases in student achievement since the onset of educational reform, though the data also shows an increase in harmful effects on students from certain demographic groups. Potter and Wall stress the need for more studies that examine the deleterious effects of testing reform.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984; Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB); effects of testing reform acts

Sacks, P. (2000). Predictable losers in testing schemes. *The School Administrator*, 57(11), 6, 8 - 9.

Sacks believes that current high stakes reform is nothing more than a costly, educational experiment. He contends that those most deleteriously affected by high stakes will be/are poor and minority students, while privileged students will/do excel. Sacks maintains that the astronomical price tag attached to high stakes reform is producing nothing more than misleading, quick-fix results.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; Massachusetts; MCAS; poor and minority students; cost; inequality

Shepard, L. A. (1991). Will national tests improve student learning? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(3), 232 – 238.

In this piece, Shepard examines the negative effects of standardized testing, the vision behind national examinations, and the problems that must be resolved if the goals of testing are to be met. Some of the negative aspects of testing she examines include: pressure attached to high stakes yielding misleading data surrounding student achievement; curriculums being narrowed as a result of high stakes; and children with special needs being rejected by the high stakes culture. Shepard cautions that past research pertaining to the successes and failures of previous testing reform must be analyzed and considered if current testing policies are ever to be successful.

- Category: Curriculum and Instruction; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Minimum Competency Testing (MCT); National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)

Sloan, K. (2000, April). *Teacher agency and the TAAS: Maintaining the ability to "act otherwise."* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED441830)

Teachers are the fundamental focus of this paper, but also of interest is if high stakes testing actually leads to better instruction and greater achievement. The study concentrates on four elementary schools, each with bilingual classrooms, that demonstrate “exemplary” performance on the TAAS. How those schools have developed and tailored reading programs to conform to the TAAS is also looked at. In addition, the author is specifically concerned with how the development of these programs has effected teachers. Sloan’s data suggests that teachers and administrators demonstrate a “continuous flow of conduct” regarding the TAAS. Further suggested is; “the way in which the structural elements were configured at these four schools as a result of TAAS did indeed preclude the teachers from acting otherwise.”

- Category: Teachers and Teaching; Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Texas; TAAS; teacher agency; impact/effect on teachers; bilingual classes/students

Thurlow, M.L., & Johnson, D.R. (2000). High-stakes testing of students with disabilities. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(4), 305 - 314.

This article addresses the intended and unintended consequences of high stakes testing on students with

disabilities. The authors take a detailed look at considerations that must be addressed for students with disabilities to participate in the current assessment system, including purposes, accommodations, and alternative assessment. Some intended consequences that they point to include: using test score information to modify curriculum, to modify pedagogy, and to address the strengths and weaknesses of educators. Unintended consequences range from increased referrals to special education services to lowered expectations and narrowed curriculums. The advantages and disadvantages of diploma options are also examined in this piece.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA 97); diploma options

U. S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2001). *The use of tests as part of high-stakes decision-making for students: A resource guide for educators and policy-makers*. Washington, DC: Authors. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/testing/index1.html>

This resource guide is specifically aimed at providing educators and policy-makers with the necessary knowledge and tools to make accurate and fair high-stakes decisions about students based on test scores. The guide covers professionally sound test measurement principles as well as federal constitutional, statutory, and regulatory nondiscrimination principles. Both are intended to provide a framework for establishing nondiscriminatory testing principles especially when these are used to make placement, promotion and graduation decisions about students. Also included are glossaries of legal and test measurement terms; testing accommodations currently used by states; and a compendium that describes current federal nondiscrimination statutes and regulations relevant to testing issues.

- Category: Historical/Political/Legal Contexts; Student Achievement/ Special Populations; Test Development and Administration
- Keywords: Measurement principles; nondiscriminatory legal principles; test accommodations; promotion; graduation

Valencia, R. R., & Guadarrama, I. N. (1996). High-stakes testing and its impact on racial and ethnic minority students. In L. A. Suzuki, P. J. Meller, & J. G. Ponterotto (Eds.), *Multicultural assessment: Clinical, psychological, and educational applications* (pp. 561 – 610). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This chapter in the Handbook of Multicultural Assessment describes the high stakes testing campaign and its impact on racial and ethnic minority students. The authors approach the subject by beginning with background on the history of high stakes testing followed by a discussion of the controversies associated with high stakes testing and concluding with a discussion of alternative assessments to high-stakes testing, with special attention to the implications for assessment of minority children. The effects specific to minority students include: the disproportionate failure rate among minority students on state-mandated competency tests, the disparate, negative impact of teacher competency tests on minority students who seek teaching certificates, and the extreme negative impact of "school-based competency tests" of "take-over" (loss of accreditation, school closure, and subsequent receiver-ship by the state).

- Category: Student achievement/Special populations; Historical/political/legal contexts
- Keywords: Minority students; alternative assessments; CAT

Wheelock, A., Bebell, D. J., & Haney, W. (2000a, November 2). What can student drawings tell us about high-stakes testing in Massachusetts? *Teachers College Record*. <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=10634>

This study explored students' reactions and opinions to taking the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) through an examination of students' drawings of themselves taking the tests. 411 drawings gathered from 4th, 8th, and 10th grade students were used. Student depictions confirm the authors' beliefs that students do not respond in a uniform way to the expectations inherent in high-stakes assessment policies and practices. Several drawings and interpretations are described.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
- Keywords: Massachusetts; MCAS; student motivation; student drawings

Wheelock, A., Bebell, D. J., & Haney, W. (2000b, November 2). Student self-portraits as test-takers: Variations, contextual differences, and assumptions about motivation. *Teachers College Record*. <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentID=10636>

This study explored the educational and social factors that might explain the variety of students' responses to taking the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Several developmental differences in student responses are offered. The assumption that high stakes tests are necessary to motivate students is criticized. A variety of student attitudes and beliefs are offered. This report hopes to stimulate discussion of the assumptions surrounding high stakes testing policies and school-based practices.

- Category: Student Achievement/ Special Populations
 - Keywords: MCAS; student motivation; student drawings
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