

18.13 Student Assessment and Testing

Board position 1991; resolution passed 2006; amended 2013

Whereas, Washington State PTA finds that children develop at vastly different rates and have different learning styles, exhibiting differing strengths and weaknesses and thus must be allowed to demonstrate their knowledge in more than one way; and

Whereas, several well-respected education organizations including, the American Educational Research Association, urge that, “Decisions that affect individual students’ life chances or educational opportunities should not be made based on test scores alone. Other relevant information should be taken into account to enhance the overall validity of such decisions”; and

Whereas, policymakers must understand that no one test gives a complete picture of a student’s knowledge, ability, or aptitude. Each type of assessment can provide important information to students, families, teachers, and administration about student achievement, program effectiveness, and alignment of instruction to identified goals and objectives as each type of assessment looks at achievement from a different perspective and for a different purpose; and

Whereas, high stakes state-wide tests have a disproportionate influence on classroom practices. Many teachers believe that state assessments are forcing them to concentrate too much on the limited standards covered by the test to the detriment of other important standards and areas of learning; and

Whereas, Washington state adopted the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics for grades K-12 in July 2011.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA will work to enact policies that create a balanced assessment system with high standards and multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning, providing students with wide access to multiple forms of state-wide assessments; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA will oppose any efforts to use a single indicator for making decisions about individual student opportunities such as grade promotion, high school graduation, or entrance into specific educational programs.