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 INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
 REVIEW COMMISSION

I read with horror the idea of even more "standardized" testing (10!) in high school... I understand the idea of setting standards, but I feel that teenagers are highly stressed now, with a battery of testing already...

- PSSA's, which many schools take time out from their curriculum to study for to show good results for their school or district.
- PSAT's, ACT's, SAT's, as well as SAT subject tests – students are advised to take all of these, some multiple times – in addition to their suggested rigorous academics of honors courses, multiple school clubs and athletic teams, all to build their resume for the pressure filled college admission process.
- Graduation projects are required at most high schools.
- AP testing – to garner additional credits

The college admission process has become highly competitive, causing some students to take courses sometimes beyond them in an attempt to show they can take on challenges ...

All of these pressures and test preparations are on top of the many demands of high school academics, and this doesn't even count time for athletics, after school jobs, and the clubs and organizations they may wish to even enjoy, if they can even find time.

As well, none of the above even considers students that don't test well or do poorly on standardized tests – not to mention the still ongoing discussions of the biases or value of standardized tests – many colleges don't even require them for admissions anymore, citing that they may not be an advantage to good students.

I think that additional standardized tests (especially so many) would only divert classroom time to test preparation, even if that is not the intention – as schools want their statistics to be high (they already take class time to prepare for the PSSA's).

Finally, I think it would be better to set teaching standards – not methods or styles – for education, perhaps incorporating some kind of minimum testing WITHIN or as part of the class testing – not in addition to. Teenagers these days are experiencing high levels of stress and depression, leading to frightening suicide rates, and I don't believe that adding ten standardized tests to their load is valuable or wise. There should be more emphasis on classroom teaching and fair grading than lumping on more testing.

I would like to see more appreciation of students that do well instead of just recognition of the very top students – the feeling among teens is that if they are not exceptional at something they shouldn't or can't become involved, leading to feelings of inadequacy or "just not being good enough" ... it follows that depressingly current feeling that coming in second or third is failure ... where does that leave everyone else?

Our teenagers need much more than academic thrashing – they need encouragement and positive motivation and, most of all, support of everyone around them... the teen years are difficult enough and we should be helping them succeed instead of testing them to death.

Thank you for listening ...



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