Less Testing = More Learning

Not only does the Every Student Succeeds Act take steps to reduce the amount of standardized testing, it decouples testing and high-stakes decision making—a major improvement over No Child Left Behind’s one-size-fits-all approach to accountability and the U.S. Department of Education’s criteria for granting waivers to the law.

KEY PROVISIONS

Eliminates Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the impossible one size fits all goal driving No Child Left Behind’s failed accountability system
Incorporates the SMART Act to provide funding for states to audit and streamline assessments, and eliminate those that are unnecessary or duplicative
Creates a state pilot program (in seven states initially, then could be available to all) for local assessments driven by teaching and learning, not accountability alone, that could be used in place of the state’s standardized tests
Requires school districts to inform parents and guardians of opt-out policies, and allows them to have their children opt out of statewide standardized tests where state and local policies permit
Allows states to set a cap limiting the amount of time students spend taking annual standardized tests
Continues annual statewide standardized tests in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high schools, but districts could seek approval to use the SAT, ACT, another nationally recognized assessment, or Advanced Placement assessments to fulfill the high school requirement—a potential reduction in federally-required standardized testing