

Dear CPS Parent or Guardian.

In October, the Chicago Board of Education passed a new promotion policy for our elementary school students. No longer do we use the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) as the standardized assessment. Our new policy relies heavily on data from the Northwest Education Association (NWEA) exam, which is administered to students in the spring. I fully support this change, as I believe it will create a more well-rounded picture of student progress and needs.

In the coming weeks, you may receive correspondence from individuals and/or groups encouraging your child not to participate in this exam. While I respect your right to opt out of testing, it is extremely important for you to understand that by doing so your child's future could be negatively impacted. Scores from the NWEA are one of the tools we use to gauge a student's readiness for the next grade level, and which could benefit from summer school.

I understand the view that too many assessments can take away from our children's valuable learning time. I share this concern, which is why my staff has conducted a rigorous review of all District assessments, and decided to reduce assessments for students in Grades K-2. However, certain exams, including the NWEA test that will be administered this spring, are important tools for measuring student growth and determining where children need academic supports. That is precisely why I encourage you to allow your child to participate in this exam.

I thank you for the work you do each day to support the next generation of Chicago's children. If you have questions about the NWEA exam, I invite you to contact Myetie Hamilton at 773-553-2237.

Sincerely,

Barbara Byrd-Bennett

CEO, Chicago Public Schools