
Testing for Home Educated Students? *Yes and No!*

Testing can be a highly controversial issue for homeschooling families. Many parents have questions--who, what, where, how, when, and why? In New Mexico, there are no required tests for homeschools, and that means we need accurate information in order to make good decisions for ourselves.

Testing is GOOD! We are all tested, one way or another, all the time! Testing is a biblical concept when it's used for evaluation, analysis, and improvement, so we need to consider the benefits and the ramifications. See [Romans 12:2](#), [2 Corinthians 13:5](#), [Galatians 6:4](#), [1 Thessalonians 2:4](#) and [5:21](#).

If testing is good and useful, why does CAPE so vehemently resist government-mandated testing?

Homeschools are accountable to homes (God, family, etc.) and public schools are accountable to the public. That declarative statement is the foundation of home school freedom. We have refused the public school system for various reasons, therefore we reject government-selected curriculum, government-certified teachers, and government-mandated testing. We believe our freedom is worth the fight!

How will the public schools use our test results? In New Mexico, the test results were never evaluated or used for reports to the legislature, which was their original intent. They were filed, or misplaced, and frequently just disappeared. Too often, parents did not receive their promised copies. In some states, a minimum percentile score is used to question the success of the home school. Moms are hard enough on themselves without adding that fear to their daily routine.

Too often, tests evaluate students' testing skills, and not learning achievement. Some students are born competitive and thrive on adrenaline-producing pressure, and others who are equally bright and well prepared freeze up under the same conditions. Then, too, tests compare knowledge and skills with either a standard based on what's been taught or they compare one student with others. We are teaching differently and we will be evaluated individually, so does testing even accurately assess anything we want to know?

We know that the public school testing experience was difficult for some homeschooled children. Testing younger students in familiar circumstances is one recommendation for accurate results. An unfamiliar proctor combined with the distractions of a strange, new location and strange, new faces creates an awkward situation for both homeschooled and public school students. Past experiences in one small school district reported threats of gang violence, a fist-fight in a bathroom, obscenities carved into desktops, and intimidation from one teacher who was aggravated with the inconvenience. Remember, once on school property, your students no longer under your care and custody.

What material is being tested? Approaches to teaching and the scope, sequence, and worldview values of curriculum covered can significantly skew results. Tests were becoming more subjective and even emotionally disturbing for younger students.

Government-mandated testing violates home school freedom -- the right of parents to direct the education of their child. It didn't produce the intended results, wasted time and money, and had the potential for some harm. In other words, since public schools do not have the authority to test homeschooled students, and could not provide the appropriate content, circumstances, or results for accurate assessments, there was no point to government-mandated testing. In 2001, the legislature agreed that they couldn't justify the statute, and had no valid reason to enforce it.



Informing, Encouraging, and Supporting New Mexico's Home School Community

Voice Mail 505-898-8548 Email info@cape-nm.org Website www.cape-nm.org

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