

January 25, 2008

H.B. 08-1186: CREATING A MASSIVE CSAP LOOPHOLE

Background

Current law requires every public school student to participate in the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). Current law exempts the CSAP scores of the following students from being used to calculate a school's academic performance rating or accreditation category:

- A student who is eligible to participate in the alternate assessment for students with disabilities, commonly known as the CSAP-A (According to CDE, a student who participates in the CSAP-A has a significant **cognitive** disability).
- A student who transfers into the school after October 1 of the school year in which the CSAP is administered.
- A student whose dominant language is not English and who has not been enrolled in a public school for three years or who has not demonstrated proficiency on each component of the CSAP.

HB 08-1186 prohibits a school from invalidating scores or penalizing a student who is absent during the administration of the CSAP.

PROS

- Uniformity among schools and school districts concerning the penalties for poor scores of individual student's absence might be achieved.
- Parents and schools who oppose these tests will embrace the opportunity to not participate in them.

CONS

- This bill would make meaningless the longitudinal base of the last 11 years.
- The passage of this bill would be an open invitation to the manipulation of scores and ratings.

KEY POINTS

Creates Incentives for Schools to Keep Low-Scoring Students from Taking the CSAP.

Will schools encourage students they expect to score low on the CSAP to stay home that day to artificially boost their school's overall scores?

Currently in Colorado, 98% of students take the CSAP. This rate would sink rapidly.

Potentially violates federal law and risks millions in federal education funding.

For purposes of making adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, 95 percent of a school's student population must participate in the statewide assessment program.