Fourteen reasons why it is a silly idea to believe that standardized achievement tests can help us evaluate school leaders, schools and teachers.

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1. Easy confusion of the effects of sociological variables for the effects of teachers and teacher preparation programs.
2. Holding teachers and preparation programs responsible for student achievement doesn’t fit into our system of law or the moral code subscribed to by most western nations.
3. Professionals are often held harmless for their lower success rates with clients who have observable difficulties in meeting the demands and the expectations of the professionals who attend to them.
4. There are other quite acceptable sources of data, besides tests, for judging the efficacy of teachers and teacher education programs.
5. Reliance on standardized achievement test scores as the source of data about teacher quality will inevitably promote confusion between “successful” instruction and “good” instruction.
6. Teachers affect individual students greatly, but affect standardized achievement test scores very little.
7. Teacher’s effects on standardized achievement test scores fade quickly.
8. Observational measures of teacher competency and achievement tests of teacher competency do not correlate well.
9. Different standardized achievement tests, both purporting to measure reading or math or science at the same grade level, will give different estimates of teacher competency.
10. The administration of standardized achievement tests at different times of the year, will yield different estimates of teacher effectiveness.
11. No standardized achievement tests have provided proof that their items are instructionally sensitive.

12. Teacher effects show up more dramatically on teacher made tests than on standardized achievement tests because the former are based on the enacted curriculum, while the latter are based on the desired curriculum.

13. The opt-out testing movement invalidates inferences about teachers and schools that can be made from standardized achievement test results.

14. Assessing new teachers with standardized achievement tests is likely to yield many false negatives.