

Adamant refusal will not go unnoticed

anon.

2004

I've been giving the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to my 3rd graders this week. I could be fired, possibly arrested, for telling you this, but do you want to know what's on the test? Here's one of the questions:

Why do cities have laws?

- a. to take people's money
- b. to make leaders powerful
- c. to give police officers jobs
- d. to help people live together

Do you know the "correct" answer?

The ITBS isn't testing whether your child knows the three branches of government or how bills become law. No. It's testing whether kids are being indoctrinated the "patriotic" way. One or two "wrong" answers won't cause alarm; kids are expected to miss a few. But if your child—who faces the same test at 5th and 8th grade—consistently gives "subversive" answers, rest assured, the government knows who you are.

So what else is going on at Patriot Elementary? Some of our students can't hold a pencil. Some of them are severely disabled and autistic. The Bush Administration wants us to test all of them. Any student that is away sick during test week is scored zero. Say you hear about the ITBS and stop your child from taking part. Your child will be scored zero.

If a school performs badly in this test then its funding is cut. How is that going to help it identify and correct its problems? This test isn't made to help poor performing schools. It's to pressure schools to conform. This is a fear-based government scare tactic against its own people.

Of course, if you insist on resisting the ITBS, you might hear: "You want your child to graduate from 3rd grade, don't you?" Schools will say something like this, not because they're evil but because of the extreme pressure they face. Know this: no one can force a child to take the test. Also know: adamant refusal will not go unnoticed.

This anonymous letter originally appeared on the "Letters" page of the expensive anti-consumerist art magazine *Adbusters* earlier this year.

fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #366, Fall, 2004

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