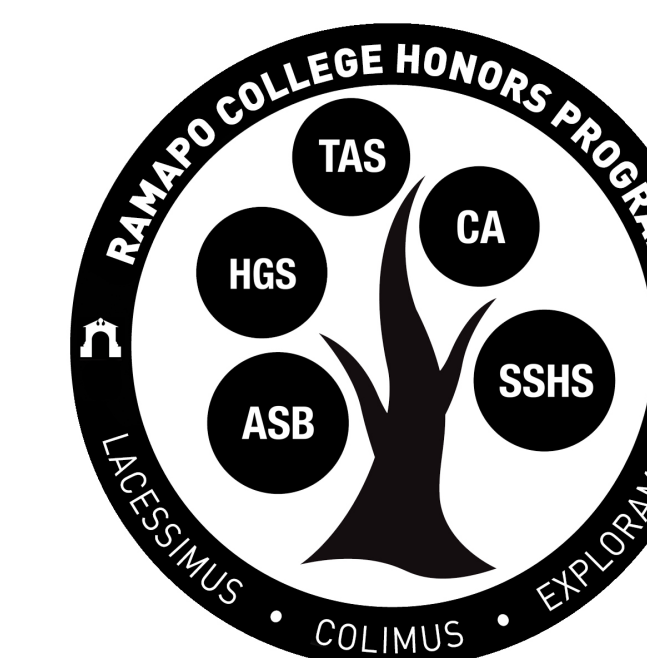




Standardized Testing in American Education

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The History of Standardized Testing

- The 1800s:
 - The standard way of assessment was through public exhibitions.
 - The first written assessment was implemented in 1845, which can be considered the first standardized test.
- The 1900s:
 - Mental testing was a new movement, and standardized testing quickly became linked with the mental testing movement.
 - During World War I, standardized tests were used on a large scale for an army recruitment test. It was the first mental test in history administered on a large scale, specifically to two million recruits.
 - In 1951, the U.S. implemented a draft deferment test, which was important because this standardized mental test would be the largest peacetime testing program.
- The 2000s:
 - The No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002 and began to link students' school performance with their scores on standardized tests.
 - Race to the Top was a federal grant adopted in 2009 by President Obama's administration in reaction to the No Child Left Behind Act. The largest part of Race to the Top that affected standardized testing was that teachers would be evaluated based on students' test scores, causing major implications inside the classroom.

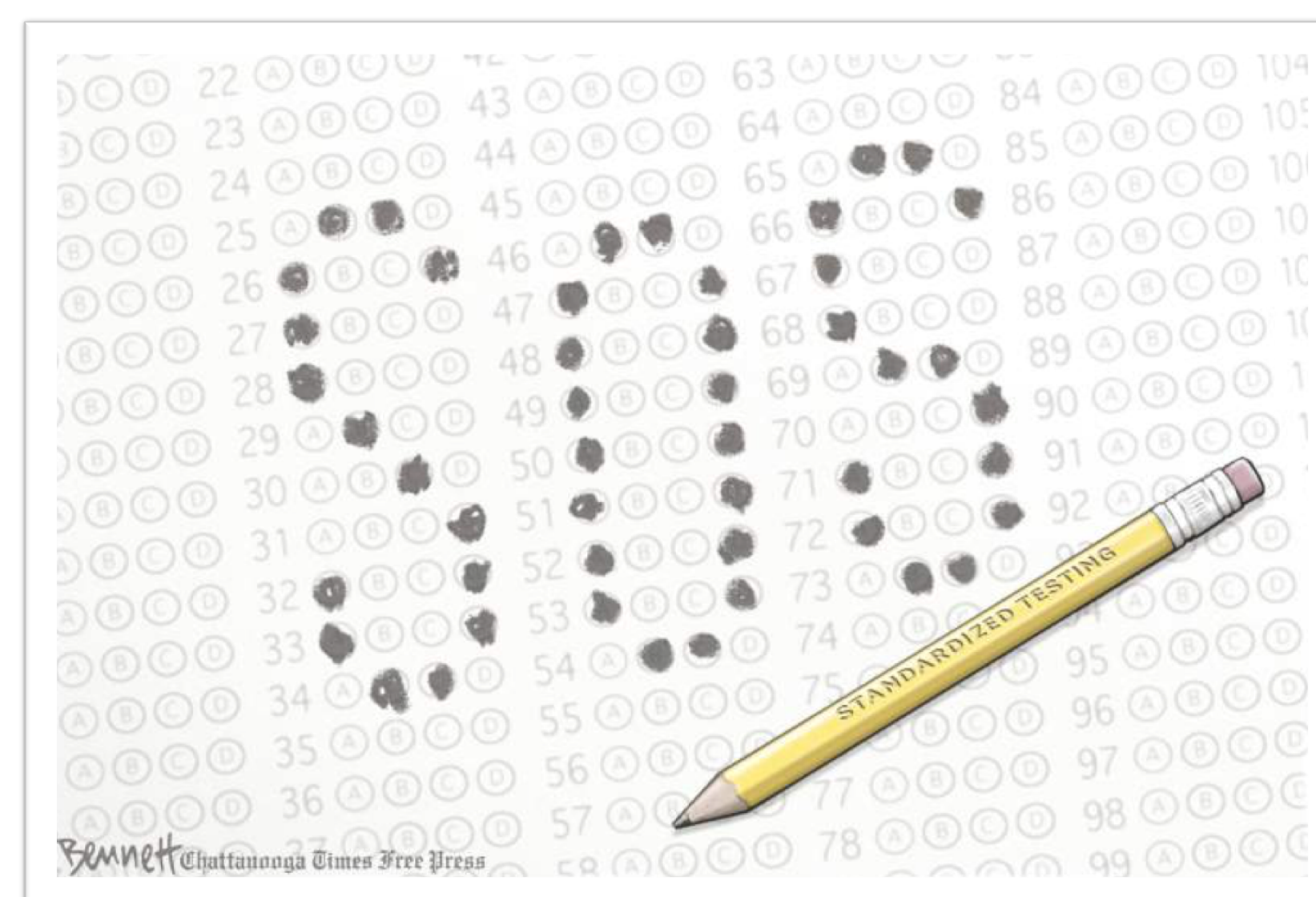
To understand the complex contemporary debate over standardized testing in American education today, it is imperative to comprehend the background and history, contemplate what professionals have studied, and know the positive and negative effects of standardized testing. Although there are some positive attributes of standardized testing on students and school systems, this paper concludes that the current rejection of high-stakes standardized testing will have a profound and positive impact on American education.

The Effects and Implications of Standardized Testing

- Bias
 - Family income influences test scores because the wealthy can afford better test prep.
 - Analysts can determine, based on demographics, which students will reach proficiency levels.
 - Stereotypes also impact a student's ability to excel at taking standardized tests.
 - Schools may report the scores of special needs students separately or hold them back, which impacts test scores.
- Teaching to the test
 - Teaching to the test leads to a narrowed curriculum.
 - Students are prepped to answer certain types of questions, and this leads to a loss of inquiry-based learning.
 - Test prep effects are often small and interfere with test scores.
- Cheating
 - Teachers and students cheat because schools need to meet accountability requirements.
- Anxiety
 - There is a negative relationship between anxiety and achievement on standardized tests.
 - A higher level of anxiety will most likely lead to a lower test score.

Contemporary Perspectives on Standardized Testing

- Positive
 - Standardized tests are objective and comparable, hold schools accountable, show patterns of growth, and can provide important information when used correctly.
 - Tests can identify lower performing schools and students.
 - Tests can reduce loss of knowledge, increase effectiveness in how people organize and access information, and improve the transfer of knowledge.
- Negative
 - Accountability Problems
 - Tests have errors and administration is flawed.
 - Reliability and Validity Problems
 - Scores are not always comparable.
 - Various factors influence students when taking tests.
 - Tests take too much time.
 - Standardized tests lack creative and critical thinking skills.
 - These tests create a shallow approach to learning.
- Personal
 - Teacher (Stacie Starr): "It is very upsetting. We are becoming presenters of materials and not teachers. They have taken away all of our creativity in the classroom..."
 - Student: "I feel like we have to take all these tests and if I pass the tests I live and if it don't, I die."



The Current Rejection of Standardized Tests

- The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests are under scrutiny in New Jersey.
 - The graduation requirements have been struck down.
 - New Jersey is moving away from PARCC tests.
- In fact, many states have rejected PARCC and Smarter Balance tests.
- Fewer states are requiring high school graduation tests.
- More than 1000 colleges and universities have de-emphasized the importance of standardized tests in the college admissions process.

