TOO MANY TESTS?: STUDENT, PARENT, AND EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF UPASS AND NCLB

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The debate between state and federal rights has recently received significant attention in Utah as state legislators debated bills that would put state control of educational standards and testing above those mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind law. As legislators and federal education officials debate which test to use to evaluate our students and schools, however, the voices that are most important to the debate are often left out.

Confusion and lack of knowledge seem to be a common theme revolving around NCLB and its implementation into the state's education system, especially in a state like Utah that has its own separate education performance evaluation program (UPASS). Through qualitative research, such as interviews and observations, we will explore the perceptions and opinions that administrators, educators, students, and parents have regarding the implementation of both NCLB and UPASS at the federal and local levels. We are interested in both how teachers and administrators regard and accommodate the battery of tests they are required to administer, as well as how students and parents understand and view the tests. Our research will include interviews with teachers and administrators from a variety of local schools, and students and parents from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.