

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Mandatory nonsense

Standardized exit tests would be bad policy

Every U.S. student should have to pass a test to graduate from high school. Make sense?

U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley seems to think so.

But we don't.

Last week Riley endorsed the idea of mandatory exit tests for every high school student in every state in this nation.

Nebraska still remains one of 31 states that doesn't make its high school students take a test to graduate from high school.

Let's keep it that way.

Mandatory tests would represent a subtle form of education reform with far-reaching effects, reshaping the curriculum taught in every high school nationwide.

Unlike the SAT and ACT tests, the exit exam would be required of all graduating high school students, regardless of whether or not they are college bound.

There's more.

What is the point really? Students who fail the test aren't really going to say, "Hmmm, I'm 18 years old. I think I'll stick around in high school for another year and give that test another try."

They would probably just drop out.

There's also the dilemma of setting a standard.

Standard means something different for minorities, the disabled or students pursuing vocational careers. As high school classes further diversify and become more specialized, it is becoming harder and harder to determine what is the norm.

Riley was actually once opposed to the tests because of their potential to be culturally biased. But he has had a change of heart, saying that integration has solved any potential problems of cultural bias.

Riley may have legitimate concerns. We know that every high school is not the intellectual temple that others are. And some high school teachers really don't have a clue.

He has the best of intentions. He wants to establish high educational standards and promote success for all. Who doesn't?

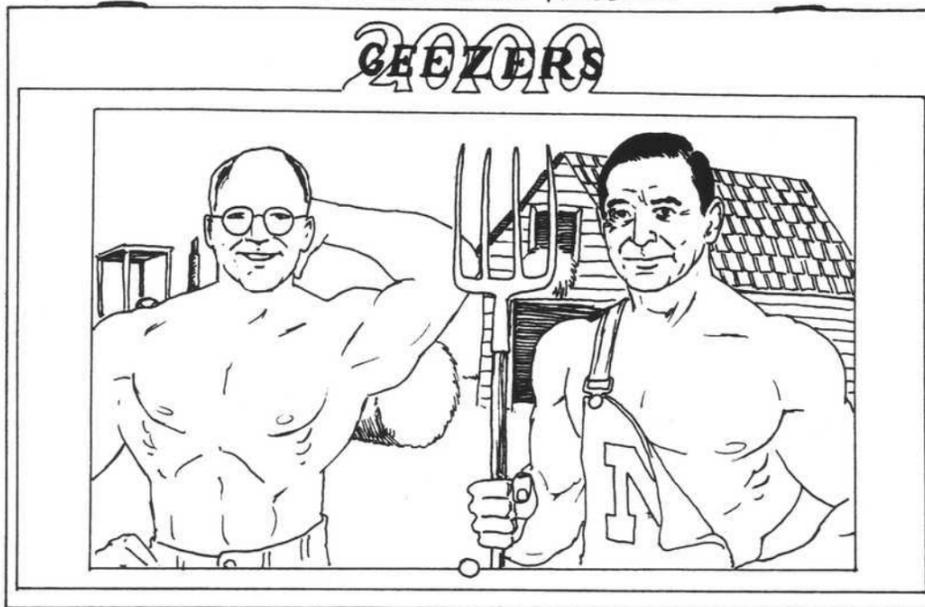
But mandatory tests aren't the answer.

And if it is all going to come down to one test, one early Saturday morning, one bubble sheet and one number two pencil, then what's the point of even going to high school?

Just cram the night before, and skip the whole four years of tedium that is high school.

Guest VIEW

WITH THE SUCCESS OF THE "SISTERS 2000" CHARITY CALENDAR, CHANCELLOR MOESER AND VICE CHANCELLOR GRIESEN UNVEIL THEIR LATEST FUNDRAISING PROJECT...



DN LETTERS



Yakkety-Yak, Mica talks back

I know as Americans we have the right to free speech. I also realize that many people have their ideas of God. Is it fair, though, to use your freedom to mold other people's images of God?

People tell me that being at a university means being open-minded and considerate of other religious beliefs. As a Christian, seeing this article was like a direct attack on what I believe in.

You called God "a baby-raping, murdering bastard" (DN, Friday) and drew a picture with a beer in his hand. The same God I live for and love every day.

As a freshman, I know being at college influences people in many different ways. I then have to wonder what a person who has no knowledge of what God is must think when he or she sees this full-page depiction of God.

I know God, and I know the Bible.

Do you know God, and have you read the Bible?

The God and the Bible I know are nothing like what is depicted in this story.

As I am asked to respect other religions represented on this campus, I ask for the same respect.

When I say I believe in God, I do not want others to think I believe in this God in this story.

Mica Fanning
freshman
psychology

Big Red Scare

Thank God for Sam McKewon's editorial (DN, Monday). The atmosphere at Memorial Stadium these days flat out SUCKS.

It used to be a place where the fans would scream bloody murder all game, and the opposing team left frightened and beaten.

Now the fans sit on their Calvins watching the boob tube with drool running down their chins. The instant replay aspect of the HuskerVision boards seemed like a good idea before they were installed.

Now I wish they would go away. There are 20 seconds of commercials before each replay, meaning the replay often continues through the start of live action. While the fans should be at their loudest, the HuskerVision screens are doing their best to distract.

They have gone too far. The UNL band has been totally taken out of the game by piped-in Top 40 hit tunes that sound like they're coming from a \$7.99 ShopKo clock radio.

The cheers led by actual humans

have been replaced by lame flashes on the TV screens. The crowd noise, especially when the Huskers are on defense, has been silenced by "... turn your attention to the HuskerVision screens for another important ..." What's more important than the game being played?

The college football atmosphere at Nebraska - once one of the best in the country - has been completely ruined. Memorial Stadium is one big yellow page now.

The student section, once a raucous area of the most intense support, is now as energetic as a pair of chimps picking bugs from each other's fur.

Shorten or eliminate the replay ads, lose the two-minute-long skits, get the band back in the game and please, please kill the stupid hot dog gun!

James Conradt
UNL alumnus

Bashin' Right Back

This is in response to Harold Williams' stance on lesbianism (Letters, Monday):

How dare you? I am appalled by your ignorance and intolerance of a complete group of people. I suppose you abhor homosexual men as well as lesbians.

Pull your head out of your back end; homosexuals have just as much right to live their lives as you do - maybe more.

I do not know any gays or lesbians who have as much hatred for any group of people as you do.

I sure hope that none of your friends or family members are homosexual, because they must be afraid of you and your beliefs.

So, Mr. Williams, maybe you need to take a class on tolerance. Maybe it will open your narrow little mind.

Jana Bartels
senior
business education

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