

## Wisconsin teacher protests No Child law

By RYAN J. FOLEY, Associated Press Writer Thu Nov 1, 5:30 AM ET

MADISON, Wis. - A middle school teacher is protesting the federal No Child Left Behind law by refusing to administer a standardized test to his eighth-grade students.

David Wasserman, a middle school teacher in Madison, began his protest Tuesday. Instead of giving students the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam, he sat in the teacher's lounge, leaving his colleagues to oversee the test.

He said he has moral objections to the federal law, President Bush's signature education policy. The state test is used to measure whether schools are meeting annual benchmarks under the law. Schools that do not meet goals can face sanctions.

Like many teachers, Wasserman said he believes the test is a poor way to measure student progress, takes up too much class time and is used unfairly to punish schools. So after years of growing frustration, he said he decided to be a "conscientious objector" this year.

Wasserman said he originally planned to resume his protest on Thursday, the second day of testing, and through four more days of testing next week. But he said Wednesday he would likely back off and give the test after Superintendent Art Rainwater told a teacher's union official that Wasserman could be fired if the protest continued.

"I can't jeopardize health insurance for my family," said Wasserman, 36. "I want to still hold by my morals, which I feel very strongly about. But I have a family to think about."

In a statement released to The Associated Press on Wednesday evening, Rainwater noted the district was required by state law to fulfill the federal requirement.

"It is part of every teacher's duty to administer the test," he said. "Any failure to fulfill this required duty would be considered insubordination and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination."

Robert Schaeffer, a spokesman for FairTest, a national group that opposes the overuse of standardized tests, said he was unaware of any other teachers who have refused to administer tests to protest No Child Left Behind. Other teachers have boycotted high-stakes state tests used for graduation or promotion, he said.

"It is an act of moral courage, and it certainly helps call attention to the widespread misuse of standardized testing," he said. "The natural bureaucratic reaction is always to threaten people with severe sanctions. That's why people have to have the moral fiber to put themselves at risk."

Wasserman, who has taught in the district for six years, said he is being treated unfairly because his colleagues at Sennett Middle School could administer the test without him.