

Participation and Parent Excusal

Can parents excuse their children from taking the state tests?

Yes. State law allows parents to excuse their child from state assessments. This law requires districts to have policies that explain how parents may excuse a student from participating in one or more state assessments and notify parents of those policies. Your district can share their specific policy with you.

What are the consequences of excusing your child from participating in the state tests?

According to state law, districts cannot impose negative consequences on students or parents if a parent excuses his or her student from participating in a statewide assessment, including prohibiting school attendance, imposing an unexcused absence, or prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities. Likewise, districts cannot impose unreasonable burdens or requirements on a student to discourage the student from taking an assessment or to encourage the student's parent to excuse his/her child from the assessment.

It is important to note that non-participation in state assessments means parents will not have information about their child's attainment and growth on the state standards compared to other students in their school, district and state. Also, there is a chance that comparisons between schools and districts won't be available as common state assessments are the most consistent way to compare performance right now.

Will my school or district's accreditation rating be impacted by low participation on tests?

Federal law requires 95 percent of students overall, and in each demographic category, to take the required assessments. However, the Colorado State Board of Education passed a motion in February 2015 that says districts will not be held liable for parents choosing to excuse their children from testing.

As a result of these two policies, there is no impact on state accountability determinations for schools or districts that do not meet the federal requirement for 95 percent participation in two or more content areas due to parents excusing their students from testing. If, however, the school or district fails to meet the 95 percent participation rate requirement in two or more content areas for reasons such as students refusing to take the test without a parent excuse, then the school or district's plan type will be lowered one level.