

Executive Numbered Memo 003-2015-16 - Exemption from Statewide Summative Tests

April 29, 2016

TO: Superintendents, Principals, and District Test Coordinators

RE: Exemption from Statewide Summative Tests

Summary:

House Bill 2655 establishes a new policy for exempting students from the statewide summative tests.

House Bill 2655 went into effect January 1, 2016 establishing a Student Assessment Bill of Rights permitting parents or adult students to annually opt-out of Oregon's statewide summative tests. Implementation of HB 2655 applies to the grade-level Smarter Balanced assessments and alternate Oregon Extended Assessments in English language arts and mathematics.

Annual Notice Requirement

HB 2655 directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to develop an annual notice that:

- describes these assessments;
- identifies the timeframe for when these assessments will most likely be administered; and
- identifies a student's or parent's right to excuse the student from testing.

Districts and public charter schools must provide parents and adult students with the ODE-developed annual notice at the beginning of each school year. A link to the ODE-developed annual notice will be included in the preliminary Test Administration Manual available each May for the upcoming school year.

30-Day Notice Requirement

Districts and public charter schools must provide parents and adult students with a 30-day notice prior to administering the statewide summative assessments in Math and ELA using the ODE 30-day notice and opt-out form. A link to the ODE 30-day notice and opt-out form will be included in the final Test Administration Manual published no later than October. School districts and public charter schools are required to use these documents to communicate with all parents about state testing requirements and their right to opt-out.

The Opt-out Form

The opt-out form included with the 30-day notice instructs parents wishing to opt their child out of the grade-level Smarter Balanced assessments to return the signed form to their child's school. Schools are responsible for notifying their district test coordinator of all opt-out forms received and for coordinating with the school district to ensure that students for whom an opt-out form was submitted are appropriately coded with Administration Code X in Student Centered Staging.

Supervised Study Time and Diploma Requirements

HB 2655 requires school districts and public charter schools to provide supervised study time for students who opt-out of testing. The bill also reiterates current Essential Skills policy and graduation requirements, in that a student who opts out of testing may not be denied a diploma if they are able to satisfy all other diploma requirements. Students who do opt-out of the Smarter Balanced state tests, however, still need to meet the Essential Skills graduation requirement using another approved assessment option.

School Report Card Rating

As required by HB 2655, ODE will develop an alternate rating on the school report card for schools that do not meet the federally mandated 95 percent state assessment participation requirement for all student groups. These alternate ratings will first appear on the 2015-16 report cards. To support ODE's ability to accurately identify the impact of opt-outs on a school's participation rates, ODE will engage district stakeholders through the Data Collection Committee to identify any needed changes to the data collection requirements. As changes are identified, ODE will provide further communication to school districts and public charter schools in as timely a manner as possible.