



JOY HOFMEISTER

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

July 15, 2015

Dear Parents,

In response to the concerns our offices have received from parents and educators about state mandated tests, we want to provide some guidance to school districts, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the growing "opt-out" movement. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) is committed to continuing to work with legislators to find balance in our testing programs. In the meantime, we encourage an open dialogue between school districts and parents to reduce the anxiety associated with testing and related requirements. The Office of Assessments at the OSDE is available to answer any additional questions as well. Please know that we respect a parent's right to direct his or her own children's education. We hope the information provided below will be helpful as you make important decisions for your child.

Title 70, § 1210.508 and § 1210.523 of the Oklahoma Statutes requires that the State Board of Education conduct criterion-referenced tests in grades three through eight and conduct end-of-instruction exams in grades nine through twelve. In addition to the statutory requirements, the State Board of Education's administrative rule 210:10-13-2 states that "All public school districts shall administer the state mandated academic achievement tests of the OSTP to all students enrolled in the designated grades." Therefore, school districts are required to provide a test to every student enrolled in respective testing grades. Both the statute and the language in the promulgated rule require every school district to administer a test to every student enrolled in a tested grade/subject area.

Because of these statutory and rule requirements, there is no "opt-out" option offered through the OSDE. In addition, 70 O.S. § 5-117 states that local school boards of education do not have the authority to take actions inconsistent with state law or rules that have been adopted by the State Board of Education.

When a local school district receives a parental request not to test a student ("opt-out"), a school district is still required to provide a test to the student and document that an attempt was made to test and that the student chose not to participate in the assessment.

There may be consequences to the school site for those students who choose not to test, depending on the number of students within that site who do not participate in required assessments. A school site is required to test at least 95% of students enrolled in the site. Failure to do so will result in the district automatically earning a lower grade on the A-F Report Card. Failure to test 90% of students will result in an automatic F on the A-F Report Card.

The Oklahoma State School Boards Association has created *Standardized Testing: A Reference Guide for Oklahoma School Districts*. This guide provides additional information related to standardized testing <http://www.ossba.org/testing-reference-guide>.

Thank you for your engagement and advocacy for your child.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joy Hofmeister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Joy Hofmeister
State Superintendent of Public Instruction