

Testing opt-out/refusal guide for: Alaska

The following is a quick-reference guide for information on opting out or refusing tests in a specific state. We thank our supporters for assisting us in collecting these necessary details to encourage test refusals nationwide. If the reader feels that the information on this form is incomplete or inaccurate, please email unitedoptoutnational@gmail.com with additional details or corrections. Feel free to download and use this form as you see fit.

Form completed by [UOO Admin \(LM\)](#)

Contact information (email) unitedoptoutnational@gmail.com

LIST OF ASSESSMENTS

Please include, in addition to the main state test, all interim assessments, benchmarks, field tests, and other inventories (for example, DIBELS, MAP, or the Fountas and Pinnell BAS).

Note: In June 2013, the Alaska State Board of Education passed a new system of school accountability. While the details are pending publication, it is not believed that there are major changes in student testing.

Standards Based Assessments (SBA): Test is administered 3rd-10th grades in reading, writing and math.

Students in 4th, 8th and 10th grade also take a science test.

Each subject, students given 1 of 4 ratings: Advanced, Proficient, Below proficient, or Far below proficient

High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE): Taken in 10th grade, Includes tests in reading, writing and math. (standards-based tests)

Students are scored as either proficient or not proficient

Like the SBA, the HSGQE is a standards-based test that measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Alaska. Students can retake the test up to twice a year

Terra Nova CAT/6

Fifth grade and seventh grade: reading, writing (language arts) and math skills. This is a norm-referenced test that, based on a percentile rank, compares student with students nationally

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ABOVE ASSESSMENTS

Detail here important rules or regulations about assessments. For instance, specific graduation and promotion requirements, entrance requirements for special programs,

and/or proportions of final grades. These should be understood before an opt-out or refusal is considered.

SBA test scores do not determine if a student will be promoted to the next grade or held back. However, HSGQU is listed as a requirement for graduation.

PROCEDURES FOR OPT-OUT/REFUSAL

This section includes information on specific laws, statutes, and procedures, including loopholes, exceptions, alternatives, and potential consequences.

No specific opt out or refusal provision can be found for general students. Alaska expects all children to be tested, but is vague as to the consequences for not completing all tests. Official exemptions appear to be very limited. However, you may first attempt to see if your child qualifies. If they do not, then you may have to test the limits of refusal for the various tests.

URGENCY FOR OPT-OUT/REFUSAL

This section includes current issues and policies specific to this state, namely school budget issues, influence of outside groups, elections, and other issues affecting children. Please explain why opting out of high-stakes testing is important to saving public education in this state.

HST:

- Is not scientifically-based and fails to follow the U.S. Government's own data on learning.
- Fosters test driven education that is not meeting the individual/intellectual needs of students.
- Presents a racial and economic bias that is beneficial to white middle/upper class students and detrimental to second language students, impoverished students, and students of color.
- Is in opposition to the corrective action in gaps in opportunity and resources sanctioned by the Fiscal Fairness Act.
- Supports complicity of corporate interests rather than democracy based on public concerns.
- Fosters coercion over cooperation with regards to federal funding for public education.

- Promotes a culture of lying, cheating, and exploitation within the school community.
- Has used the achievement gap to foster a “de facto” segregation that has resulted in separate and unequal education for minorities.

Additionally, data collection of student's private information cannot be guaranteed security or that it will not be abused in some way by third party entities.

As Common Core is implemented, the number of tests and test-centric activities will increase dramatically. Low/poor test scores, which are likely to occur with more frequency with Common Core, will be used to fire teachers, replace human interaction with the internet /technology driven activities (even in elementary schools), and close community public schools and replace them with for-profit charter schools.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE TO INCLUDE IN OPT-OUT/REFUSAL

This section includes sample phrases or language relevant to specific procedures in this state and/or a complete sample opt-out/refusal letter.

Dear _____:

I am writing on behalf of _____ to opt him/her out of the (test name). He/she is neither permitted to take the exam during mandated testing days nor during designated make-up sessions. Additionally, I am requesting that the school make accommodations for meaningful alternative activities or assignments that will continue to promote his/her academic and intellectual growth. My child will not be in attendance if academically viable alternatives are not available. Furthermore, I must be guaranteed in writing that whatever option is taken, either alternative assignments or absence, my child will not face any negative consequences to, for example, course grades, social or behavioral evaluations, workload, promotion, or future classroom assignments.

Strict adherence to state and federal high-stakes standardized testing, including the extensive classroom preparation that occurs prior to test administration, prevents my child from receiving a well-rounded and engaging educational experience. Until focus on testable skills diminishes to a reasonable extent, I will continue to withhold my child from participation in the testing program, and I ask that you honor that decision.

I do apologize in advance for the inconvenience or scrutiny that this decision may cause the administration, the school, and staff.

Sincerely,

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

This section lists resources and organizations helpful in this state in the form of names, links, email contact information, or otherwise. This is an opportunity to build a grassroots base in this state.

For more information on Assessment, Accountability and Student Information:

Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development

801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500

Telephone: (907) 465-2800
TTY/TTD: (907) 465-2815
Fax: (907) 465-4156

<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/>

STATE SPECIFIC WATCH-LIST

This final section contains a list of names, organizations, or other entities to track or otherwise know by name when scanning local media. These are individuals and organizations that potentially undermine public education in this state and can include entities from outside the state that are influencing local affairs.

Note: Much of the Education Reform movement in Alaska is being spearheaded by organizations with a broader business focus.

Alaska Policy Forum

Make Alaska Competitive Coalition

ADDITIONAL OR MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Anything else we should know about education reform in your state?

Most recent educational protests have focused on budget reductions based on recent tax cuts granted to the oil industry. Organizations such as Backbone have joined in the fight to fully support public education, but have a broader focus.