

Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for IOWA

Form completed by UOO Administrator (CS)

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List of Assessments

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)

In Iowa, students in kindergarten through 8th grade take a norm-referenced test called the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). For students in kindergarten, the ITBS tests language and math skills. For students in 1st through 8th grade, it also includes reading, science and social studies tests.

Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED)

Students in 9th through 12th grade take the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), another norm-referenced test, in reading, language, math, science and social studies. Norm-referenced means that students' scores in Iowa are compared to the scores of their peers nationwide.

ITBS and ITED tests measure how students in Iowa compare with students in the same grade nationally in reading, language, math, science and social studies. A score at or above the 40th percentile is considered proficient.

ITBS and ITED test scores alone do not determine if a student will be promoted to the next grade or held back. However, students who receive low scores in reading, language, math, science or social studies might need additional instruction in those subject areas.

Iowa End-of-Course (IEOC) assessments measure the extent to which students have met academic standards of high school courses. The IEOC provides diagnostic information to help students identify strengths and weaknesses in specific content areas found in the Iowa Core Curriculum. Results help to monitor student progress throughout the high school career, giving students the opportunity for enrichment or remediation. Results can be used by teachers to help make instruction more effective. Schools and districts can help evaluate the performance of students within specific courses. The IEOCs are being developed to match the courses most frequently offered in math, science, and social studies.

The IARA, Using both the Standards from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Common Core State Standards as guides, is intended to help teachers and counselors make more informed decisions regarding the initial placement of students in the secondary mathematics curriculum. While the recommendations of current and former teachers must be given great weight, additional information about mathematics achievement and foundational knowledge is also important. The IARA provides this information in an easy-to-administer format so that determinants of algebra readiness are well informed and timely.

Price

The IARA is \$2.75 for each student tested.

Logramos® is an achievement battery for grades K-12 developed by Riverside Publishing Co. to be compatible in content and process with the skills measured by the Iowa Tests. Thus, performance on Logramos is an indication of the level of student achievement that we might expect of the student if he/she took the Iowa Tests as a native-English speaker.

Qualls Early Learning Inventory - This inventory for grades pre-K through 1 uses teacher ratings of many of the student characteristics that are important for success in the primary grades. The purpose of this program is to offer an efficient assessment of primary students' skills and behaviors that can be used to supplement test score information obtained from the *Iowa Assessments* achievement battery.

Constructed Response Supplement - This set of materials includes assessment tools that are 30-minute assessments in Reading, Math, and Language for grades 3-12, each requiring students to furnish or construct their responses to the questions asked. The purpose of this program is to offer additional opportunities to assess student achievement in core curricular areas using a different format than is used in the *Iowa Assessments* achievement batteries.

Iowa Writing Assessment - The Iowa Writing Assessment (IWA) is a set of materials and procedures that permits a school system to conduct its own writing assessment in any of grades 3-12. The purpose of the program is to assess students' abilities to generate, organize, and express their ideas in response to specific writing situations.

Special considerations for the above assessments

Iowa has no assessment requirements for promotion or for high school graduation. Iowa has already implemented its own form of Common Core State Standards and data collection tools.

Procedures for opt-out/refusal

1. Submit an opt out letter to the school site administrator, which includes your rights as the parent or legal guardian of the student (see **Get Tough Guide** on UOO website).
2. Provide your own written statement that you are aware you are not required to keep your child home during the testing window.
3. Secure alternative in school academic assignments/activities for your child during the testing window.

4. Know the legal requirements for high school graduation, but advocate for alternative assessments to be used to determine student proficiency in the required subjects such as a portfolio review for elementary and middle school students, all of which are voluntary and will provide the parent with the student's actual completed work demonstrating proficiency.

4. Be adamant in your resolve to exempt your child from testing, which can include any or all the following:

- Seeking legal assistance
- Seeking police protection if your child meets with verbal or physical force in an attempt to have him/her report to a testing area
- Organizing and attending regular meetings with opt out support groups or consult online groups
- Contacting any of the United Opt Out administrators for additional support or information

Urgency for opt-out/refusal

Testing in Iowa is very low stakes in comparison to many states. Children are not retained or prohibited from graduating from high school as a consequence of testing. Additionally, the data collection seems to be contained within the academic community. The only concern is if a parent does not agree with the amount of class time relegated to testing or the testing used for early childhood.

Sample language to include in opt-out/refusal

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that our child will not be participating in state standardized testing during the current school year. Furthermore, we ask that no record of this testing be part of our child's permanent file, as we do not wish our child to participate in standardized achievement testing for promotion, graduation, or school/state report cards.

We believe the following of forced, high stakes testing:

- 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 detrimental to second language students, impoverished students, and students of color
- Violates fiscal fairness in funding schools

- 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

We understand that federal law provides the parent or guardian the right of choice regarding standardized testing when such testing violates beliefs. In contrast to our beliefs, which are firmly rooted in a moral code that embraces equity and fairness, we believe such testing is not in the best interests of our child since it fosters competition instead of cooperation, contributes to separate and unequal education for minorities, and belies our child's intellectual, creative, and problem-solving abilities, while presenting a fictitious picture as to the impact of the pedagogy provided by our child's individual educators.

Ultimately, our state is required to provide our child with an education in a least restrictive environment that does not force us to go against our core beliefs. My child should proceed to learn and develop at an individual pace following education standards that are imparted under the guidance of education professionals, not market-based reformers, who are able to provide quality pedagogy without fear of reprisal if students - who mature at vastly different levels and come from diverse backgrounds that may or may not be supportive of intellectual pursuit - do not hit the bulls' eye of a constantly moving achievement target.

Therefore, we request that the school provide appropriate learning activities during the testing window and utilize an alternative assessment portfolio or concordant college testing score to fulfill promotion and or graduation requirements, as our child opts out of standardized testing.

Sincerely,

Child's Name _____

ID# _____

Resources and organizations

Beth Barnhill at enebarnh@aol.com for opting out information

State specific watch-list

Students First Iowa <http://www.studentsfirst.org/pages/iowas-plan-for-education-reform>

Michelle Rhee

<http://www.blogforiowa.com/2013/05/21/michelle-rhee-group-students-first-to-increase-presence-in-iowa/>

Additional or miscellaneous information

None

DO NOT EDIT United opt Out