

Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for: VERMONT

Form completed by United Opt Out Admin (LM)

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List of Assessments

Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) Statewide assessments include:

New England Common Assessment Program

- The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) mathematics, reading and writing: administered in grades 3-8 and 11 each October.
- The NECAP science: administered to all students in grades 4, 8 and 11 each May.
- Schools also assess student performance in additional subject areas and at additional grade levels using portfolios (collections of student work), norm-referenced standardized tests, and locally developed assessments.

NECAP Online Writing Pilot Program

Offered to grades 7, 8 and 11. Following a very successful second year, Measured Progress is expanding the program to provide additional schools with the chance to participate in the Online Pilot in order for the schools to do the NECAP Writing Assessment online this October. The pilot test dates are March 25-29 and April 1-5, 2013.

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment.html

(Updated February 2013)

Dynamic Learning Maps

Vermont has joined the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment Consortium (13 states: Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin).

The DLM Consortium is developing the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment system, a computer-based assessment for the 1% of the K-12 public school student population with significant cognitive disabilities for whom, even with accommodations, general state assessments are not appropriate. It will be implemented during the 2014-2015 school year.

The DLM system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction. In this way, testing happens as part of instruction...An end of the year assessment will be created for states that want to include a summative test in addition to the instructionally embedded

system... Every student who is participating in an alternate assessment in each of the 14 consortium states will be required to participate in the First Contact Survey. This survey has been designed to compile student data that will eventually assist in the completion of the online alternate assessment.

Questions about DLM can be directed to:

Cindy Moran, Alternate Assessment Program Coordinator, VT AOE
cindy.moran@state.vt.us or (802) 828-0646 or
Joanne Godek, Director of Educational Support Systems, SBSB
jgodek@sbschools.net or (802) 652-7392

Per http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Memo_2012_02_04_Vermont_Joins_Dynamic_Learning_Maps.pdf

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

Vermont is one of 28 member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium which will produce new tests for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics that will be fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and use state of the art Computer Adaptive Testing and accessibility technologies.

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment.html

Special considerations for the above assessments

Vermont does not appear to require testing for graduation or use it as the basis for promotion.

Procedures for opt-out/refusal

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

Students are expected to participate in NECAP testing unless a student qualifies for alternate assessment or an exemption for medical reasons, family emergency or personal crisis.

Per http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment.html

However, we have been told that parents can opt their children out by informing their school in writing of their desire not to participate. The procedure for not participating is not detailed on the Department of Education website or in code, so each school may handle this differently.

Urgency for opt-out/refusal

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

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

For more information on Assessment, Accountability and Student Information:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment.html

Susan Ohanian <http://www.susanohanian.org/>

State specific watch-list

Bruce Lisman, founder of Campaign for Vermont <http://campaignforvermont.org/who-we-are-Bruce-Lisman.php>

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Additional or miscellaneous information

Nothing available at this time.