

Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for Washington

Form completed by United Opt Out Administrator (MM)

Special thanks to Opt Out Washington for their amazing website which served as the source for much of the information in this guide: <https://sites.google.com/site/optoutwashington>

Contact information (email): OptOutWA @ gmail.com

List of assessments

All students in Washington are given the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in elementary and middle school.

The MSP is given in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8, in writing in grades 4 and 7 and in science in grades 5 and 8.

All students are given the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) in 10th grade in Reading and Writing and is also required to pass the End of Course Exam (EOC) in Algebra/Integrated Math 1 or Geometry/Integrated Math 2 for the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014.

For the graduating classes of 2015 and beyond students will be required to pass the 10th grade HSPE in Reading and Writing, the EOC in Algebra/Integrated Math 1 and Geometry/Integrated Math 2 and an additional EOC in Biology.

There are additional tests which apply to specific students populations or that are currently being phased in around the state. For a complete list of state tests go to OSPI's overview of state tests.

Special considerations for the above assessments

Seattle has successfully “scrapped the map”

At the elementary and middle level state tests are not “high-stakes”-The tests are not tied to course credit, advancement or graduation. Even at the high school level there are alternatives to the HSPE and EOC tests, though these tests are currently tied to graduation.

Washington state has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and with new standards come new tests that are being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The SBAC tests will also run from grade 3 through grade 8, but will have 11th grade tests instead of 10th grade tests. From 2013 to 2020 each graduating class will have a different set of graduation requirements as measured solely by which tests they will have to pass.

Procedures for opt-out/refusal

There are no negative consequences for your student, your student's teacher, your school, or the District if your student doesn't take the MSP.

According to Dora at <http://seattleducation2010.wordpress.com/2012/04/05/opting-out-of-the-testing-madness-why-and-how/> “A note to the principal of your student's school requesting that your child be offered an alternative option to taking the MAP test during that testing period should be adequate. I have heard some parents say that they have had to write a note for each testing phase which occurs three times each school year and other parents say that they only had to write the note once. It seems to be up to the principal at this time.”

Parents and guardians who want to opt their kids out of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test **may need to do so for every MAP session** — that is, send **three separate opt-out letters each year**.

One opt-out letter at the beginning of the year *may not* cover all three testing sessions.

To opt-out of MAP: parents/guardians need to write a short letter to their school's MAP administrator stating that they want their child to be exempt for that session.

In lieu of the testing, request a high-quality instructional alternative (not just worksheets or study hall) that allows learning to continue.

Urgency for opt-out/refusal

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 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.

Low/poor test scores, which are likely to occur with more frequency with Common Core and PARCC will be used to fire teachers, create more online learning scenarios even in elementary schools, and close more public schools to be replaced with for profit charter schools.

Sample language to include in opt-out/refusal

Sample Opt Out Letter retrieved at: <https://sites.google.com/site/optoutwashington/>

Sample MSP Opt-Out Letter

Dear _____,

I do not want my student to take the MSP. Washington State and our school districts should be spending money on smaller class sizes, updated curriculum, more assistance in the classroom, and more resources for our students instead of wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on standardized tests that are not a good measure of what my student has learned.

Please do not pull my student from his/her classes for any test preparation activities.

Please provide my student with an alternative high-quality learning opportunity while other students are taking the MSP.

Please do not contact me and try to change my mind about this decision.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date Signed: _____

Student's Name: _____

School: _____

Student's Grade Level: _____

Return this form to the Main Office at your student's school.

Resources and organizations

Teacher Work Group on Assessment that gathered some 20 educators from around Seattle to research testing and develop criteria for what should replace the MAP test.

Support Schools Snohomish in the state of Washington has established a Facebook page regarding opting out of standardized testing.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EdmondsOptsOut>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/We-Support-Schools-Snohomish>

<https://www.facebook.com/SolidarityWithGarfieldHighSchoolTestingBoycott>

State specific watch-list

Democrats for education Reform-Washington: <http://www.dfer.org/branches/wa/>

Stand for Children

The Washington Coalition for Public Charter Schools <http://www.wacharters.org/our-supporters/>

The Washington Round Table Partnership for Learning

<http://www.partnership4learning.org/who-we-are>

Additional or miscellaneous information

In 2012 over five hundred students were opted-out in Snohomish and there were no consequences to anyone.

State test scores are not used in the teacher evaluation process. While “student growth” will be a part of the new teacher evaluation system, that growth is not tied to state test scores. Reading and mathematics are clearly critical elements of a student’s education, they are not the only elements.