

Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for: WYOMING

Form completed by UOO Admin (LM)

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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).

PAWS: The Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students, PAWS, is a summative assessment in reading, mathematics, and science. The PAWS in reading and mathematics is administered once a year in grades 3-8. The PAWS science assessment is administered in grades 4 and 8.

PAWS-ALT: The PAWS-Alternate (PAWS-ALT) is given once a year to students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics and in grades 4 and 8 in science, and grade 11. An alternate assessment will be developed for grades 9, 10 and 12.

PAWS-ALT and SAWS-ALT are given once a year to students with significant cognitive disabilities in grade 11. An alternate assessment will be developed for grades 9, 10 and 12.

SAWS: The Student Assessment of Writing Skills (SAWS) is a summative writing assessment administered once a year. Beginning in the spring of 2014, SAWS will be administered in grades 3, 5, and 7 only.

SAWS-ALT: SAWS-ALT is for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Beginning in the spring of 2014, SAWS-ALT will be administered in grades 3, 5, 7, and grade 11. An alternate assessment will be developed for grades 9, 10 and 12.

ACCESS for ELLS/ ACCESS-ALT for ELLS: The ACCESS for ELLs® is required once a year with all students who are English language learners. It assesses students' progress in attaining English proficiency.

EXPLORE: EXPLORE is the initial assessment of the ACT College and Career Readiness System. It assesses students' achievement in English, math, reading, and science. This assessment will be administered to all 9th graders for the first time in the spring of 2013

PLAN: PLAN is the second assessment of the ACT College and Career Readiness System, and it is administered once a year to all 10th graders. It assesses students' achievement in English, math, reading, and science.

ACT Plus, Writing: ACT Plus Writing is the capstone of the ACT College and Career Readiness System. It measures students' general learning outcomes in English, math,

reading, writing, and science. This assessment is given once a year to all students in the 11th grade.

WorkKeys: *WorkKeys* is an optional assessment in grade 11 in 2014, and is used to assess a student's job skills. In prior years, WorkKeys was available as a substitute to the ACT; however, it can no longer be substituted per state statute.

COMPASS: COMPASS is an optional computer-adaptive college placement assessment. Students are to be given the opportunity to take this assessment at least one (1) time during their senior year.

NAEP: In addition to the statewide assessment system, Wyoming schools and students also participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, every other year. (Grades 4 & 8)

Special considerations for the above assessments

All students are expected to participate in the Wyoming State Assessment System. However, on behalf of the student, school administrators may apply for exemption from participation. An exemption request must meet certain criteria and current documentation must be submitted with each request. Documentation is to be submitted by either fax to 307-777-6234, attention Pari Swanson or mailed to the Wyoming Department of Education, 2300 Capitol Avenue, 2nd Floor Hathaway Building, Cheyenne, WY 82002, attention Pari Swanson before the due date. DO NOT send confidential student information via email. COLLECTION PERIOD: 1/11/2013 - 4/1/2013

I also found this information:

3.5 Disruptive students:

Any student who disrupts testing should be subject to the disciplinary procedures established by the school for such occurrences. These types of disruptions include, but are not limited to, refusing to participate, trying to receive help from other students, and engaging in behaviors not consistent with acceptable classroom behavior. The Test Administrator must gather the testing materials, and the student should be escorted to the principal's office. The student must be informed that his or her opportunity to participate in the test has been revoked, and the Test Administrator must document the incident according to district guidelines...

..If a student is disrupting the testing room to the extent that he or she must be dismissed, the dismissal should be noted on the Test Administration Incident Report Form. It is up to the Test Administrator to determine if the Student TAB should be scored or marked "VOID."

AND

Students not taking the PAWS MUST be officially exempted by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE). The school's participation rate will be affected for each student who is not tested and is not officially exempted.

Information about exemptions can be found on the WDE Website at <http://edu.wyoming.gov> Click on the Programs tab and then the Data Collections Suite. Questions regarding exemptions should be directed to the Assessment Division, Wyoming Department of Education, Cheyenne, WY at (307) 777-8586

Resources:

<http://edu.wyoming.gov/DataInformationAndReporting/DataCollectionSuite/WDE673>

http://edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/statewide_assessment_system.aspx **Wyoming Statewide Assessment System**

http://wyedu.ets.org/rsc/pdf/96462_web.pdf **2013 Directions for Administration: PAWS**

<http://edu.wyoming.gov/DataInformationAndReporting/DataCollectionSuite.aspx>
Wyoming DOE Data Collection Suite

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. Wyoming 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

Sample Opt Out 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:

Feb 2011 Article:

http://trib.com/news/local/casper/national-organization-targets-wyoming-teachers/article_58932d38-a7ea-5c85-9ba0-db8df0640f4f.htm

Wyoming Policy Institute Rep. Steve Harshman, R-Casper, said he's concerned about the national influence on education debate in Wyoming. "This movement isn't coming from the average Wyoming guy who's working today to put food on the table," Harshman said. "This is coming from the wealthiest, most privileged folks in our state, and why they decided to jump in on this I don't know."

Harshman, who has been a teacher for 23 years, said the facts used by the organization (Teachers Union Exposed, a project of the Center for Union Facts, a nonprofit based in Washington, D.C.) are a "total distortion" of the truth. For example, the site says one in four high school students doesn't pass the exam required to join the U.S. Army. Wyoming actually has the lowest military exam ineligibility rate -- 13 percent -- in the country...

State specific watch-list

Wyoming Citizens for Educational Choice

http://www.pbs.org/closingtheachievementgap/resources_orgs.html

John Wold, Casper oilman: He brought "Waiting for Superman" to theaters across the state. http://trib.com/news/local/casper/national-organization-targets-wyoming-teachers/article_58932d38-a7ea-5c85-9ba0-db8df0640f4f.html

StepUpWyoming.com

AdvancED Wyoming <http://www.advanc-ed.org/locations/wyoming-office>

Additional or miscellaneous information

The contract for the provider of PAWS, SAWS, and the corresponding ALTs expires after spring 2014, and developments for 2015- need to either buy or purchase one. State is considering continuing with its current vendor, ETS or changing to greater use of SBAC products purchasing the ACT/PEARSON ASPIRE program that is being developed to align with common core. Wyoming is a politically conservative state, so it may help to consider that in how arguments against testing are crafted.