

Things every parent should know about student participation in statewide assessments under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



The Every Student Succeeds Act outlines how states can use federal money to support public schools. New York receives \$1.6 billion in federal funding each year to support its public schools.

What are the statewide assessment participation requirements under ESSA?

ESSA requires that every state assess all students in English language arts and math each year in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school. While New York State does not have any laws regarding parent rights to choose whether their children participate in state testing, federal law requires that:

- < States must ensure that 95% of students in each public school, including charter schools, participate yearly in required state assessments.
 - o This applies to all student subgroups, which include racial/ethnic groups, English Language Learners, Multilingual Learners, low-income students, and students with disabilities
- < If requested, school districts and charter schools are required to provide parents with information on state or local policies regarding the rights of parents to choose not to have their children participate in state testing.
- < States are not required to create or change any laws they have in place regarding parent preference on participation in assessments.

What happens to my child if I advise the school that I prefer that my child not participate?

There are no consequences for a child who does not participate in a state assessment. However, state assessment results are used to help:

- < Parents learn about their child's academic achievement;
- < Teachers understand how well students are learning what is being taught;
- < School district, and state education leaders determine what is and is not working well;
- < Stakeholders identify achievement gaps that may be forming among different student populations.

When too few students participate in complete state assessments, districts can recognize gaps and provide support to the students who need it the most. Students who do not do well on a state assessment, or who are not on track to become proficient in ELA, math, science, and social studies can qualify for instructional support, guidance counseling, attendance improvement services, and help with study skills.

What will my child do during testing if I advise my school that I prefer that my child should not participate?

Districts have flexibility to allow students to engage in other activities such as reading quietly in the room where the test is given or participating in other activities in different rooms while the test is administered. For students who do not participate in state assessments, districts may have students engage in other learning activity during this time.

