

Back up to #16-79, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Ms. Dexter

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Refusals to Take an Assessment:

As the spring assessment administration nears, please keep in mind that participation in statewide assessments is required of all students enrolled in public schools in the relevant grade levels. The state assessments provide important feedback to families, teachers, administrators, and state policymakers as to where schools are succeeding and where schools and districts need to enhance their efforts.

In some instances, a student may refuse to take a test, either of his/her own volition or at the direction of a parent. In these cases, we ask principals to encourage parents to rethink their refusal and remind them that the assessments are a valuable gauge of their student's and school's progress. We ask principals and test proctors to handle refusals with sensitivity. Students should not be pressured to take the test, nor should they be punished for not taking the test. They may sit quietly and read in the testing room, but if they are distracting others in the class who are taking the test, it would be appropriate to have them move to another location in the school with adult supervision. There is no requirement to provide formal or informal instruction to these students during the test period; having them do homework or read a book is sufficient, provided that the material is separate from the content being assessed in the testing room.

For students who refuse to take MCAS paper tests, no special reporting is needed. If no answer form is submitted for a student or if a blank answer form is submitted, the student will automatically be considered absent. For students who refuse to take the PARCC test on paper or on a computer, the test administrator will need to go into PearsonAccessNext to manage the student's account and mark them as Not Tested, Absent, for each test they refused to take. Additionally, if the student started an online test session before refusal, that test will need to be marked complete by the test administrator. The Department strongly suggests that the test administrator document the student refusal and keep it on record at the school in case questions arise later about the school's participation rate.