

North Carolina Standardized Testing and Opting Out

All students in North Carolina (including students with disabilities and students identified as ELs) are required to participate in the Annual Testing Program per state and federal requirements. North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required testing unless there are extenuating circumstances, primarily related to serious health conditions. N.C. Admin.

[Code 06G .0315](#) requires all students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) participate in the Annual Testing Program.

The [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) requires each state educational agency to implement in each district and school, a set of high-quality academic tests that includes, at a minimum, annual tests in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. Mathematics and reading or language arts tests are to be administered in each of grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12. Science tests are to be administered at least once during grades 3 through 5, grades 6 through 9, and grades 10 through 12. Furthermore, as amended by 1005 of Public Law 114–95, ESSA requires state tests to “be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State.” [ESSA](#) requires all states to “provide for the participation in such assessments of all students.” These federal requirements do not allow students to be excluded from statewide tests. Rather, they define the legal requirement that all students in the tested grades must be tested.

Parents and guardians who request that their students not be tested or refuse to allow their students to test must be informed of the state’s testing requirements and any possible academic outcomes for not permitting their students to test.

If eligible students are present in the classroom on test day, the test administrator must administer tests to all eligible students in membership. If a student attends a test session but chooses not to answer any test questions, they will be assigned the lowest possible score. Schools do not have the option to remove a student’s test from scoring. The student’s grade for the course and overall grade point average calculation may be negatively affected by receiving the lowest possible score.