



# YOU CAN OPT OUT KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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**Many parents are concerned about the impact of state-mandated standardized testing on their children. The California Teachers Association is providing this information to let parents know their rights regarding opting out of high-stakes testing for their children.**

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**What is the CAASPP System?** California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) is the state's system of mandated and optional assessments. It currently includes three types of mandated tests: Smarter Balanced Assessments, California Alternate Assessments, and California Science Assessments. The Smarter Balanced Assessments are in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 through 8 and 11. For more information on CAASPP, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca>.

**Can parents opt out of state testing for their child?** Yes. [California Education Code section 60615](#) allows a parent or guardian to submit a written request to school officials to exclude his or her child from any or all parts of state-mandated assessments. [Section 852 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations](#) further provides that parents or guardians may annually submit a written request to the school to excuse their child from any or all parts of CAASPP for the school year.

**How do parents opt out of standardized testing for their child?** Check specifics with your school district, but generally, parents write a letter to the superintendent or school principal letting them know that their child will not take part in the specific test (name the test) this year, and ask that the school make arrangements for a productive educational experience for their child during the testing period.

**How will opting out of testing affect my child's grades or academic standing?** Currently, there are no state-mandated consequences for students who do not take the Smarter Balanced Assessments or other state-mandated tests.

**Is opting out of testing legal?** Yes. While there are federal laws requiring states to administer these tests to at least 95% of eligible students, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) recognizes a parent's right to refuse testing in states that have opt-out laws. California Education Code section 60615 allows a parent or guardian to submit a written request to school officials to exclude his or her child from any or all parts of state-mandated assessments. Section 852 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations provides that parents or guardians may annually submit a written request to the school to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP for the school year.

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**What will my child do while the tests are administered?** Most students are given an alternative educational activity during that time.

**What if a parent submits a request to opt out after CAASPP testing has already started?** If the parent's request is submitted after testing has begun, any completed tests will be scored and the results will be reported to the parent or guardian and included in the pupil's records.

**Does opting out cost my school or district money?** Under ESSA, the federal government may withhold funding to states that dip below the 95% threshold and is encouraging states to create their own sanctions on local districts. To date, no federal funding has ever been withheld from a state, and California currently has no state sanctions against local school districts that don't meet the threshold.

**What is CTA's position on testing?** CTA believes assessments should be used to inform instruction and improve student learning. They are not meant to label students or schools. State tests must be age and subject appropriate, and must be free from cultural, racial, gender, socioeconomic and linguistic biases. A true reflection of student achievement and improvement is always done through multiple measures and can never focus on just one test score.

**What can I do to support learning over testing?** Connect with and share your views with your local education association, PTA, school site council and school board. Work with teachers and parents in your district to develop your Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) with a focus on learning over testing.

**Where can I get more information?** Get more information through organizations like CTA ([www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org)), the National Education Association ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)), FairTest ([www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)), Parents Across America ([www.parentsacrossamerica.org](http://www.parentsacrossamerica.org)), and United Opt Out ([www.unitedoptout.com](http://www.unitedoptout.com)).