



May 11, 2015

Dear Parents of Davis District Students,

Many of you have questions about opting out of standardized tests. In order to improve communication and inform you of the district procedures, here is a list of frequently asked questions.

Q: To which tests do opt out procedures apply?

A: Utah law allows parents to opt students out of any statewide standardized assessment (SAGE summative, SAGE interim, ACT, DIBELS). The Davis district applies the same to district standardized tests (1st and 2nd grade CRTs and kindergarten testing) as well as classroom tests created in the SAGE formative system.

Q: How do I opt a student out of tests?

A: Opt out requests should be submitted each year by a parent to a school administrator. Written requests may be submitted in person or by email. The administrator will make note of the request and inform the student's teachers that the test should not be administered.

Q: Is there any penalty for opting out of a test?

A: No. A student's course grades, advancement to the next class, or eligibility for academic programs will not be adversely affected by a parent's decision to opt out of testing. Sometimes test results are used to help determine placement in academic programs (like honors classes). Opting out of testing does not affect eligibility for placement in any program, but in the absence of test scores, parents should work closely with school personnel to ensure that students have opportunity to be placed in the most appropriate course. Teachers should also ensure that students who have opted out do not feel embarrassed or singled out in any way during class.

Q: Can teachers use SAGE scores in calculating student grades?

A: No. Recently passed legislation states that SAGE scores (and scores from other state required tests) may not be used on student grades. The Davis district has implemented this directive for the current (2014-15) school year. If a teacher would like to include some kind of participation incentive, they may as long as individual student test scores are not considered and as long as students who opted out of testing also have opportunity to receive the participation incentive.

Q: Can the teacher provide an alternative activity for a student who has opted out?

A: Yes. The activity should be meaningful and one that can be completed during the class periods when the rest of the students are taking the SAGE test. The activity should not require additional time (at home or during non-testing class time), nor should it be unreasonably difficult or punitive. As with SAGE scores, student scores on any alternate activity should not be used in determining academic grades. Otherwise the alternate assignment could be viewed as an academic penalty for opting out.

Q: Can a student who has opted out of a test remain with the class during testing?

A: Yes. Students who have opted out may remain with their class during testing, but they should not login to the testing system, or view test material.

Q: Will opting out of the test effect teacher evaluations?

A: No. Opt out requests do not directly affect class-level test results. In the rare case that many high-achieving students opt out, a class-level test report may show lower scores than if the high-achieving students had not opted out. However, teacher evaluations are not negatively affected by class-level test results.

Please reach out to a school or district administrator if you have further concerns.

Sincerely,



Dr. Logan T. Toone, Director
Assessment Department