

## **Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for: WEST VIRGINIA**

**Form completed by Peggy Robertson**

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### **List of Assessments**

WESTEST 2 (West Virginia Educational Standards Test) includes online writing

HEAP (Health Assessment)

Fitness Gram (Physical Fitness Assessment)

(NAEP) NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

(APTA) ALTERNATE PERFORMANCE TASK ASSESSMENT

WORK KEYS

Global 21 Career/Technical Education (CTE) Performance Assessment

WESTELL

Early Learning Scale

Teaching Strategies GOLD

ACT EXPLORE\* (Grade 8)

ACT PLAN\* (Grade 10)

Optional Assessments:

Golden Horseshoe

(PIRLS) Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PISA) Program for International Student Assessment

(ODBIA) Online District Benchmark Interim Assessment

(OTA) Online Technology Assessment

State Support:

Acuity

Creative Curriculum.net

DIBELS or Other Informal Assessments

Riverdeep

techSteps

TestMate Clarity  
Odyssey  
West Virginia Writes

WESTEST FAQ [http://wvde.state.wv.us/oa/WESTEST2\\_FAQ.html#test](http://wvde.state.wv.us/oa/WESTEST2_FAQ.html#test)

Participation guidelines for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency:  
<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3ZkZS5rMTIud3YudXN8b2Fhcil1maWxlLWNhYmluZXR8Z3g6MmY0YjVmYmJjYTIzZjEwMw>

Parent brochure for Westest: [https://7c57f2b1-a-4e227265-s-sites.googlegroups.com/a/wvde.k12.wv.us/oaar-file-cabinet/westest-2/2011WESTEST2ParentBrochure.pdf?attachauth=ANoY7cqV40PvI9TGDcRC9ZTWzDSwm20ReQb7bQaQZz1S9WEuXUCT4rT3aDlpP1gzM27qRphuIwR5HNYrKuu-pFy2otJ\\_7Nh5IVcXm3lnvHAhErz1s2LxygSk\\_WLmLFC8JPUkrEhr7kapCknmThnTgkvLd4BPbgF6txOjdvRP0gCmCz-Qt1ckNRQ0\\_N\\_qWXT62nu54hkmcWVeWpXE-1kvSTKhTWFQnw\\_CbJ8t9slllWQPsUz1GUEhggSPOvoniuFU8EuNLqZEb69&attredirects=0](https://7c57f2b1-a-4e227265-s-sites.googlegroups.com/a/wvde.k12.wv.us/oaar-file-cabinet/westest-2/2011WESTEST2ParentBrochure.pdf?attachauth=ANoY7cqV40PvI9TGDcRC9ZTWzDSwm20ReQb7bQaQZz1S9WEuXUCT4rT3aDlpP1gzM27qRphuIwR5HNYrKuu-pFy2otJ_7Nh5IVcXm3lnvHAhErz1s2LxygSk_WLmLFC8JPUkrEhr7kapCknmThnTgkvLd4BPbgF6txOjdvRP0gCmCz-Qt1ckNRQ0_N_qWXT62nu54hkmcWVeWpXE-1kvSTKhTWFQnw_CbJ8t9slllWQPsUz1GUEhggSPOvoniuFU8EuNLqZEb69&attredirects=0)

### **Special considerations for the above assessments**

Currently we are aware of students who have opted out of WESTEST with no repercussions. There was also an article shared recently which states, “Parents can send a formal letter requesting to opt their child out of the test and a committee will see if that student is eligible to opt out.” See article here: <http://www.wtov9.com/news/news/wva-standardized-tests-have-varying-effects-on-stu/nDbGy/>

In West Virginia, we have not found any high stakes attached to any testing other than WESTEST, in which 95% of students must participate for results to be valid. If a large group of students do not take the test, there is the possibility that the test results simply will be void as discussed by Dr. Yong Zhao ([http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teacher\\_in\\_a\\_strange\\_land/2011/09/opting\\_out.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teacher_in_a_strange_land/2011/09/opting_out.html)) However, this does threaten a school’s AYP rating. Even so, we have never seen a school shut down due to parents opting their children out of the state test. We have, however, seen schools shut down due to parents opting in. The question we must ask ourselves is, do we do more harm to our schools by continuing to allow our students to take tests, which do not improve learning, yet profit corporations using our tax dollars? We must ask ourselves, do we want our children to go to schools which focus on test prep and tests, or do we want our children to receive an education full of creative, critical and conceptual thinking? West Virginia received a waiver to NCLB, which means they have accepted the mandates of Race to the Top. The mandates of Race to the Top include much more testing than No Child Left Behind.

## **Procedures for opt-out/refusal**

The only potential consequence we can find at this point is the 95% AYP for WESTEST. Other than that, we have found no additional consequences at this point.

As stated previously, we have had successful opt outs in WV.

## **Urgency for opt-out/refusal**

This section includes current issues and policies specific to this state, namely school budget issues, influence of outside groups, elections, and other issues affecting children. Please explain why opting out of high-stakes testing is important to saving public education in this state.

It is our understanding that teacher evaluation in West Virginia will be connected to high stakes testing. This will increase the teach to the test culture, therefore, it is paramount that we oppose high stakes testing, and any corporate tests that do not inform teacher instruction. Teachers already know how to assess. See here for more information regarding teacher evaluation in WV:

[http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill\\_Status/bills\\_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4236%20intr.htm&yr=2012&sesstype=RS&i=4236](http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4236%20intr.htm&yr=2012&sesstype=RS&i=4236)

## **Sample language to include in opt-out/refusal**

Here is a letter that was used successfully in WV:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ to opt him/her out of the (test name). He/she is neither permitted to take the exam during mandated testing days nor during designated make-up sessions. Additionally, I am requesting that the school make accommodations for meaningful alternative activities or assignments that will continue to promote his/her academic and intellectual growth. My child will not be in attendance if academically viable alternatives are not available. Furthermore, I must be guaranteed in writing that whatever option is taken, either alternative assignments or absence, my child will not face any negative consequences to, for example, course grades, social or behavioral evaluations, workload, promotion, or future classroom assignments.

Strict adherence to state and federal high-stakes standardized testing, including the extensive classroom preparation that occurs prior to test administration, prevents my child from receiving a well-rounded and engaging educational experience. Until focus on testable skills diminishes to a reasonable extent, I will continue to withhold my child from participation in the testing program, and I ask that you honor that decision.

I do apologize in advance for the inconvenience or scrutiny that this decision may cause the administration, the school, and staff.

Sincerely,

### **Resources and organizations**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/168758196622305/?fref=ts>

[www.unitedoptout.com](http://www.unitedoptout.com)

<http://unitedoptout.com/united-opt-out-national-toolkit-opt-out-of-high-stakes-testing/>

<http://unitedoptout.com/parental-rights/>

### **State specific watch-list**

[http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/West\\_Virginia](http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/West_Virginia)

[http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/West\\_Virginia\\_ALEC\\_Politicians](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/West_Virginia_ALEC_Politicians)

<http://www.studentsfirst.org/page/group/WestVirginiaforEducationReform>

### **Additional or miscellaneous information**

We suggest demanding that National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) be used for those who feel a need to administer a standardized test. Read here to find out more: [http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/NUT\\_No\\_Unnecessary\\_Testing.pdf](http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/NUT_No_Unnecessary_Testing.pdf)

Additionally, if your school is participating in any field tests, these can easily be refused. Field tests are created to determine which questions to use on future tests, and, in essence, place students in a position of working for the corporations who develop these tests. We suggest refusing them.

If your child brings home homework in the form of test prep booklets, consider refusing these as well. Ask your child's teachers to provide alternative activities or creative projects in place of test preparation.