

2020 State Testing FAQ

Why is it important for students to participate in state assessments?

While state assessments are only one measure of student learning, having all Colorado students take these exams provides teachers and parents with answers to important questions including:

- Is my child mastering more rigorous grade-level standards? (For reference, Colorado has a series of educational standards known as the Colorado Academic Standards. These standards have raised the bar for students in order to prepare them for college and careers.)
- How well is my child doing on meeting state standards compared to other students?
- Is my child gaining real-world skills like problem-solving and critical thinking?
- What information does my child's teacher need to know to improve classroom instruction?

How can I help my child do their best on state assessments?

Parents and guardians can work with their child's teacher to identify strategies to enrich their education where he or she is already meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations. Likewise, your child's teacher can help identify resources to improve his or her performance where needed. Tutoring, after-school programs or at-home activities may be needed to help students practice their skills. Other helpful tips to prepare for state assessments include:

- Make sure your child is well-rested.
- Provide your child with well-balanced and nutritious meals to help them focus and perform their best.
- Ensure your child arrives at school before the bell rings so that he or she feels more at ease as testing begins.
- Assure your child that test scores are only one indicator of academic progress. Highlight your child's great skills and talents.
- Determine which skills to reinforce at home. The detailed breakdowns of specific skills on your child's score report serve as a great starting point for identifying areas that need improvement.
- Access more information about the Colorado Academic Standards at cde.state.co.us/communications/resourcesforparents

Why are ELL students required to take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Summative Assessment?

It is a state and federal requirement that all students meet English Language Proficiency standards. ELL students are required to take the WIDA ACCESS assessment to measure their progress toward English proficiency. Please visit the Colorado Department of Education's website for more information:

cde.state.co.us/assessment/ela.

What process should parents follow if they choose to opt out their children from the CMAS, PSAT or SAT exams?

State law allows parents/guardians to excuse their child from taking all state assessments except WIDA ACCESS. Parents/guardians should contact the principal of their child's school to discuss the opt out process. Parents/guardians can then complete a form and return it to the school's principal.

What will students who are excused from the exams do at school while other students are testing?

Schools are not required to provide instruction for students whose parents have opted them out. Students may have to sit in the front office reading a book or use the library to work on homework.

Can my child make up the exam if they have to miss school on a testing day?

APS offers make-up test days for all of the assessments. Please check with your child's school for dates and times.