

Test Participation and Refusal

State and Federally Required Assessments

All students enrolled in Virginia public schools are expected to take the applicable state tests. The Virginia Board of Education Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia state ([8VAC20-131-30](#)):.

1. Standards of Learning (SOL) or Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) state assessments are required for:
 - All students in grades 3-8 for all tested subjects at the grade level;
 - All middle and secondary students taking a course with an associated test and needing the test for federal participation or verified credit to graduate.
2. English learners in Virginia are expected to take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or another approved English language proficiency assessment.
3. Virginia Growth Assessments (VGA) are required ([HB2027](#) and [SB1357](#)) for reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 to measure progress throughout the school year.

Virginia regulations do not include what is sometimes referred to as an "opt out policy" for state assessments. However, state law allows parents and guardians to refuse SOL, VAAP, and/or VGA testing for their children. Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS) provides a process for schools to use when a parent and guardian wish to refuse state assessments. Schools use this process to make sure parents and guardians understand what refusal means for the student, including any potential impact for on-time graduation.

Federal law does not provide for parents and guardians to "opt out" or "refuse" English language proficiency assessments, including WIDA ACCESS for ELLs. However, parents and guardians may choose to decline participation for their student. RCPS provides a process for schools to use when parents and guardians wish to decline participation for these federal assessments. Schools use this process to make sure parents and guardians understand what declining participation means for the student.

What You Should Know Before Refusing a Test

A parent or guardian should consider the following important points before deciding to refuse any test:

- Your student will receive a score of zero (0) on the test and parent refusal will be listed as the reason on the score report. This becomes part of the student's permanent record (only Standards of Learning (SOL) or Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)). This will not directly impact the student's course grade or access to future coursework.
- Students need to pass certain SOL tests associated with high school credit-bearing classes in order to earn [verified credits](#) for Standard or Advanced diplomas. If you are requesting to refuse a test associated with a high school credit-bearing course, it may result in failure to graduate from high school. Consult with the school counselor for more information.
- The score of zero may count against the school in federal and/or state accountability and could impact the school accountability status.
- The refusal is only valid for the current school year for which the parent or guardian notification was given. A new request will need to be made for each subsequent school year.

How to Refuse a Test

If a parent or guardian chooses to refuse testing state or federal assessment, they should contact their student's school. School staff can address any questions regarding test content, format, and purpose.

If a parent or guardian determines that refusing a test is in the best interest of their student after speaking with school staff, they will be asked to complete a form documenting the testing administration and specific tests. This information is a requirement for state reporting.