



Policy and Procedure for Opting Out of State Testing

Cottonwood pupils are required to participate in all statewide assessments that are applicable to pupils in non-charter public schools according to [California Education Code Section 47605\(c\)](#). Parents do indeed have the right to waive state testing requirements for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System according to [California Education Code section 60615](#). A charter school cannot disregard or take away this parental right. However, the California Department of Education states that parent waivers do not exempt students from participation rate calculations.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to test at least 95% of all eligible students and student groups in ELA and Mathematics. In 2020, the US Department of Education reviewed the California Department of Education (CDE)'s methodology and determined that it does not meet ESSA requirements.

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, instead of a 0.25 point penalty for each percentage point below 95%, the CDE will assign the Lowest Obtainable Score (LOSS) for each student needed to bring the school, district, or student group to a 95% participation rate.

Under the new methodology, the calculation will add the number of students needed to reach a 95% participation rate into the DFS calculations, and these students will be assigned a predetermined LOSS score. The calculation will assign the LOSS among the school's tested grade levels that penalizes the school the least.

In simpler terms, 95% of testing age students must participate or Cottonwood will face severe penalties on the California Dashboard, the states' measurement of school accountability. This in turn will impact our ability to renew our charter and continue operations.

Exceptions to the Participation Rate Requirement

Students flagged with the "Medical Emergency" condition code will be automatically removed from the participation rate calculation unless they log onto both parts of the test. English learners new to the country (enrolled in a U.S. school for less than one year) are exempt from taking the ELA portion of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. Note that the same LOSS will be applied to students who do not take the California Alternative Assessments as for those taking the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

Opt-out Procedure for Cottonwood

In order for a family to complete the opt-out process, the HST and the family will complete the following steps:

1. Parent communicates intent to opt out of state testing to HST
2. HST fills out [this survey](#) documenting the reason for the opt-out request
3. The Testing Team and the HST review the reason for the opt-out request, and then schedules a phone call with the parent to discuss the reason for the opt-out request prior to the opt-out being processed
4. If after the conversation the parent still decides to opt-out, the testing team will complete a spreadsheet documenting the conversation and the resolution.