

Dear NAACP,

This is not legal advice. These two pages are only meant to share information.

You have a civil right to opt out of state mandated standard testing. In Pennsylvania, that is based on religious beliefs. There are people in school districts across the Pennsylvania doing this right now. There are four (4) simple steps.

Important:

It is illegal for officials to ask for information about the nature of your religious beliefs or faith. They cannot ask for “proof” of your beliefs (e.g. a letter from your minister, rabbi, or imam). They cannot threaten you or your child for exercising this right, nor can they impose punitive measures on your child for your decision to refuse the test.

Starting with the class of 2017, a score of proficient or advanced on all three Keystone exams will be required for a Pennsylvania student enrolled in public school to graduate. Chapter 4 of the school code will allow for an opt-out, but instead require a project-based high stakes test rather than your usual test, and courses teaching specifically to the test may also be required.

PSSA tests administered in the spring of 2015 will be aligned with the new PA Core Standards.

Steps for refusing standardized testing (other than Keystones).

How to Opt Out of the PSSA’s

STEP 1: Parent write letter/email to the superintendent or principal their intent to opt out.

EXAMPLE:

Dear Superintendent:

Pursuant to Pennsylvania Code Title 22 Chapter 4, section 4.4 (d)(5) I am hereby exercising my right as a parent to have my child, [NAME], excused from PSSA testing because of religious and philosophical beliefs.

Sincerely,

STEP 2: Parent reviews test at school.

Two weeks prior to the testing window, exams must be made available for review by parents and guardians. Districts must provide a convenient time for the review. Parents and guardians will need sign the Parent Confidentiality Agreement that simply states they will not share what is on the test with anyone.

STEP 3: Parent provides written request for their child to be excused from test to the superintendent or principal stating that that you reviewed the exam. This letter can be submitted at the time of the review or mailed soon after.

Dear Superintendent:

On [DATE] I had the opportunity to review the PSSA test and pursuant to Pennsylvania Code Title 22 Chapter 4, section 4.4 (d)(5) I am hereby exercising my right as a parent to have my child, [NAME], excused from PSSA testing because of religious and philosophical beliefs.

Sincerely,

STEP 4: Superintendent reviews the request - this request cannot be denied.

If the student is excused from the state assessment due to parental or guardian request, school personnel must provide an alternative learning environment for the student during the assessment and

complete the “Non-Assessed Students” grid by selecting “Student had a parental request for exclusion from the assessment.”

Parents can opt their children out of the PSSA’s at any time during the school year, and within 2 weeks prior to test date. One benefit to opting out in the beginning of the school year is that parents can also opt their children out of Study Island and CDT’s, which are PSSA test prep. To do this, email or write a letter to school principal and/or teachers.

YOU CAN ALSO OPT OUT OF KEYSTONES

FOR THIS INFORMATION, GO TO: <http://unitedoptout.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Pennsylvania-Opt-Out-Guide-2015.pdf>