**FAQs about State Tests**

**How Does Taking State Tests Help My Students?**

**Are all students required to participate in state tests?**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) **requires** the participation of all students in state tests. For students with disabilities, test participation is also required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

* It allows your students to demonstrate what they learned and practiced in your classroom over the school year.
* It provides information to make sure that curriculum and instruction are aligned to rigorous, grade-level standards.
* It provides information to share with your students’ families about their progress toward success after high school, such as college attendance and career readiness.
* It supports your efforts to hold all your students to the same high expectations.

**Are state tests accessible for all students?**

Most students take the general state test. Some need accommodations to access the test, and a few with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an alternate assessment.

**How Does Taking State Tests Help My Students?**

* It provides a complete and accurate picture of how all students are doing.

**Are state tests the only way to know how students are performing?**

State tests are just **one measure** of student progress. In combination with other indicators, such as report cards, teacher feedback, and attendance, state tests contribute to a more complete picture about students’ academic performance.

* It reveals performance gaps across different groups of students in your school and guides school strategies to address all students’ educational needs.
* It ensures that policy development and distribution of resources support schools in most need.

Statewide testing was not always available to all students. Not too long ago, when statewide tests were given to students, they were **not** given to students with disabilities.

**How** **Can I Support My Students?**

* Work with your students and their families to identify student accessibility needs. For students with disabilities and English learners, make sure accommodations are listed on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or English learner plans.

**Is this the best way to know what students can do?**

Statewide testing is meant to show a snapshot of how a **whole school system** is performing. This allows for decisions that will improve programming and provide targeted resources and support to different schools.

* Remind your students and their families that testing is a regular part of teaching and learning during the school day.
* Explain to your students and their families that their score on the test is only one measure of student progress.
* Talk with your students and their families to help them understand that state tests are aligned to standards that prepare them to thrive in a global future.

*Add any SEA or LEA questions and answers, or links to resources in this box. Be sure to add links to the SEA website with state testing information. Also include a link to state accessibility manual.*

**CONTACT**

(Delete the instructions below and add in your contact information)

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