**FAQs about State Tests**

**How Does Taking State Tests Help Students and Their Families in My State?**

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

The Every Student Succeeds Act **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 provides information for leaders and policymakers to allocate needed supports and services for all children.
* It allows all students to show what they have been learning and practicing in the classroom.
* It enables families and community members to understand how local schools are meeting the educational needs of all students.
* It measures students’ progress toward completing high school and success after high school, such as attending college and being ready for a career.

**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 Districts and Schools?**

* It ensures that policy development and distribution of resources support districts and schools in most need.

**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 helps provide a complete and accurate picture of how all students across your state’s districts and schools are doing.
* It reveals performance gaps across different student groups in your state and supports programs to address all students’ educational needs.

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 Students and Their Families in My State?**

* Work with district and school leaders to communicate how state tests are part of a comprehensive instructional system.

**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 students, families, and other education partners that testing is a regular part of teaching and learning during the school day.
* Talk with students, families, and other education partners about how state tests are aligned to rigorous state content standards that will prepare students to thrive in a global future.
* Support state, district, and school efforts to ensure that state tests are accessible to all students.

*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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