



PARCC Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of statewide assessments like PARCC?

The PARCC assessment is the summative, or statewide, assessment for all public schools (both DC Public Schools and DC public charter schools) in the District of Columbia to assess student learning and academic growth.

Throughout the year, DC Public Schools (DCPS) uses [additional assessments](#) outside of the PARCC assessment to gauge the academic performance of their students. Public charter schools also use assessments throughout the school year to assess their students' academic performance. Information about public charter school assessments can be found in each Local Education Agency's¹ (LEA) [Performance Measurement Framework \(PMF\)](#) located in each public charter school's profile.

You can contact your child's principal or teacher for more information about the specific assessments at your child's school.

What is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment?

The [PARCC assessment](#) is a statewide assessment that provides information to LEAs, parents, and community members regarding what students have learned throughout the school year. Additional resources on the PARCC assessment can be found on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) [website](#).

When are the PARCC assessments?

PARCC assessments are administered towards the end of the school year in every LEA in the District (both DCPS and public charter schools). Contact your school for the specific testing dates.

What about assessments for pre-k students?

OSSE provides information about pre-k standards and assessments on their [website](#). These standards help ensure that students have the skills necessary to be successful in school. Public charter schools have their [own assessments](#) that they use for pre-k students.

¹ An entity that operates public elementary and secondary schools. DCPS is its own LEA and each charter network is its own LEA. Each LEA creates its own set of policies and helps ensure the on-the-ground implementation of federal and state policies.

Opting-Out

Is there an opt-out policy for statewide assessments? Will I get in trouble for keeping my child out of assessments?

There is currently no opt-out policy for statewide assessments. According to the statewide assessment policy, “All students enrolled in grades three (3) through eight (8) and grade ten (10) shall participate in the statewide math and English language arts assessments.”² Currently, the statewide [assessment policy](#) requires that students take the assessment. There are currently no formal disciplinary consequences for a student who refuses to take the test. A student who does not take the PARCC assessment may be excluded from any incentive rewards for successful completion of statewide assessments.

If I keep my child out of school to opt-out of the statewide assessment, will my child be marked as absent?

Testing days count as instructional days and are subject to the same attendance policy that applies in any other school day. Though an LEA has some discretion regarding excused absences, schools do not excuse absences that are not covered in their LEA’s attendance policy. You should closely review your school or LEA attendance policy for clarity on what kinds of absences are excused.

The [general attendance policy](#) outlines compulsory education requirements for K-12 students in DCPS and public charter schools, including what kinds of absences are excused.

DCPS and public charter schools have additional attendance guidelines. [DCPS attendance policy](#) outlines specific requirements that apply only to DCPS. Public charter school attendance policies can be found in each public charter school’s handbook, which can be accessed on each [charter local education agency profile](#) on the Public Charter School Board’s (PCSB) website.

Does my child HAVE to take the PARCC assessments?

Currently, there is no legislation banning parents from opting out of statewide assessments, nor is there legislation for an opt-out process. According to the statewide [assessment policy](#) from OSSE, eligible students are required to take any statewide assessments. A child may be marked as absent for the time missed during assessment testing days. A student who does not take the PARCC assessment may also be excluded from any incentive rewards for successful completion of assessments. Parents should discuss their concerns with the school and familiarize themselves with the PARCC assessment and applicable attendance policy before making their decision.

Does anything happen to LEAs if I choose to have my child opt-out of statewide assessments?

According to [federal policy](#), LEAs are required to assess at least 95% of eligible students or else they may be sanctioned. Sanctions can include but are not limited to decreased funding, identification as a lower ranking school, or identification as a low-participation rate school. There is currently³ no state-level guidance regarding sanctions for LEAs that do not meet the 95% assessment threshold

² DC Municipal Regulation & Register 62 DCR 15676 (December 4, 2015). Title: 5-A Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Chapter: 5-A23 Statewide Academic Assessments, Section: 5-A2301 Participation in Statewide Academic Assessments; <http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Gateway/FinalAdoptionHome.aspx?RuleVersionID=4494997>

³ As of the publishing of this document.

Why is participating in statewide assessments worthwhile?

LEAs use the information that they gain from statewide assessments to understand what District students have learned throughout the school year. They may use assessment data collected to improve or amend their curriculum and academic programming. It also allows you as a parent to understand what your child has learned.

What do I do if I want to opt-out of statewide assessments?

The first step is to speak with your child's school to better understand what opting out of the statewide assessment would mean for your child. Since LEAs may use statewide assessments to improve school programming, opting-out means that your child's school has less data about students' overall academic needs. If you choose to opt-out, it is important to understand what other tools are available to assess your child's performance. This can include classroom or grade specific assessments, writing samples, or projects. You should also review the attendance policy with your child's teacher and attendance counselor to make sure that you understand it.

It is also important to create a plan of action to review with your child's school. Make sure you understand what being absent during testing days would mean for your child. Some questions that you may consider include:

- Are there any other assignments due during testing days?
- Are there any school-sponsored activities your child may miss or be excluded from?
- Will the absence be excused or unexcused?
- What happens if you bring your child to school during statewide testing days but do not want your child to take the assessment?

Understanding the answers to these questions will allow you to better assess whether opting-out of the statewide assessment is right for your child. This can help ensure that you are better equipped to make the decision that you feel is best for your child.

Who can I contact for more information?

Questions about assessments should be directed to your school; start by first talking to your child's teacher or the school principal. If necessary, additional questions that you might have about testing and assessment policy and legislation can be directed to osse.assessment@dc.gov or (202) 535-2651.