

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
BARKHAMSTED, COLEBROOK, NEW HARTFORD, NORFOLK
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The Regional School District No. 7 Board of Education provides the following position statement regarding the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) that will be given to our 7th and 8th grade students this spring. This statement is intended to address any misperceptions among students and parents concerning “opting out” of the SBAC testing.

High participation in the SBAC assessment is important to Regional School District No. 7. Our Middle School enjoys a well-deserved positive reputation. We strive to maintain the outstanding status of our Middle School. Strong participation on this standardized test is a critical component of this effort. The school-wide participation rate and results are used by the CT Department of Education in determining our School Performance Index. We acknowledge that one assessment cannot provide a complete portrait of a student’s academic standing or achievement level and do not rely solely on the results in planning for our students. However, these results are used to inform educators and the district in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Some students and parents may be confused by the term “opt out.” While it was possible to opt out of initial trial assessments when the Common Core initiative started, the SBAC assessments are mandated by the state and therefore not optional,

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which was amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires all states to implement “high-quality, yearly student academic assessments.” 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(3)(A). The statute further provides that “[s]uch assessments shall . . . provide for . . . the participation in such assessments of *all* students.” 20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(3)(C) (emphasis added). The ESEA **does not** include a mechanism for parents to exempt their children from taking the state assessments.

The Connecticut General Statutes also require that “for the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year thereafter, each student enrolled in grades three to eight inclusive, and grade ten or eleven in any public school shall, annually, in March or April take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics.” Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-14n (b)(1). Like the federal statute, this state law also **does not** include a mechanism for parents to exempt their children from taking the state assessment.

Both federal and state statutes are clear in their language. *All students enrolled in public schools must take the yearly state assessment.* Until such legislation changes, the Department of Education and each school district must comply with federal and state mandates.

The websites below provide additional information about the testing process.

- The CSDE has made this link available for Parent Guides and other important information regarding the SBAC assessment:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&q=335764>
- Connecticut State Department of Education, CT Core Standards website, family page
http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=32
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Student Assessment
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&q=335456>
- Smarter Balanced Website, family page which includes FAQs
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/>