



1100 Southgate Suite 8
Pendleton, OR 97801
Ph: 541-276-6711
Fax: 541-278-3208
www.pendleton.k12.or.us

Dear Parent,

Jon Peterson
Superintendent

Tricia Mooney
Assistant Superintendent

Michelle Jones
Director of Business
Services

Julie Smith
Special Programs
Director

Laura Miltenberger
Curriculum Instruction
& Assessment
Coordinator

Dan Greenough
Principal
Pendleton High School

Matt Yoshioka
Principal
Sunridge Middle School

Brenda Giesen
Principal
West Hills Intermediate

Lori Hale
Principal
Lincoln Elementary

Aimee VanNice
Principal
McKay Creek Elementary

Theresa Owens
Principal
Sherwood Heights
Elementary

Curt Thompson
Principal
Washington Elementary

Board of Education
Steve Umbarger, Chair
Greg Galloway, Vice
Chair
Dave Krumbein
Lynn Lieuallen
Debbie McBee
Michelle Monkman
Bob Rosselle

This letter is written in response to your request to exempt your student from state testing. According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) 2014-2015 Test Administration Manual, parents may request that their student be exempted from state testing based on either disability or religion (see language below). As mentioned in the language below, parents must submit a written request to the principal of the student's attending school listing the reasons for the testing exemption request. **This request must state whether the testing exemption is based on student disability or religion. These are the only two reasons for which a testing exemption can be considered.** Additionally, according to the ODE Test Administration Manual, parents must propose an alternative individualized learning activity for the student that meets the same goals accomplished by state testing participation. Once the request is submitted, the school principal and the district assessment coordinator will evaluate the parents request for approval or denial and notify the parents accordingly.

4.7 Parent Requests for Exemption from State Testing

Parents may request that their student be exempted from state testing based on either disability or religion. OAR 581-022-1910 allows school districts to excuse students from a state required program or learning activity, including state testing, to accommodate a student's disabilities or religious beliefs. In order for a school district to excuse a student from testing under this rule, the student's parent must submit a written request to the school district, listing the reasons for the request and proposing an alternative individualized learning activity for the student that meets the same goals that would be accomplished by participation in state testing. Appropriate school personnel must evaluate and approve the parent request. When reviewing a parent's request for exemption, school district personnel should first discuss the use of accommodations with the parent to determine whether the use of any appropriate accommodations during testing might address the parent's concerns and allow the student to participate in state testing. Students who are enrolled in school during the statewide test window who are not tested due to a parent-requested exemption must be counted as non-participants.

Prior to requesting testing exemption for your student, it is important to understand that the Smarter Balanced assessment was adopted by the State Board of Education after a prolonged period of discussion and public comment. The Smarter Balanced assessment was developed by a consortium of more than 30 states working collaboratively since 2009 to develop a student assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards were developed by the states to prepare students to be nationally and internationally competitive, and to ensure they graduate high school prepared for college and career. The Oregon State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in October of 2010 to replace the Oregon State Standards. Pendleton School District has been gradually implementing these standards since. Starting in the 2014-15 school year the Smarter Balanced assessment will replace Oregon's previous state-wide test – the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) – for English language arts and math. This assessment will more accurately measure students' learning of the standards teachers have been phasing in for the past several years. The data gathered from the Smarter Balanced assessment will help our district determine how well our curriculum and instruction align to the Common Core State Standards.

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or principal with any questions you have regarding the Common Core State Standards, Smarter Balanced Assessment, or the parent request for exemption. Additionally, I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Laura Miltenberger'.

Laura Miltenberger, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Coordinator