

Right to Refuse Assessments

Parents may refuse assessments for their children

Policies Related to Test Participation and Refusal

All students in Virginia are expected to take the Standards of Learning (SOL) state assessments. Virginia regulations do not include what is sometimes referred to as an "opt out policy" for state assessments; however, under Virginia law, parents may refuse testing for their children.

RCPS students are expected to take certain tests to provide schools with information for planning appropriate, high-quality learning experiences. Like with state assessments, parents may refuse testing for their children.

What Parents Should Know Before Refusing a Test

A parent should consider the following important points before deciding to refuse any test:

- Certain tests are used to help a school identify appropriate placement for the student in advanced academic, enrichment, intervention, and other programs. If the child does not test, his or her appropriate placement could be delayed.
- If a child does not test, the school will not have academic data from the assessment to inform plans for the child's classroom instruction.
- When children do not test, the school does not gain a clear reflection of how it is meeting the instructional needs of its students as a whole.

A parent should consider the following additional implications before refusing SOL tests:

- The child will be assigned a score of zero (0) for each SOL test refused.
- The child's score reports and academic records will display the score of zero, but will not directly impact the child's course grade or access to future coursework.
- If the child is in high school, refusing an SOL test could impact his or her on-time graduation. Virginia requires verified credits to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma, and SOL tests are the most common way credits are verified.
- The child's zero score will count against the school for federal accountability under ESSA but will not impact the school's state accreditation status.

How to Refuse a Test

If parents choose to refuse testing for one or more tests administered in RCPS, they should first contact their child's school. The School Test Coordinator or the child's teacher can address questions the parents may have about the test content, format, and purpose.

If parents determine that refusing a test is in the best interest of their child after speaking with school staff, they will need to officially notify the school of this decision. For certain tests like the SOLs, parents will need to sign a specific form that the school is required to file for documentation. Parent refusal of testing must be communicated annually.