

Vicksburg Warren School District
Testing Policy Letter to Parents
School Year: 2023-2024

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Vicksburg Warren School District receives federal funds for education programs that are a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended (2015). This law requires that all States adopt challenging academic standards and tests based on those standards. States must also develop alternate tests for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A school district may also request State approval to use a locally selected test for high school students that is different than the State test.

Statewide assessments are a useful and valid tool that assist the MDE, the SBE, and the Mississippi Legislature in evaluating schools, school districts, and generally the progress that we are making in raising the level and quality of education across our state. Statewide testing is so important that it has actually been codified in state law (Mississippi Code §§ 37-16-1, et seq.). Along with the MDE every school district in the state is required to “periodically assess student performance and achievement in each school” (Mississippi Code § 37-16-5). Mississippi law mandates that “basic skills tests shall be completed by each student” and “in the event of excused or unexcused absences, make-up tests shall be given” (Mississippi Code § 37-16-3 (2)). In summary, student assessments are not an option, they are a requirement. School districts are not required to provide alternative activities on testing days for students whose parents do not want them to take scheduled tests.

It is the goal of our district to have all students participate in state and local testing. There are potential negative consequences that could result from the failure of students to participate in assessments. The ESEA requires participation of all students in statewide assessments. Schools have to demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” towards improving student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science. Failure to participate also jeopardizes the accreditation of schools and school districts, as well as advancement from third to fourth grade and even graduation.

You have the right to request to receive any State or District policy about student participation in any of these tests required by the ESEA. If you request this information, the district must provide it to you.

If you have decided you do not want your child to participate in the State testing, please contact the school test coordinator to request the Test Refusal Form. Please note that a new Test Refusal Form must be submitted each school year.