

National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME)
Position Statement on Student Participation in State Assessment

In spring 2015, and again in spring 2016, significant numbers of students did not take part in state assessments, bringing participation rates in some states and districts well below the 95% level required by federal education law.

NCME strongly supports student participation in state assessment because these indicators are the only ones aligned with state content standards, the only comparable indicators of that achievement at the school-building level, and the only comparable achievement indicators disaggregated by demographic group. As a consequence, state assessments can help policy makers, educators, parents, and other members of the public not only understand how effectively a state's education system is functioning, but how successfully each school is at educating the specific student groups attending it. That understanding allows those concerned with the quality and equity of education to plan and advocate for needed resources at both the system and the local levels. When students refuse to participate in state assessment, the accuracy of results, and our ability to improve education for all, is severely undermined.

NCME's position on participation is consistent with the positions taken by other civic and professional organizations, including the [National PTA](#), the [National Association of Secondary School Principals](#), and the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#), which includes NAACP, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, League of United Latin American Citizens, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, National Disability Rights Network, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, TASH, Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, and the American Association of University Women.

Participating in state assessment costs valuable student and educator time, as well as money. NCME believes that these costs are best justified when assessments are *worth preparing for* because they faithfully represent content standards, helping test preparation to become part of good instruction. NCME also believes that state assessments should be designed to be *worth taking* because they provide experiences from which students learn something valuable. In addition, NCME recommends that sampling approaches be considered, where appropriate, so that the testing time per student can be reduced while still providing meaningful group results. Finally, NCME believes that tests should provide information educators can use for making improvements to the system, at the school, and in the classroom.

NCME urges parents, educators, policy makers, and citizens to advocate for the creation of assessments like those described and to support them where they currently exist. The organization urges these groups to encourage student participation so that the quality of assessment information, and our ability to use it to improve education for all, is preserved.

By the NCME Board of Directors, Month, Day, Year

About NCME

The National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) is a professional organization for individuals involved in assessment, evaluation, testing, and other aspects of educational measurement. Members are involved in the construction and use of standardized tests; new forms of assessment, including performance-based assessment; program design; and program evaluation.

NCME members include university faculty; test developers; state and federal testing and research directors; professional evaluators; testing specialists in business, industry, education, community programs, and other professions; licensure, certification, and credentialing professionals; graduate students from educational, psychological, and other measurement programs; and others involved in testing issues and practices.

Service to communities and ensuring that assessment is fair and equitable for all students are essential elements of NCME's mission and purposes.