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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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January 31, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance MS
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Absences During Testing Days

As was the case last year, there continues to be inquiries from the field regarding parents requesting that their children "opt out" of our state-approved assessments. There is no recognized process or approved form for this action. The Alabama State Board of Education is charged with implementing a "unified, coordinated statewide testing program" as follows:

290-4-2.01 Student Assessment Unified Coordinated Statewide Testing Program.

(1) The policy of the Alabama State Board of Education is to have a unified, coordinated state testing program.

(2) Alabama's Student Assessment Program is a system of assessments that measures the knowledge and abilities of students in Alabama's public schools for the following purposes:
   (a) To provide information to educators and parents regarding the educational strengths and weaknesses of individual students.
   (b) To provide information to assist local and state educational personnel in reviewing and planning for instructional and curricular improvements.
   (c) To provide information to local and state educational personnel, policy makers, and the general public regarding the educational performance of Alabama's students.

(3) The Alabama State Board of Education shall choose the tests to be used, grades to be administered, and when chosen tests shall be administered.

(4) All students must be provided the opportunity to participate in the state testing program. See 290-040-020.03 for specific procedures regarding students of special populations.

Certainly the Alabama State Board of Education wishes to respect parental rights pertaining to their child's education. Should a parent refuse to allow his or her child to participate in our state-approved ACT assessments, regular student attendance policies apply if the child is absent. If present, that student should be given an alternative assignment in a supervised area of the school.

Any student who does not participate due to parental refusal will not count for or against your overall school scores. The only area where non-participation is applicable is your participation rate.

Should you have any questions or if issues arise pertaining to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Maggie Hicks, Student Assessment, at 334-242-8038, or mhicks@alsde.edu.

MS:MH:SDW

cc: City and County System Test Coordinators

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