

# Refusing High-Stakes Tests: A Step-by-Step Guide

## Join the discussion and get informed!

- Attend local board of education meetings.
- Connect with parents and neighbors in your community.
- Join Facebook groups and pages like [Save Our Schools New Jersey](#) and [Opt Out of State Standardized Testing—New Jersey](#).
- [Find](#) and attend screenings of [Standardized](#), a documentary about high-stakes testing.
- Explore [PARCC practice tests](#) online—or attend a Take the PARCC event in your area.
- Organize a "Take the PARCC" event or a showing of Standardized in your area. [Email us](#) if you would like our help with that.

## Know your rights!

- Though some states do have an "opt out" provision, New Jersey does not—so parents must REFUSE testing on behalf of their children.
- As State Board of Education President Mark Biedron acknowledged at the January 7<sup>th</sup> State Board of Education meeting, "[nobody can force a child](#)" to take a test.
- That same day, NJ Commissioner of Education David Hespe said that it's [up to districts](#) to determine how to handle refusals. Keep this in mind as you await a response from your own district: the decision administrators make is their own.
- A district cannot instruct parents to keep their children home to avoid testing.
- As per the PARCC [Test Coordinator Manual](#), "non-testing students," which PARCC representatives have stated include children whose parents have refused testing, are not permitted in rooms where testing is taking place.
- Though some districts claim that schools will lose funding if fewer than 95% of students participate in state testing, this is [not true](#).

## Compose a letter or complete a form informing your local district that you're refusing (not "opting out" of) testing for your child. (Sample letters are available on the sites listed above.) Submit your letter to the following, and follow up with a phone call if you don't get a response in a reasonable amount of time:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Curriculum
- Testing Coordinator
- Board of Education
- Building principal
- Classroom teacher(s)

## If your district refuses to accommodate your child, take the following steps:

- Attend board of education meetings and voice your concerns during the public comment session.
- Get other parents in your community involved; consider starting a Facebook group or page that can serve as a forum for discussions and resource-sharing.
- Be prepared to inform administrators of other districts that are accommodating refusals; the boards of education in [Bloomfield](#) and [Delran](#), for example, passed resolutions ensuring that students refusing testing will not be subject to punitive measures.
- Consider contacting local media outlets and/or writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

## Other steps everyone should take: contact legislators and encourage them to support student-centered legislation.

- [A3079](#) prohibits the administration of standardized testing in K-2
- [A3077](#) requires district and charter schools to inform parents of every standardized test they give (why given, how used, who takes, how much it costs, what's done with the data, etc.).
- Encourage legislators to pass a bill prohibits districts from punishing children who refuse testing.
- Check the Save Our Schools New Jersey link listed below frequently for legislative updates.



For more information on refusing PARCC testing, see [www.saveourschoolsnj.org/refusing-parcc-test](http://www.saveourschoolsnj.org/refusing-parcc-test)