**Parent Refusal to Student Assessment**

**What you need to know**

The Smarter Balanced assessments are a key part of implementing the Common Core State Standards and preparing all students for success in college and careers. Delaware’s move to the Smarter Balanced assessment system replaces previous tests, offering significant improvements over assessments of the past. The Smarter assessments provide an academic checkup by measuring real-world skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.  In addition, through optional formative assessments and a digital resource library and interim item bank, Smarter provides information during the year to give teachers and parents a better picture of where students are succeeding and where they need help.

In Delaware, the purpose of state testing is to ensure students get the help they need to graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to make the most of their talents. The Delaware Department of Education recognizes state testing as an important part of understanding how schools, districts and the state are doing in educating and preparing students for college and careers. This is the primary way we can know if we are making appropriate progress toward educating students on the academic standards.

Student testing also helps districts and schools identify if there are specific populations within their school that are behind and may need extra assistance. And state testing helps parents understand how their child is doing in comparison to students in other schools.

That said, we cannot spend precious student and teacher time on assessments that do not offer this important information. The Delaware Department of Education over the past two years has eliminated some required tests and its switch this year to the Smarter assessments will reduce the number of times students take the state English language arts and mathematics assessments from up to three times a year to only one.

There are no provisions in state or federal regulation that allow Delaware to have a system for parents to refuse student assessment. In addition, state and federal laws are clear that there is an expectation that all students will participate in the state assessment system. The only instances in which students can be excluded relate to exemption requests. Only two reasons are allowable for requests for exemptions: extreme medical incidents or for reasons of mental health of the child (each requires documentation from a physician).

Sate Code: <http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c001/sc04/index.shtml>

ESEA, Subpart 1, Subsection 1111(b)(3): <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html>