

CATASAUQUA AREA

SCHOOL DISTRICT

No. 105.3
 SECTION: PROGRAMS
 TITLE: Excusal from State
 Assessments on Religious
 Grounds

ADOPTED: April 2, 2013

	#105.3 — Excusal from State Assessments on Religious Grounds	1
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1. Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to comply with the requirements of the State Board of Education that school districts adopt policies to assure that parents and guardians have the right to review State assessments in the school entity, and to permit their students to be excused from an assessment if, upon inspection, the parents or guardians find the assessment in conflict with their religious beliefs.	4 5 6 7 8
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2. Policy	A. <u>In General</u>	10 11
22 Pa. Code § 4.4(d)(4), (5)	The parent or guardian of a student who is proposed to be given a State assessment will be granted a request for the student to be excused from the assessment on the grounds that the assessment is in conflict with their religious belief, so long as they follow the procedures and requirements of this policy to review the State assessment in a timely manner and properly request that the student be excused from the assessment.	12 13 14 15 16 17 18
	B. <u>Review of Assessment</u>	19 20 21
	Before requesting that a student be excused from taking a State assessment, the parent or guardian of the student must first review the State assessment in order to make a knowledgeable determination whether the assessment is in conflict with their religious belief.	22 23 24 25 26
	A parent or guardian who wishes to review a State assessment must satisfy each of the following requirements:	27 28 29
	1. The review must take place at least two (2) weeks prior to the administration of the State assessment.	30 31 32
	2. The parent or guardian must contact the building principal of the school the student attends to schedule a date, time, and place to review the State assessment. The contact must be made in sufficient time to schedule the review by the deadline set forth in paragraph 1.	33 34 35 36 37
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3. Prior to reviewing any State assessment materials, the parent or guardian must sign a confidentiality agreement in accordance with State assessment administration instructions or requirements. The agreement may include, among other things:
 - a. The parent’s or guardian’s agreement not to discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the content of the assessment materials to anyone, including the student.
 - b. The parent’s or guardian’s understanding that violation of the confidentiality agreement could result in personal liability of the parent or guardian for damages caused by a breach of test security. The agreement may describe some of the types of liability and/or costs for which the parent or guardian may be responsible, such as, but not limited to, retesting students; recalculating student, school, and/or school district achievement data; developing or producing new test materials to replace compromised test materials; and investigations relating to breach of test security.
 - c. A requirement that the agreement be signed subject to the penalties of 18 PA. CONS. STAT. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsifications to authorities).
4. At the review, the parent or guardian may not make any written notes, take any pictures or video recordings, or make any audio recordings, and must comply with all other security requirements to maintain the confidentiality and validity of the assessment which are imposed by school district representatives in accordance with the State assessment administration instructions. A monitor will be present at the review.

C. Request that Student be Excused from State Assessment

If, after reviewing a State assessment, the parent or guardian of a student finds the assessment to be in conflict with their religious belief and wishes the student to be excused from the assessment, the parent or guardian must deliver a written request to the Office of the Superintendent at least two (2) school days before the date the assessment commences. The request should identify the specific student and the specific State assessment involved, explain the parent’s or guardian’s objections to the assessment, state that the parent or guardian finds the assessment in conflict with their religious belief, and formally request that the student be excused from taking the assessment.

The Superintendent (or his/her designee) shall approve all requests to excuse a student from taking a State assessment which conform to the requirements of this policy.

3. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent and/or the Director of Curriculum and Assessment shall adopt guidelines to implement this policy and assure the rights granted to parents and guardians under this policy, including, but not limited to:

1. Procedures to notify parents and guardians of the State assessments proposed to be administered to their student and their rights under this policy, within a reasonable period of time to permit parents and guardians to act under this policy.
2. Guidelines to insure that parents and guardians may review State assessments during convenient hours for parents and guardians.
3. Guidelines for locations in School District buildings where parents and guardians may review State assessments.
4. Procedures for monitoring parents and guardians while reviewing State assessments to insure that they do not make any written notes, take any pictures or video recordings, make any audio recordings, or otherwise attempt to make any record or notation of any of the content of the assessment.
5. Procedures to insure that all other necessary security requirements to maintain the validity of the assessment shall be taken in accordance with the State assessment administration instructions.

4. Termination or Modification

This policy shall become void and unenforceable if the regulation of the State Board of Education upon which it is based (22 Pa. Code § 4.4(d)(4), (5)) is repealed or declared invalid. If the regulation is modified or declared invalid only in part, this policy shall be deemed amended to the extent necessary to conform to the modification or declaration.

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