

# WHY OPT OUT?

## High-stakes standardized assessments:

- have become too important, forcing teachers to “teach to the test,” not to the students.
- are stressful for children and teachers, because of the high-stakes.
- are developmentally inappropriate/ inaccurate/meaningless for K-3.
- are unethically tied to teacher pay/bonuses/ employment, school grades/real estate values.
- are harmful to all students, as test-prep time squeezes out time, sacrificing critical activities such as recess and experiential learning.
- are inherently limited in scope, unable to assess creativity (art, music, dance, creative problem solving, etc) and emotional intelligence.

The latest policies using wide scale online testing and competency-based education (CBE) have led to an explosion of high-stakes standardized tests. Testing, test prep, and progress monitoring have grown to unsurpassed levels, creating a toxic, high stress learning environment.

**IF YOU'RE NOT OPTING OUT...  
YOU'RE OPTING IN.**

## WHAT IS THE OPT OUT FLORIDA NETWORK?

Since 2012, **The Opt Out Florida Network** (formerly Opt Out Orlando) has advocated for multiple measures of authentic assessments, that are used to inform instruction and which do not result in punitive consequences for students, teachers and schools.

We are a network of parents, grandparents, students, educators and community members who are fighting for Florida's public schools.

**\*2015-2016 Opt Out Guide:**  
<http://bit.ly/Pocket00Guide15-16>

**\*Special Opt Out group for  
3rd Grade:** <http://bit.ly/00FL3rd>

**\*Find your local Opt Out group:**  
<http://bit.ly/LocalOptOutGroups>

For the most current education news:  
**The Opt Out Florida Network**



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**#PublicEdREVOLUTION**

# OPT OUT of the FSA? YES, YOU CAN

**IN 2015, FL DOE REPORTED 20,709  
STATE TESTS WERE SUCCESSFULLY  
REFUSED.** *(Orlando Sentinel 10/09/15)*

To date, NO students have been harmed by opting out of tests. However, students, teachers and schools continue to be harmed by students opting IN.

# THE OPT OUT

**FLORIDA NETWORK**  
for a #PublicEdRevolution

# JUST THE FACTS

- FL law says that districts must administer the FSA. It says that all students must “participate”... When students sit for the test, break the seal on the test, and refuse to complete it, they have PARTICIPATED but **ONLY TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED BY THE LAW** and cannot be re-tested. They have now “opted out.”
- 3rd Grade retention is mandated for failing the FSA. **HOWEVER**, by law, students **CAN** be promoted by good cause exemptions via alternative assessments (SAT10, IOWA, Terra Nova, or portfolios). Students must pass **ONE** assessment, not all.
- A concordant (passing) score on the ACT(19) or SAT(430) replaces a failing (or missing) 10th grade FSA Reading score.
- Passing score on PERT replaces Algebra 1 EOC toward graduation requirements.
- Students who OPT OUT receive a score code of NR2, which does not negatively affect their teacher’s evaluation or their school’s grade.
- NO school district has ever lost a single \$ because of opting out.

“OPT OUT” has been the **ONLY** action to hold the attention of education policy makers and legislators.

If YOU don’t advocate for your child, who will?

# OPT OUT 101

## THE NOTE TO SCHOOL

Parents should send in a short note on the day of testing. Early letters could set you up for harassment from school and/or district. **“(Student Name) will be opting out of the FSA today and I am aware of the possible consequences. Thank you. Sincerely,...”**

## THIRD GRADE:

Students opting out may be told by their friends that they will fail and will be held back. Parents should discuss this with their children so that they can be confident in their actions. Eight year olds understand that there is too much testing. Parents can explain **WHY** it’s happening.

If a student is absent on test day, they will be scheduled for the make up upon return. The rest of the student’s class will already have taken the test and will be “back to normal.” After the student refuses during the make up testing, they are usually sent back to class.

## TO OPT OUT OF A PAPER TEST

The student simply has to fill in their name (if there is not already a label), break the seal of the test. When the teacher says to begin, student should politely say, “No thank you.” That’s IT. They should not be badgered to test. That would be coercion and/or intimidation.

## TO OPT OUT OF A COMPUTER-BASED TEST

Follow instructions to log-in and 'Start test.' Press 'End test' (they might have to enter one letter for the 'end test' button to become available), and then 'Submit test'. The idea is simply to submit a blank (near-blank) test.

# DURING THE TEST

## CHECKING STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL

- You will need to ask what time testing will begin so that you can go to the office and sign out your child a little **AFTER** testing has begun. After your child breaks the seal and pushes the test away, they **SHOULD** be allowed to leave the room if you request them in person and return them when class resumes.
- The **ONLY** time a school may lawfully deny a parent access to their child, on demand, is during a security lockdown or in a restraining order.

## DURING THE TEST

Your school should have a policy that (after your child breaks the seal, signs test, and turns it in), allows them to read the rest of the time. (FSA manual p. 34: “You may allow students to read after they have finished a session **AND** their test materials have been collected.”)

[www.fsassessments.org](http://www.fsassessments.org)

# IMPORTANT NOTE

Despite the mandated validity study from Summer 2015, there have been no published reports demonstrating that the 17 FSA exams are valid, fair or reliable for at-risk populations of students (ESE, ELL, low socio-economic, etc).

Of the 17 tests mandated to be evaluated, **ONLY 6** were even examined by the Alpine Validity Study and **TO DATE**, there are **STILL** no published validity studies on the remaining 11 tests.