



How to Opt Your Children Out of Standardized Testing

By Educator Barnes – April 30, 2021

Earlier this week, I [shared](#) that my husband and I had opted our fourth grade twin sons out of ILEARN. Part of the reason I shared my story was so many parents had reached out to me to find out if they could actually opt their children out of testing. Some of the parents, when they spoke to their children's school, were told that all students must take the test. The reason school staff tell parents this is because Indiana does not have an official opt-out policy or procedure. I received the response below from IDOE when I inquired about the topic.

Good morning, Mrs. Barnes

Thank you for reaching out with this question about opting out of state assessments. The State of Indiana does not currently support (or recognize) an opt-out policy. However, if a

parent chooses to keep their child home from testing, there are no consequences or penalties applied to the student. Schools may request some documentation from parents who make this choice so that they can appeal for leniency from the state with regards to their accountability calculations.

Please let me know if you have other questions, and I'm happy to assist.

This led to more questions about how to opt students out if there is not an official process. On my public Facebook page, I was asked, "Would you be willing to share the wording you used to notify their school of your decision?" That's a great question. Let me explain how it all went down.

My husband and I went back and forth about our decision. Once we had decided, we knew we had to notify the school. The school sent parents a message if their children were attending school virtually that they needed to sign up their children for ILEARN. Before we could notify the school, the school secretary called because we had not filled out the form. I told her we decided that we weren't sending our children to school only to take a test. She explained about the COVID-19 guidelines they have in place. I appreciated the extra information she shared, but it wasn't going to sway our decision.

If I would have had the opportunity to send my email, this is what I would have said:

Good morning!

As you know, my sons have been attending school virtually the entire school year. They have been able to complete their work and NWEA testing at home. However, we are aware that students must take ILEARN in-person to participate in testing. We are not willing to send our sons to school only to take a test. My husband and I understand that the Indiana Department of Education does not have an opt-out policy, but as parents, we know we are entitled to make the decision to not have our children participate in this state standardized test.

We intentionally moved into our neighborhood, so our children could attend this school. We have confidence that our sons' NWEA scores, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment, quizzes, unit tests, homework, class assignments, and checks for understanding during instruction will provide the data needed to ensure our sons will progress academically. Thanks for your understanding.

Mr. and Mrs. Barnes

If parents are going to opt their children out of standardized testing, they should let the school know. This will stop the school from contacting parents repeatedly to have their children take the test.

Feel free to use the email I didn't get to send to craft your own statement.