

March 31, 2015

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your letter requesting that your children not take the Idaho State Achievement Tests (ISAT) (also known as the SBAC). I very much appreciate your involvement and concerns about your children's education.

Unfortunately there are no provisions in Idaho State Board Rules or Idaho Code that allow for us to exclude students from taking the ISAT. If you wish your children to not take the ISATs, you will need to determine from your school when these assessments will be given and have your children stay home on those days. Please notify the school that you do not wish them to participate in the makeup exams. These absences will be counted as excused absences however they do count toward the maximum number of absences allowed for the year. If your child is in school when their class is taking the ISAT they will participate with all students. They will also participate in all activities and preparations for the assessments with their classmates.

Idaho law requires each school district to have a minimum of 95% participation on the ISAT exams. If too many parents take this option there is a possibility we could lose 20% of our Title One dollars or about \$120,000.

In Idaho's Constitution, the responsibility for creating a uniform and thorough system of public education is given to our legislative representatives and the State Board of Education. During this year's legislative session, the legislators considered a bill that would have allowed parents to opt out of this assessment. The bill did not pass the legislature.

Assessments have been a part of education from the beginning. They allow us to measure students' progress and improve our overall educational programs. The ISAT assessment has had local teachers from Emmett assisting in setting the cut scores. They also participated in a statewide panel that read all of the ISAT questions to insure each question was appropriate for children in Idaho. Their work resulted in the removal of one passage from the assessment.

If I can be of further help, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Wayne Rush
Superintendent