



New Hampshire

Department of Education

Serving New Hampshire's Education Community

# Technical Advisory

## Statewide Assessment and Student Participation

RSA 193-C:6  
Elementary and Secondary  
Education Act

The New Hampshire Department of Education's (NH DOE) 2014-15 *Request for State Approved Special Considerations* document is posted on the NH DOE Web site ([www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/alt\\_assess/part.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/assessment/alt_assess/part.htm)). Although **this** document is specifically for those students that qualify for the Alternate Assessment, a similar document will be posted soon regarding students that will be taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment this spring. The considerations in both documents will be aligned. Special considerations have been offered to schools for the last several years and are not related to a specific assessment name (i.e.: Smarter Balanced).

The document reviews the criteria and process for a student to qualify for one of five "special considerations." If the special consideration request sent by the district is granted by the NH DOE, the district will not be negatively affected in the state's reporting of the school and district's participation rate in the assessment. The five considerations include:

- Medical Emergency or Serious Illness (*confirmed by a treating physician*)
- Severe Emotional Distress (*confirmed by a licensed health care worker*)
- Death in the Family
- Student enrollment after the start of NH alternate assessment
- Student participation in another state's assessment system

Parent refusal for their student to participate in the statewide assessment, and/or a district not obtaining approval from the state for the five considerations stated above, will negatively affect the school districts participation rate. The mention of parent refusals in the first paragraph of the *Request for State Approved Special Considerations* document is an acknowledgment of a district's reality when it comes to meeting the requirements of the New Hampshire law that states all students must participate in the statewide assessment. This statement does not, in any way, articulate that the state has a "parent refusal policy." In fact, the document is clear (page 12) that parent refusal does not qualify for an exemption.

New Hampshire law (RSA 193-C:6) states the following: "Each year, a statewide assessment shall be administered in all school districts in the state in grades 3 through 8 and one grade in high school. All public school students in the designated grades shall participate in the assessment, unless such student is exempted..." If a student does not participate in the assessment, it will be reflected in the school and district's participation rate that is included in the state, district and school report cards.

If you have any questions please contact Heather Gage at [Heather.Gage@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Heather.Gage@doe.nh.gov) or (603) 271-5992.

Issued by:

*Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.*

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Page 1 of 1