

Review of Alternative Instruction and Assessment Requirements (Home Schooling)

What are the steps a school should take when a parent request a home school exemption for their child? What types of assessments are required for home school students? How orders and purchases these assessments? These are a few questions and a step-by-step process for school personnel seeking to best serve home school students regarding testing.

1. What are the basic testing requirements for individuals providing alternative instruction to students?

SDCL 13-27-3--“A child shall be excused from school attendance, pursuant to 13-27-2, because the child is otherwise provided with alternative instruction for an equivalent period of time, as in the public schools, in the basic skills of language arts and mathematics...No individual may instruct more than twenty-two children. All instructions shall be given so as to lead to a mastery of the English language. Children receiving alternative instruction who are in grades two, four, eight and eleven shall take a nationally norm referenced standardized test of the basic skills. The test may be the test provided by the state and used in the public school district where the child is instructed or another nationally norm referenced standardized achievement test chosen by and provided at the expense of the child’s parent, guardian, or school giving alternative instruction. The test may be monitored by the local school district where the child is instructed”.

2. How many children can be provided in an alternative instruction setting?

No individual may instruct more than twenty-two children. All instructions shall be given so as to lead to a mastery of the English language. Children receiving alternative instruction who are in grades two, four, eight, and eleven shall take a nationally norm referenced standardized achievement test of the basic skills. The test may be the test provided by the state and used in the public school district where the child is instructed or another nationally norm referenced standardized achievement test chosen by and provided at the expense of the child's parent, guardian, or school giving alternative instruction. The test may be monitored by the local school district where the child is instructed.

3. What grades are tested using a norm reference assessment for home school students?

Grades 2, 4, 8 and 11

4. What norm reference assessment will the SDDOE purchase for home school students?

The SDDOE will purchase the Stanford Achievement Test 10th edition (SAT10) for home school students in grades 2, 4, 8 and 11 to be administered.

5. What parts of the SAT10 (or other norm reference assessment) must be administered?

The SDDOE requires that only the reading and mathematics portion of the SAT10 be administered in grades 2, 4, 8 and 11. Science must be administered in grades 8 and 11. The SDDOE will pay for all subtests of the SAT10 that are administered.

6. Can a home school child be exempt from taking the SAT10 or another norm reference assessment?

No; SDCL 13-27-1. Any person having control of a child, who is not younger than five or older than six years old by the first day of September, or any child who, by the first day of September, is at least six years old, but who has not exceeded the age of eighteen, shall cause the child to regularly attend some public or nonpublic school for the entire term during which the public school in the district in which the person resides, or the school to which the child is assigned to attend, is in session, until the child reaches the age of eighteen years, unless the child has graduated or is excused as provided in this chapter. However, the requirements of this section are met if a child who is at least sixteen years of age enrolls in a general education development test preparation program that is school-based or for which a school contracts and the child successfully completes the test or reaches the age of eighteen years.

7. Who orders the SAT10 to be used for home school students?

It is the responsibility of the district to communicate with the home school parents that their child is in a tested grade and that the district will order the SAT10, if the parent chooses to administer this norm reference assessment.

8. If a home school parent chooses to give their child another type of norm reference assessment who will order and pay for this assessment?

If parent chooses not to administer the SAT10, then the parent must order and pay for the norm reference test that has been approved by the SDDOE. The parent must then provide the district the results of this alternate assessment.

9. Can a home school student take the Dakota STEP Assessment?

The Dakota STEP cannot be administered to a full time home school student. If a home school student is enrolled at least 51% into a public school district, then the Dakota STEP Assessment must be administered instead of the SAT10.

10. When is the test administered?

The SDDOE highly recommends that the SAT10 be administered at the same time the statewide assessment is administered (the month of April). If a parent chooses to give the SAT10 at another time, neither the SDDOE nor our testing vendor can guarantee that the results will arrive in a timely manner.

11. Who administers or monitors the SAT10 or another type of a norm reference assessment?

The parent or guardian administers and monitors this assessment. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to make sure they return the SAT10 to the district by the agreed date.

12. Does the parent need to provide the resident school district the test results from another norm reference assessment that was administered? SDCL

All test scores required by § 13-27-3 shall be kept on file in the public school of the district where the child has school residence. If subsequent achievement test results reveal less than satisfactory academic progress in the child's level of achievement, the school board may refuse to renew the child's certificate of excuse.

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