

2019 Assigning Letter Grades Talking Points



The Background

The administration of the 2018/2019 state standards assessments to students in grades 3-8 (RISE) suffered interruptions of service and other irregularities that affected students experience and reporting functionality with the standardized assessments. As a result of the interruptions and irregularities the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) commissioned **three** separate studies and examined descriptive data to determine if the results could be published and used for their intended accountability purposes. The results of those studies were reviewed by the Board's Assessment and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee in September 2019. In October 2019, the USBE reviewed the studies and recommendations from the advisory committees, afterwards directing staff to publish the 2018-2019 school, district, and state level data, seek flexibilities from state accountability, including eliminating the assignment of the letter grade for the 2018-2019 school year, and include a disclaimer on the school accountability report card indicating that interruptions occurred during testing.

Talking Points

Misrepresentation

While the analysis determined that the aggregated data can be used for the state, district, and school level reports, it also acknowledged that some students were negatively impacted, and schools may have been disproportionately impacted by the irregularities. For that reason, publishing a letter grade could unintentionally misrepresent the student achievement and growth for individual schools.

Confidence

The interruptions were widely publicized during the test administration, creating a lack of confidence in the results by some teachers, administrators, and community members. While the Board has determined the results are reliable and can be published, it is difficult/impossible to fully overcome the impacts of the initial media reports.

Audit

An audit conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor General found that 91% of LEAs reported their LEA was significantly or moderately negatively impacted by the interruptions/irregularities experienced during the test administration.

Impacts

Those negative impacts included, lost instructional time, negative impact on student and staff morale, strained testing environments, an inability for LEA employees to complete testing responsibilities, and a lack of confidence in the data.

Value

The percent of parental exclusion (opt-out) test events declined from 5.31% in 2018 to 3.68% in 2019. This is evidence that more parents sought value from their student's participation in the assessments. USBE hopes to maintain that confidence and trust as we enter the 2020 test administration window by addressing the community's concerns, which includes a "lack of confidence in the 2019 data."

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Talking Points *cont.'d*

Completion

.04% of test events were not able to be completed as a result of the interruptions/irregularities. While this is a relatively small number in the larger data set (985,083), it is very significant to the students that were directly impacted.

Accountability

As directed by the Board, staff have published the accountability results on the school report card, including indicator ratings, enabling stakeholders to review the indicators of progress for their schools.

RISE Assessment Results Studies

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) commissioned three separate studies and examined descriptive data to determine if the results could be published and used for their intended accountability purposes.

Utah Test Interruption

ETS, validated by the Center for Assessment and Utah Technical Advisory Committee

Determine if the testing interruptions impacted student proficiency scores

Student Growth Percentile (SGP) Across Transition & Impact

The Center for Assessment

Determine ability to validate/calculate student growth with removal of writing and change in assessments.

USBE / LEA Achievement Study

USBE, Jordan, & Salt Lake City School Districts

Examine differences in achievement outcomes to prior years to determine impacts of all irregularities.

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2019 RISE Participation Codes

Despite the widespread and publicized interruptions with the RISE test administration, fewer students opted out of participation, resulting in a much larger percentage of test participants. However, .04% of the eligible tests were not accessible or could not be completed as a result of test administration system failures.

CODE	2016	2017	2018	2019
Did not Test	.57%	1.18%	1.02%	.34%
Refused to Test	.05%	.07%	.06%	.02%
USBE Excused	0	0	0	0.4%
Invalidated	.04%	.04%	.02%	.03%
Parental Exclusion	4.98%	5.89%	5.31%	3.68%
USBE Assigned did not test	.22%	.11%	.39%	.33%
Standard Participation	92.29%	91.27%	91.95%	95.03%

* This is not the full list of participation codes

Point of Contact

Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning
Email: darin.nielsen@schools.utah.gov
Cell: (435) 720-7770