# 2026-27 OFF-GRADE TESTING WAIVER INSTRUCTIONS

*Information on grade-aligned test requirements is available in the **Federal Testing Requirements**.*

***FAQ: Off Grade Level Testing***

## Determination of Grade Level

All students must test according to their enrolled grade. For testing purposes, a student's enrolled grade shall be the grade in which the student is reported to be enrolled in NOVA on the second Wednesday of February (120-day Snapshot).

For a student to be counted as having participated in statewide summative testing and for the student's results to be included in the state's annual ESSA accountability model:

- A student must be administered a test aligned to the student's grade level as reported in the NOVA 120-day Snapshot, or the PED must have approved a waiver to administer an off-grade assessment.
- No exceptions to this rule will be approved for students enrolled in Grades K–9.

## Above-Grade-Level Testing (Relevant only for SAT School Day and NM-ASR)

In some circumstances (e.g., early-college high school students, students on track to graduate early), students enrolled in Grade 10 may be approved to take the SAT School Day and New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR) in Spring 2026. Any such approval must be obtained from the PED in advance before testing. To be eligible for above-grade testing, the student must receive sufficient content instruction prior to the testing window.

- Should a student enrolled in Grade 10 be approved to participate in the SAT School Day or NM-ASR, the student should ***not*** be administered a SAT School Day or NM-ASR in subsequent years. Students are not permitted to take the state-funded and state administered ESSA Title I assessments more than once, with the exception of those students repeating Grade 11.
- The PED may conduct random audits of the results of approved up-tested students. This may influence further approvals of up-testing requests coming from particular LEAs.
    - **Note:** *Even though it is a very rare occasion for the state, some LEAs may administer above-grade tests more frequently due to differences in local practices.*

## Below-Grade-Level Testing (Relevant for SAT School Day, NM-ASR, and DLM)

**Grade 12 students absent during ESSA Title 1 assessment administration at Grade 11 *may participate (SAT School Day , NM-ASR, or DLM Alternate Assessment for Math, Language Arts and Science), but are not required*** to participate in spring state assessments. All Grade 12 testers must have an approved Off-Grade Testing Waiver and cannot have previously participated in SAT School Day, NM-ASR, or DLM.

## Off-Grade Testing as it Relates to the NM ESSA Accountability Measures

- **Below-Grade Testers:** Students "downtesting" in Grade 12 are ***excluded*** from the ESSA accountability model and NM Vistas calculations. They will not affect LEA participation rates.
- **Above-Grade Testers:** Only Grade 10 students "up-testing" with an approved off-grade testing waiver are included in the ESSA Accountability model.
    - Grade 10 students who had an approved waiver but did not participate are excluded from the ESSA accountability model.
    - Grade 10 students who test without an approved off-grade testing waiver are excluded from the ESSA accountability model.

## Waiver Completion Guidance

The off-grade testing waiver must be submitted via form to PED through the **Test Coordinator Portal**, for each assessment. Submission instructions can be found in the **Test Portal Instructions 2026-27**.

> **Note:** The waiver deadlines **for SAT School Day is** April 20, 2027. This gives enough time to complete testing before the end of the window on 4/23/27.

Fields included in the waiver are below:

1. State Student ID
2. Grade level at the 2026 120-day Snapshot
3. Anticipated Graduation Semester (No follow-up is necessary if this date changes.)
4. District Code and District Name
5. School Code and School Name
6. Requested Assessments (If an assessment is not requested, leave the column blank.)
7. Rationale

## Rostering Off-Grade Students for NM-ASR, SAT School Day, or DLM

DTCs are responsible for rostering off-grade students in the State Data Management System for SAT School Day and in the Kite Educator Portal for NM-ASR or DLM.

***Who do I contact for additional assistance?***

- For general PED policy guidance, contact **ped.assessment@ped.nm.gov**.
- For SAT School Day questions, please contact **christina.fritz@ped.nm.gov**.
- For NM-ASR questions, please contact **mireya.gonzalez@ped.nm.gov**.
- For DLM Alternate Assessment questions, please contact **alice.banks@ped.nm.gov**.