



# DALLAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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*A Grassroots Public Charter School located in Dallas, Oregon*

February 25, 2019

Dear DCS Families:

DCS staff are preparing for this year's Oregon State Assessment Tests. I know that taking tests is not something that students, parents, and staff necessarily look forward to, but they do serve an important purpose and I wanted to take a moment to provide you with some important information on this year's tests.

**DCS will be hosting a Parent Assessment Information Night on March 19th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm to provide important information on Oregon State Assessments.** You will have the opportunity to take a practice test so you will have first-hand knowledge of what your child will experience when they take the actual test. An overview of the assessment process will be covered to include what the scores mean and how they can be useful. Participants will be eligible for some exciting door prizes. It would be great if we filled the room with parents interested in learning more about state assessments.

There are many reasons to have students take the Oregon State Assessment Tests. This test measures student progress and identifies learning strengths and weaknesses. It provides students with an opportunity to take a standardized test; an essential skill they will need in life. As an example, students will need to take a computerized multiple-choice test, the same format as the OAKS and SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium) tests, when they go to the DMV to take their driver's test. Students interested in a higher education program will be tested as part of the admissions process, and even some jobs require applicants to take a standardized test to determine if they that qualify for the job. The Oregon State Assessment testing environment will replicate that of many formal tests that students will face as they transition from school into adulthood. You can [take the OAKS Sample Test here with your students](#) to see what it will be like, and to help familiarize them with the format.

It is important to assess learning over time to determine what skills and concepts have been mastered and what skills require more instruction. Assessment data should be used when planning for future instruction and curriculum selection in order to help each child be successful. DCS guides use assessment data to align curricula with educational goals when developing each student's PLP. The goals are designed to help students with the knowledge and skills they need at every step along their educational journey so they can graduate high school fully prepared for success in college and in the workplace. In fact, that is why the SBAC assessments were developed in the first place, to help students be successful. A group of states recognized the importance of assessing knowledge and skills that young adults will need to be successful in college and careers, which resulted in the Common Core Standards and the SBAC assessments.

We know that one test cannot possibly tell *everything* about your child's academic progress. However, the results do act as a snapshot of your child's academic strengths and weaknesses. When your child's assessment results become available, they will be shared with you, but it will not be until the Fall.

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788 SW Birch St



Dallas, OR 97338

Email: [office@dallascommunityschool.org](mailto:office@dallascommunityschool.org)

Phone: 503.420.4360

Fax: :503.420.4361

Bill Conlon, Director

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Monitoring assessment data is our way to ensure that every student is getting the supports they need. In addition, the school staff will spend some time reviewing scores to see how we can improve our school. We use the data to help make decisions when planning onsite courses, field trips, and purchasing curriculum.

Parents do have the option to opt out of participating in the state assessments. However, I strongly encourage you to participate in the upcoming testing. The state of Oregon and our charter contract with Dallas School District stipulate that we must offer all students the opportunity to test. The federal and state departments of education have set an expectation that 95% of our students will participate. In fact, schools are sanctioned if they fall short of this expectation multiple times. Should you still wish to opt your child out, please complete the form posted on our website and submit the form to your guide, to Andrea Wilcoxon, or directly to me.

Last year, 91.9% of DCS students participated. In 2017, 86% of our students participated and the year before that only 56% of DCS students took this test. Our participation rate will be carefully reviewed by the Dallas School District when we are asking for our charter to be renewed after next year. A participation rate of 95% would be a positive reflection on Dallas Community School and strengthen our application for continued operation.

DCS guides will be working with families to schedule students for testing. If you have questions or wish to discuss your family's needs please talk to your guide, or contact me directly.

You can find more information on the OAKS and Smarter Balance assessments at the following websites:

[Smarter Balanced Website](#)

[Common Misperceptions](#)

Warm regards,

Bill Conlon, Director of Dallas Community School

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