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Opt-Out Rule Inappropriate in Era of Standards

Education Trust—West Director Russlynn Ali today released a statement opposing California's opt-out rule.

(Oakland) – “**W**e strongly oppose any effort to roll back the participation rate requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act in California.

“The participation rate is crucial. If our public schools are going to teach *all* students to high standards, we must test *all* children. Otherwise, how will we know which groups we’re leaving behind?”

“We understand the urge to change the participation rule. Schools say they feel trapped between federal and state law. In California, parents can opt their children out of standardized assessments. But if they do so their schools risk falling short of NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress measure.

“But is listing the children who don’t show up as ‘not proficient’ really the answer? We don’t believe it is.

“Rather than roll back NCLB, we should repeal California’s opt-out provision. Opting out is not a ‘right’ shared by parents in other states. Students take tests. Period. Final exams. Pop quizzes. And, yes, standardized assessments. That’s a good thing. It should go without saying, at this point, that using tests aligned to our standards is the best means to measure whether our students are learning the content we’ve promised they all will be taught.”

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