



**THE COTTONWOOD SCHOOL**  
— OF CIVICS AND SCIENCE —

February, 2019

Dear Families,

State testing begins at The Cottonwood School the week of April 15th. I want to take a moment to provide some important information about this year's state tests.

For the fourth year in a row our students will take the Smarter Balanced Achievement Tests (SBAC). These tests measure complex, real world skills such as critical-thinking, writing, and problem solving rather than the traditional fill-in-the bubble exams that focused on rote memorization.

The Cottonwood School's testing window is April 15th - May 3rd. The tests are not timed so your child can take as long as they need to fully demonstrate what they know and can do. At our school we provide more frequent, shorter testing periods to help combat fatigue and stress. We will be offering brain breaks and snacks that research shows help stimulate the brain - sour and crunch. In the classroom children will get to learn about how these treats might help with their testing.

We know that these tests do not tell us everything about your child's academic progress. However, the results do act as a snapshot of your child's and our school's strengths and areas of improvement. We already have a small student body so when fewer students take the test, we are left with an incomplete and inaccurate picture of how our students are performing. This can be detrimental for our school as the state uses these scores to rate us on our annual report card. Dropping below the minimum participation rate of 95% which translates to 10 or more kids at our school, reduces our score significantly. The report card is important because it is one of the main resources Oregon Department of Education uses to evaluate our school's performance.

If you choose to opt out, you must fill out a form. There is a link to the form on our school website and forms are available in the school office. Please submit the form to me directly via email or the mailbox on my office door. You can read more about your rights to opt out here: <http://tinyurl.com/OR-HB2655>. Normally we have a high percentage of our students testing and this reflects favorably on us in state reports.

At The Cottonwood School we are deeply committed to ensuring each and every student has the supports needed to achieve at their highest levels and graduate prepared for high school.

If you have general questions or want more information about these tests, please see the [attached fact sheet](#) or reach out to your child's teacher or me.

Thank you,

Amanda McAdoo  
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