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Dear Parents;

I am writing this k-mail in response to questions either I or OHVA staff members have received these past few weeks with concerns and questions regarding Ohio's mandated state testing for students in grades 3-8 and at the high school level. These tests are commonly referred to as PARCC Tests or PBA/EOY. In an effort to get information back to everyone who has contacted OHVA, I have chosen to address these questions/concerns in a group k-mail.

I have communicated at the state level that there are significant concerns with the amount and timing of testing this year given the uniqueness of online schools and how testing must be completed. I will continue to speak with elected officials about our concerns moving forward, however that does not relinquish OHVA from the responsibility of implementing the tests as currently prescribed by the Ohio Legislature and the Ohio Department of Education.

Ohio has no official "opt-out" form. Individual outside groups have created "opt-out" or "safe-harbor" forms that parents can use to direct school officials not to test their children, however they are not state authorized. The Ohio Revised Code does continue to override the opt-out decision and the student will still be identified as not testing and all that is attached to this decision. In addition, OHVA parents have agreed to participate in state testing upon enrollment or re-registration, as outlined in the [Parent Compact](#): *My student will participate in all required state achievement and diagnostic testing.*

Consequences for teachers and schools are directly tied to the evaluation systems and the rating systems or "Report Cards" for schools. Ohio does have very stringent closure laws for community schools. While direct response has not been given to our questions on this topic, it is presumed that any child not testing will be given a score of "0" for the teacher, the school building, and the district. This will negatively impact the teacher's individual evaluation, as well as the school building and district Local Report Card Ratings. Community school Report Card grades are directly tied to school closure decisions. In addition, Ohio Law clearly states that every 3rd Grade student must pass the Ohio Achievement Test in Reading or an alternative assessment to move onto fourth grade. A, passing scores on high school level tests, either the Ohio Graduation Test or the new end of course exams, are required for graduation from high school.

Please know that OHVA is a strong advocate for children and schools on issues of this nature. It is our desire to keep OHVA a valid option for our students and to do so we must adhere to the rules and regulations give to us by the Ohio Department of Education via the State Board of Education. We will respect the decision that parents make on this matter, however we must also follow the rules and regulations as described above and will do so. We hope in return that you will respect our need to follow the accountability requirements given to us. I cannot and will not ask any department administrator or teacher to "bend", "defy", or otherwise modify what has been mandated to us by our state officials.

I understand that this year has been difficult and as parents you must make decisions based on information at hand. However, please understand that as a public school we must also make decisions based on regulations provided. I hope that we can work together to reach the common goal of educating students.

Respectfully,

Dr. Kristin L. Stewart
OHVA Head of School

Mr. Matt Norton
OHVA Board President