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1 In 4 Colorado 11th-Graders Skipped Their State's Standardized Test – Geography and Income Help Explain Why

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The big idea

About one in four 11th-graders in Colorado exercised their right to skip the state's official science test each year between 2016 and 2019. More specifically, between 23% and 27% of 11th-graders did not participate in the science exam during those years. That's what we found in a study published in AERA Open. Our study was based on a geographical analysis of state data that revealed how many students decided to skip the test during the years in question.

Why it matters

Opting out of tests is part of a recent national educational movement across the United States. The opt-out movement garnered national attention in 2015 and 2016 after growing dissatisfaction with high-stakes testing, both as a tool to evaluate teacher performance and assess student learning. Many students and parents do not believe in the importance of standardized tests as a measure of academic achievement.