

RESEARCHING THE ASVAB TEST AT YOUR SCHOOL

Key information that you should request from the school counseling department, career center or principal's office:

1. Was the ASVAB test given at the school in the previous year? Is it going to be given during the current year?

The ASVAB is given at most schools, but not all. Some schools give it every other year to juniors and seniors, a cycle that can potentially include all students before they graduate.

2. Which students are being given the test, and approximately how many are under the age of 18?

The ASVAB can be given to students in grade 10 or higher (test scores are valid for enlistment purposes only for two years, however, so the military's main interest is in testing juniors and seniors). Most students taking it will be given the ASVAB during the first half of the year, and very few of them, therefore, will have reached the age of legal consent (18).

3. Is the test given during the regular school day, or on weekends?

Most schools give up half of the day for testing, but some will only allow the ASVAB on weekends.

4. Where does testing occur; e.g., in a single large space or in individual classrooms?

5. Which school staff are involved and how; e.g., do counselors and/or teachers serve as proctors?

6. Are students informed that it is voluntary? If so, how are they notified?

Some schools improperly tell students the test is mandatory, others effectively make it mandatory by not giving students a choice. Some schools only give students a choice when voices are raised in protest.

7. Where are students who are not taking the ASVAB told to go while it is being given to others; do they go to their regular classes or report to a place to study, like the library?

8. Does the school know that it can dictate that information gathered from the test cannot be used for recruiting purposes (i.e., ASVAB option 8)? If so, does it elect option 8 for all students who are being tested?

9. If the school does not elect option 8 for all students, are they and their parents clearly notified before the test date that if they take the test, the information they provide will be given to local recruiters and added to the Dept. of Defense's centralized recruiting list? Are they told that this could result in multiple attempts by recruiters from all the military branches to contact them at home?

10. Does the school notify students and parents that this information will be released to the military even if they have separately asked not to be included (i.e., opted out) in the student contact list that the school releases to recruiters under the No Child Left Behind Act?

11. If the school does not elect option 8 universally for all students, does it take any other steps to try to protect the privacy of students taking the ASVAB?

Some schools tell students to write down the school's address instead of their own. This does not provide true privacy protection, however, because recruiters can use the general student contact list to look up students' addresses and phone numbers.

12. Is informed consent secured from a parent or legal guardian before any student under the age of 18 takes the test? If not, on what grounds does the school believe it can allow an outside group to extract such private information from students in the school?

The private information that is obtained from students with the ASVAB includes name, birth date, gender, race/ethnicity, Social Security number, test answers and contact information. When the student is a legal minor, schools have a responsibility to obtain parental permission before releasing such information to non-school groups, including the military. A privacy waiver that all students are asked to sign on the ASVAB test form does not excuse schools from this responsibility and leaves them open to potential lawsuits.

For more information on ASVAB testing in high schools and possible actions you can take to stop or limit its use as a data source for recruiters, contact:

Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (Project YANO)

www.projectyano.org; 760-634-3604

Coalition for Alternatives to Militarism in Our Schools (CAMS)

www.militaryfreeschools.org

National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth

www.nnomy.org