



Pathways to College K-8

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Sonya E. Joyner, Ph.D.
*Executive Director/
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March 15, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Each spring, most students in California participate in the statewide testing program, which is the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System. The tests in the CAASPP System provide information to teachers, parents/guardians, and students about students' progress and readiness for college and career. In grades three through eight, students will take the Smarter Balanced online tests for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. In grades five and eight, students are also tested in science.

This year, your child will take the following assessment for ELA and mathematics:

- Smarter Balanced tests for ELA and mathematics

Students in grades five and eight only will also take one of the following assessments for science depending upon their specific needs:

- California Standards Test (CST) for Science
- California Modified Assessment (CMA) for Science

Smarter Balanced Assessments

The Smarter Balanced online tests are based on the new California Content Standards, also known as the Common Core State Standards, for mathematics and ELA. While last year's test results provided parents with **baseline** information on how your children were performing in ELA and mathematics, in 2016 parents will be able to compare results across **two years** (2014–15 and 2015–16) and determine their children's progress in meeting California's rigorous academic standards. (Exception: Only one year of data will be reported for students in grades 3 and 11.)

The California Department of Education (CDE) has developed several resources to help students and parents understand the grade expectations of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. These are listed on the following page.

- The *Parent Guides to the Smarter Balanced Assessments* (in English and Spanish) are posted on the CDE's CAASPP Web page, under the Students and Parents Tab, at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/index.asp?tabsection=3#ssr>. Separate guides have been developed for each of the three grade spans tested: grades 3–5, grades 6–8, and grade 11. Each guide explains the grade-level expectations for students in ELA and mathematics and provides sample test items.
- The practice and training tests, which can be found on the CDE's Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>, can help parents and students experience the type of test items that students will encounter on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. Answers to the practice test and scoring rubrics for the performance tests are posted on the Test Administrator (TA) Resources for the Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests Web page at <http://www.caaspp.org/ta-resources/practice-training.html>.

Assessments for Science grades five and eight only

California has adopted new science standards and is currently developing assessments that are aligned with these standards. During the transition to new science assessments, students in grades five, eight, and ten will take the CST or CMA, as identified above.

For information on the new science assessments and who is eligible for each of these science tests, please see the CDE's California Science Assessments FAQ Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/sciencefaq.asp#accordionfaq>.

For information about the content, types of questions, and other targeted resources for the science tests, please see the CDE's CAASPP Science Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caasppscience.asp>.

For information about the CAASPP System, please visit the Parent/Student tab of the CDE's CAASPP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/index.asp?tabsection=3#ssr>.

For more information or resources about alternate assessments, please visit the CDE's CAASPP Alternate Assessments Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/altassessment.asp>

Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 852 and Education Code Section 60615, a parent or guardian may submit a written request to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of the test annually. Please note that opting-out of the State test is not a valid excused absence. If you have any questions regarding your child's participation, please contact the Principal, Sonya E. Joyner, Ph.D. at 760-949-8002 ext. 6910.

Sincerely,

Sonya E. Joyner, Ph.D.

Sonya E. Joyner, Ph.D.
Executive Director/Principal