

**CAASPP System Assessments 2015–16**  
**Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments**  
***Grades Three through Eight***  
**Parent and Guardian Notification**

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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 and grade eleven, most students take the Smarter Balanced online tests for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. However, students who have a significant cognitive disability (as designated in their individualized education program) are eligible to take the California Alternate Assessments (CAAs). In grades five, eight, and ten, students are also tested in science.

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

- Smarter Balanced tests for ELA and mathematics or
- CAAs for ELA and mathematics

This year, your 5<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student will take one of the following assessments for Science:

- 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 their 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:

- 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**

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>.

If you would like more 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>.

If you would like 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>

If you have any questions regarding your child's participation, please contact ***[insert name of school contact]*** at ***[insert phone number and/or e-mail address]***.

***[Insert name of school principal]***

**Principal**