

# A Family Guide

## To Understand California's New Student Score Report California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

**T**his spring Lake County Students participated in the new state testing program called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress or CAASPP. Like last year, students in grades 3-8 and 11 have completed tests in English-language arts and mathematics online using a computer. These tests are also known as the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC). Students in grades 5, 8, and 10 have also completed the California Standards Test in Science (paper and pencil test) and students in grades 4 and 7 have completed Physical Education testing.

The CAASPP program is designed to give information to teachers, students, and their families about what students know and are able to do and whether they are on track to be ready for success in college or career when they graduate from high school. Test results will help identify and address gaps in knowledge or skills early on so students get the support they need to be ready for success in higher grades.

### Tests Measure Real-World Skills

As the world and workforce evolve, what and how we teach our children must also evolve so they are prepared to live and work in an ever-changing world. Over the course of their lives, our children will have to apply what they know in new and different ways, including ways we can't even imagine today. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are important for students as they prepare for success in college, career, and life. These skills can't be measured by multiple-choice questions alone or paper and pencil tests. This is why the new Smarter Balanced tests were developed.

### Test Results Will Be Reported This Spring

Preliminary results will be available to district staff in the next few weeks, and individual student score reports will be mailed to families in late August or early September. The new score reports are just one part of a multi-level restructuring of education in California. As the new student score reports become available to families, Lake County school districts will be working to inform our families and communities to help them understand the new testing system. The California Department of Education has designed a scoring system for the new tests that is significantly different than the previous testing system. Individual student scores for ELA and Math will be reported as scaled scores in the range of 2000-3000, and placed in one of four performance levels. The new performance levels are Standard Exceeded, Standard Met, Standard Nearly Met, and Standard Not Met.

### Results Set New Baseline for Student Achievement

Results from the new tests are measured differently and cannot be compared to results from the previous Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Because the tests in each system measure different things in different ways, comparing their results would be like comparing apples to oranges. Think of this year as hitting the reset button. This year's results will set a new starting point for student achievement, against which we can compare performance for years to come.

### New Test Results Are Just One Measure

You receive information about how your child is doing in school through grades on tests and classroom assignments, as well as by talking with your child's teacher. The new test results will give you another piece of information about how well your child is learning what is expected for his or her grade and how well your child is doing compared to other students in the same grade. Think of the test results as one part of an academic "wellness" check for your child – similar to when you take your child to the doctor for their annual checkups. The test results, combined with all the other information you have about your child, give you a good sense of where your child is doing well and where he or she might benefit from some extra help. And, most importantly this information will give insight into your child's readiness for college and career early enough to address any areas where he or she might need extra support.

This Guide was developed by the Lake County Office of Education for use by schools and school districts in communicating with their families about state testing and student score reports for 2015.

For more information contact your local school district or Stephanie Wayment at [swayment@lakecoe.org](mailto:swayment@lakecoe.org)



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## Preparing and Supporting Your Child\*

- Discuss the new tests with your child. Make sure he or she is not scared or anxious going into the new tests.
- With older children, explain that the new tests were created to help him or her better prepare for college and career.
- Explain to your child that the new tests will be more challenging the first few times they take them.
- Tell your child that you and his or her teacher have high expectations and that you are both there to help them every step of the way.
- Review test results with your child, bringing your child's teacher into the discussion as necessary.
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before testing.

\*Source: National PTA "Parents' Guide to New Assessments in California."

## For More Information

Your child's teacher or principal is the best place to start if you have other questions about testing this spring.

Practice tests are available at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/>.

The practice tests can be taken by parents, teachers, students, and others and will give information about the type of test questions that students will see in different grades and subject areas.

## Online Tests Engage Students and Provide Personalized Experiences

Students use technology all the time so taking the tests online will be familiar for them. Unlike paper and pencil tests that have mostly multiple choice questions, the online tests give students many different types of questions that allow students to interact with the test questions in new and different ways. For some of the math questions, for example, your child might be asked to drag and drop things from one place on the screen to another or draw a graph to solve a problem. Taking the tests online also allows students to use different tools that they might need like a calculator on some math problems, a glossary when taking the reading part of the test, or a highlighter that they can use to highlight important parts of a long paragraph.

These online tests are called "computer-adaptive." That means they adjust the difficulty of the questions based on the answers that students give. Unlike paper and pencil testing where most students were given the exact same test with the exact same questions, the online tests give different testing experiences for every student. As students answer questions correctly, they receive more challenging questions. Incorrect answers trigger easier questions. This feature helps keep students engaged, shortens testing time for many students, and provides more accurate results especially for low or high achieving students.

## Grades and Subjects for Spring 2015 Testing

The table below shows the subjects and grade levels where students will be tested. For example, if your student is in 5th grade, they will take tests this spring in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. A student in 9th grade will not take any state tests this spring as part of the CAASPP program.

Subject Area	Grades Tested	Test Type
English-language Arts	Grades 3-8 and 11*	Computer-adaptive
Mathematics	Grades 3-8 and 11*	Computer-adaptive
Science	Grades 5, 8, and 10	Paper and pencil

\* It is also expected that for students in grade 11, results from the Smarter Balanced tests will tell them if they are ready for college-level coursework in English-language arts or mathematics—similar to what the results of the Early Assessment Program or EAP told students under the former STAR program.

## Testing Schedule

Most schools will test their students between the middle of March and the middle of May. You will receive additional information from your school about the specific days and times of testing.