

## Important Changes in State Testing for Spring 2014

In October 2013, Governor Brown signed a new law that changed the type of state tests that students in California will take starting this spring.

The law created a new state testing program called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress or CAASPP. CAASPP replaces the Standardized Testing and Reporting or STAR Program that was in place since 2001. The new state testing program, CAASPP, is designed to give more information to teachers, students, and their parents about what students know and are able to do and whether or not they will be ready to succeed in college or a career when they graduate from high school.

Other testing programs like the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) for high school students and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) for students who speak a language other than English will still be in place.

### What Will CAASPP Include in Spring 2014?

In spring 2014, CAASPP will include tests in English-language arts, mathematics, and science, as well as the Early Assessment Program (EAP) for high school students. The new state law requires that tests in other subject areas like history-social science, visual and performing arts, and technology be added over time to some grades.

### How Are the CAASPP Tests Different from the STAR Tests That Were Given in the Past?

The science tests that will be given this spring are the same type of tests that have been given in the past. These are multiple-choice tests given to all students in grades **five, eight, and ten**.

The English-language arts and mathematics tests are **new tests** being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to test student's knowledge on the Common Core State Standards that have been adopted by 45 states across the country. For more information about the Common Core State Standards, please visit [www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc).

Students will take the new tests, also referred to as the Smarter Balanced tests, using a computer. Schools and school districts have been busy preparing for testing using computers by buying new computers, teaching students keyboarding skills, and making sure that Internet connections are strong enough to allow for many students to take the tests on computers at the same time. The Smarter Balanced tests will not be just multiple choice tests like the STAR tests were. Students will see multiple choice questions, but will also be asked to fill-in tables, drag and drop, graph, and write short and long essays. Practice tests are available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web page at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/>.

This spring, over 300,000 California students will participate in a field test of the new tests.

### What is a Field Test?

A field test is a trial-run of the new test questions and the computer systems. The field tests helps test experts know whether the questions are fair to all students and whether they measure what students are expected to learn. Participating in the field test will give students and teachers the chance to learn about the new types of test questions and the type of computer skills that students will need to understand and perform in order to succeed with these new tests. The field test will also give the school district information

about how well prepared their technology systems are to handle this type of testing, and allow them to make improvements before spring 2015. More information about the Smarter Balanced field test can be found on the California Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterftqa.asp>.

### **Which Students Will Be Tested in Spring 2014?**

The table below shows the subjects and grade levels where students will be tested. For example, if your child is in grade five, they will take tests this spring in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. A student in grade nine will not take any state tests this spring, with the exception of a very small number of grade nine students who will "try out" new test questions from Smarter Balanced.

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Grades Tested</b>
English-language Arts <sup>1</sup>	Grades three through eight and eleven
Mathematics <sup>1</sup>	Grades three through eight and eleven
Science <sup>1</sup>	Grades five, eight, and ten

Most students in grades three through eight, and eleven participating in the field test will spend about 3 hours and 30 minutes on questions in both English-language arts and mathematics. A small number of students will have questions in only one subject area, either English-language arts or mathematics. The field test is designed to be given to students in several short sessions of about 45 minutes each. The total testing time is similar to the amount of time taken on STAR tests in prior years.

### **When Will State Testing Take Place?**

CAASPP testing will take place in the spring as just as it has every year. Each school has six weeks to test students in the required grades and subject areas. You will receive additional information from your school about the specific days and times of testing soon.

### **More To Come...**

This is the first in a series of informational fact sheets for parents and guardians about the changes in state testing. The next fact sheet will focus on the computer technology that will be used to give students the new tests and on the type of computer skills that students will need to know in order to succeed with the new tests.

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<sup>1</sup> The California Alternate Performance Assessment or CAPA for students with severe cognitive disabilities will also be in place in spring 2014 and will be given to students in grades two through eleven in English-language arts and mathematics, and in grades five, eight, and ten in science.