



South Lake Middle School

March 2, 2017

California's academic standards—the things we want students to know and be able to do—are designed so students graduate ready for college and a career. One way we measure their progress is through the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments.

Each spring, students in Irvine Unified School District participate in CAASPP assessments to provide information about their skills in English-language arts/literacy, mathematics, and science. These tests measure the skills called for by the academic standards, including the ability to write clearly, think critically, and solve problems. Given online, the tests are computer-adaptive, allowing for more precise measurement of individual skills. Like class assignments and report cards, these assessments provide one piece of information about student progress. Assessment results should always be interpreted as one of multiple measures of a student's skills.

Based on your student's grade, they may take one or more of the following tests this year:

Smarter Balanced Assessments (Grades 3-8 and 11)

The Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics tests reflect California's rigorous academic standards and allow students to demonstrate analytical writing and critical thinking skills as well as their knowledge of facts. In early fall, individual student score reports are sent home to parents with information about their child's performance on these assessments. These reports include an overall score, a description of the student's achievement level for English-language arts and mathematics, and other information.

California Science Test—Pilot Test (Grades 5, 8, and High School)

California's new state standards for science call for students to think and work like scientists and engineers—asking questions and learning through hands-on investigation and discovery. This year, students will participate in a pilot of the new California Science Test (CAST), which has replaced the old California Standards Test, or CST. The CAST is a computer adaptive test that emphasizes scientific thinking and reasoning. No scores will be reported for the CAST pilot this year, since this is a practice run of the test. This year's pilot is an important first step in developing an assessment that will fairly and accurately measure how students are achieving on the new science standards.

The California Alternate Assessments

Students in grades three through eight and high school who have an IEP that designates the use of an alternate assessment are eligible to take the California Alternate Assessment (CAA) in ELA, mathematics, and science. The goal of the CAAs is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities attain increasingly higher achievement levels and leave high school ready for academic or career options. Students will receive scores on the CAA for ELA and mathematics, but no scores will be reported for the CAA for science this year since this is a practice run of the science test.

To learn about the types of questions on the computer-based tests, you and your child can view the practice tests on the California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Practice Test web page at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp. If you would like more information about the assessments, please visit the IUSD Statewide Testing website at iusd.org/statewide-testing or the *Students & Parents* tab at the bottom of the CDE CAASPP web page at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/. If you have any questions regarding your child's participation, please contact David Kette, Assistant Principal at davidkette@iusd.org.

Sincerely,

Principal

Belinda Averill, Principal | David Kette, Assistant Principal

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