



March 12, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our students soon embark on a season of testing. The new assessment system, California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), has replaced the Standards Testing and Reporting (STAR). Last year, most students in California participated in a computer-based field test. This practice test allowed students to experience computer-based testing and new types of questions. In addition, the field test also helped evaluate how well districts' technology systems could meet the demands of computer-based tests, and determine what resources teachers and schools would need to better prepare students for future assessments. The window for testing open in mid-March and extends through mid-May. Your school will inform you of their testing schedule.

Can the results be compared to STAR?

It is important to note these scores cannot be compared to scores your child previously received on the STAR Program tests because this test is based on the new Common Core State Standards, involves different types of test questions, and will not be reported using the STAR Program reporting categories. The new state assessment encourages thinking in various domains; recall and basic comprehension, application of concepts requiring more abstract thinking/reasoning, and extended analysis and synthesis. This is a dramatic increase in rigor over past state assessments. In short, we are expecting students to think and process information differently than in the past.

What does the exam cover?

These exams will again consist of two content areas, English Language Arts and Mathematics, each consisting of two components; a computer adaptive test and a performance task. As students progress through the computer adaptive portion of the test, the level of difficulty is adjusted based on student responses. The performance task will allow students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge to show their depth of understanding of concepts and by asking them to analyze a complex, real world scenario.

When will we receive scores?

We expect the results to be available to schools much faster than in previous years when schools did not receive results from STAR until early fall. Schools are expected to receive reports from the new tests in late spring. Following the spring 2015 testing, students will receive individual score reports. Student score reports will be sent home to parents and will include an overall score, a description of the student's achievement level for English–Language Arts and Mathematics, and other information. Although we will receive test results for the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the state will not calculate our API (Academic Performance Index) until the spring of 2016.

How can I learn more about the test?

To learn about the types of questions on the computer-based test, you and your child can view the practice test online at the California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Practice Test Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>.

If you would like more information on CAASPP testing, please visit the Parent/Student tab of the California Department of Education CAASPP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>.

Our teachers and students have worked extremely hard over the last few years to prepare for the implementation of Common Core State Standards and the new assessments. Please encourage your students to be confident and do their best every day, eat and rest well, but not to stress.

Our students shine in so many ways every day and make us extremely proud. We are fortunate to have the privilege of serving the next generation who are bound to make this a better world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Parvin Ahmadi', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Parvin Ahmadi