

CAASPP System Assessments 2016-2017
Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and California Science Test
Parent and Guardian Notification Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

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. Students across California in grades 3–8 and high school take these assessments each spring. These tests were created specifically to gauge each student’s performance in English language arts/literacy (ELA), 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.

Because CAASPP tests are given statewide, they provide an opportunity to measure the skills of all students against the same academic standards. Given online, the tests are computer-adaptive, allowing more precise measurement of individual skills. This year, your child will take the following tests:

	Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment (ELA)	Smarter Balanced Assessment (Mathematics)	California Science Test (Pilot Test)
Drake	All 11th graders	All 11th graders	All 10th graders
Redwood	All 11th graders	All 11th graders	All 11th graders
San Andreas	All 11th graders	All 11th graders	All 12th graders
Tamiscal	All 11th graders	All 11th graders	All 10th graders
Tamalpais	All 11th graders	All 11th graders	All 10th graders

Smarter Balanced Assessments

The Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics tests reflect California’s rigorous academic standards, the Common Core, and allow students to demonstrate analytical writing and critical thinking skills as well as their knowledge of facts.

To learn more about these tests, please visit CDE's Test Score Guide Web site at <http://www.testscoreguide.org/ca>, which provides informative guides and test score descriptions as well as sample test items at different levels of difficulty.

Another great resource are 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>. Here, parents can experience the kinds of questions that students will encounter on the tests.

California Science Test—Pilot Test

California's new state standards for science, the Next Generation Science Standards, call for students to think and work like scientists and engineers—asking questions and learning through hands-on investigation and discovery. Working with science teachers, California is developing a new assessment that emphasizes scientific thinking and reasoning. This year your child will participate in the tryout of test items for this future assessment. While this tryout will not provide scores for you child, it is an important first step in developing an assessment that will fairly and accurately measure how students are achieving on the new science standards. For additional information about the new science tests and sample questions, please visit the CDE's CAASPP Science Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caasppscience.asp>.

Federal regulations require schools to report 95% participation rates on state assessments, so your support in encouraging all students to attend, and put forth best effort is much appreciated. For more information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) form on the district's website. If you have any additional questions regarding your child's participation in statewide assessments, please contact your school's principal or the department of Educational Services.

Thank you,

Kim Stiffler
Senior Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Tamalpais Union High School District
kstiffler@tamdistrict.org