

Testing

California students take several statewide tests. Taken together these tests provide parents, teachers, and educators with information about how well students are learning core academic skills. Teachers use this information, along with on-going assessments, to help them prepare instruction based on the needs of each student. A school's Academic Performance Index (API) is based on results from the STAR and CAHSEE tests. Most of the tests described below are tied to the state's academic standards, which spell out the skills that students are expected to learn at each grade level. Some statewide tests are given only to children who are in special education or speak English as a second language.

STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) Program

STAR is California's statewide testing program created for all students in grades 2-11. The STAR program consists of the following tests:

CST (California Standards Test)

The CST is based on the state's academic content standards. Students are scored as "far below basic," "below basic," "basic," "proficient," or "advanced." The target is for every student to score at "proficient" or above. Only California students take these standards-based tests. Their results cannot be compared to test scores of students in other states or nations. Students are tested in language arts and math in grades 2-11, spelling in grades 2-8, science in grades 5, 8-11 and social science in grades 8, 10, 11. Students in fourth and seventh grade also take a writing exam.

CAPA (California Alternate Performance Assessment) and CMA (California Modified Assessment)

Students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the CST are tested with the CAPA. The CAPA test is aligned to the California content standards and calls upon students to perform tasks as opposed to answering multiple-choice questions. Students who have an individualized education plan (IEP) and whose disabilities preclude them from achieving grade-level proficiency on an assessment of the California content standards with or without accommodation may be eligible to take the CMA. The CMA has been developed to provide more access so students can better demonstrate their knowledge of the California content standards. The CMA will be available to students in grades

3 through 8 in spring 2009. Other CMA grade level tests will be available as they are developed.

STS (Standards-based Test in Spanish)

This standards-based test will be administered to Spanish speaking students in grades 2 through 11 who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for less than one year.

CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam)

California law requires that students in the Class of 2006 and beyond must pass the CAHSEE in order to receive a high school diploma. It consists of an English language arts (ELA) section and a math section. Students begin taking the test in the 10th grade, and they have multiple chances to retake the portion(s) that they may fail.

CELDT (California English Language Development Test)

This test is used to assess the English-proficiency of students who speak English as a second language. The results of the test are a major factor in the reclassification of "English Learners" to "Redesignated Fluent English Proficient."

PFT (Physical Fitness Test)

This test is used to assess the physical fitness of students in grades 5, 7, and 9. It consists of tests in six fitness areas: Aerobic Capacity, Body Composition, Abdominal Strength & Endurance, Trunk Extensor Strength & Flexibility, and Upper Body Strength & Endurance. Students are scored as "within the Healthy Fitness Zone" or "needs improvement." To pass the PFT, students must have 5 of 6 fitness standards "within" the Healthy Fitness Zone. Students who pass the PFT in grade 9 may be eligible for exemption from PE classes. Grade 9 students who do not pass will be required to continue in physical education until they pass this mandatory Physical Fitness Test.

EAP (Early Assessment Program)

This test enables 11th grade students to learn about their readiness for college-level English and mathematics before their senior year of high school. Students can opt to answer additional multiple choice questions with the CST English language arts and math exams, and take an essay exam. The results indicate whether students are ready for college level courses at CSU campuses and can be exempted from the CSU English and math placement exams.