
Part I General Information



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2015–16
CALIFORNIA Assessment of Student Performance and
Progress

Post-Test Guide Technical Information for Student Score Reports

for CAASPP LEA and Test Site Coordinators and
Research Specialists

Chapter I.1 New in 2015–16

Table I.1 What's New in 2015–16

Change
Student Score Reports
Student Score Reports have been redesigned to include previous-year's results for Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.
PDFs of Student Score Reports are available for download in the Test Operations Management System (TOMS)—select the [Reports] button in the left navigation bar, and then the [SSR PDFs] button, also in the left navigation bar. Initial versions of electronic reports are marked “Initial” in the upper-right corner. Final versions of electronic reports are marked “Final” in the upper-right corner.
Student Score Reports are available in Spanish if requested by June 10, 2016, or prior to the end of the local educational agency's (LEA's) selected testing window, whichever came last. LEAs will receive two copies in both English and Spanish for students for whom this option has been selected and must send both to the student's parents/guardians.
California Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Results
Historical scores for the 2014–15 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) administration are available in different report formats for LEAs and schools within TOMS and the Online Reporting System (ORS).
Assessment Target Reports are available in the ORS for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. ELA claims are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim 1—Reading • Claim 2—Writing • Claim 3—Listening • Claim 4—Research Inquiry <p>In mathematics, only assessment targets for Claim 1 Concepts and Procedures are reported because mathematics Claims 2, 3, and 4 emphasize practices that may align to content included in several assessment targets; these are not reported separately.</p>
California Alternate Assessments (CAAs)
CAA Student Score Reports showing the results of 2015–16 CAA testing for English language arts/literacy and mathematics, are now available.
CAASPP Paper-Pencil Test Results
Student Score Reports that include results for the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) for Science in grades five, eight, and ten will be created and shipped with the Student Score Reports for the CAAs for ELA and mathematics in fall 2016. However, CAPA for Science results are included in the ORS and as part of the student data file available for download in TOMS.
Web Reporting
When statewide results are released, a newly designed Public Reporting Web site at http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov will be available to view summary results. Two new features include the ability to see change over time (e.g., view grade four summary results and review results from grade three from the previous year), and the ability for users to select up to three entities (i.e., schools, district, county, or state) to view results from the selected entities.
Program Updates
The term “individualized aid” has been replaced with “unlisted resources.”

Chapter I.2 Introduction

Purpose of the Reports and Using the Results

In 2015–16, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) online tests were administered for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics to California students in grades three through eight and grade eleven as part of California’s membership in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. These tests were also available in paper-pencil testing (PPT) versions to students in local educational agencies (LEAs) that could not offer these assessments electronically.

Students whose individualized education program (IEP) teams designated the use of an alternate assessment on statewide assessments and who have a cognitive disability that prevents him or her from taking the online CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments were assigned to take the California Alternate Assessments (CAAs).

In addition, students in grades five, eight, and ten took the science PPT for which they were eligible. Spanish-speaking English learners (ELs) in grades two through eleven took an optional PPT in reading/language arts (RLA).

Results for tests within the CAASPP System are used for two primary purposes:

1. Communicating students’ progress in achieving the state’s academic standards to students, parents/guardians, and teachers. In developing the legislation for statewide testing, the Legislature recognized that LEAs will conduct their own ongoing diagnostic assessments and provide information on the results of these assessments to parents/guardians and teachers on a regular basis. The Legislature also recognized that local diagnostic assessment is the primary way in which to identify academic strengths and weaknesses (*Education Code* Section 60602).
2. Informing decisions, along with local assessment data, that teachers and administrators make about helping students improve their achievement and about improving the educational program.

More background information about the CAASPP System can be found in the following locations:

- . . . on the California Department of Education (CDE) CAASPP System Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>;
- . . . on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium—in collaboration with the CDE—new California-specific Test Score Guide Web page at <http://testscoreguide.org/ca/>; and
- . . . in an archived Webcast about interpreting and using CAASPP results to inform instruction on the CAASPP Portal, under the current administration’s training Web page at <http://www.caaspp.org/training/caaspp/index.html>.

Overview of Online Smarter Balanced Assessments

The Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics are available to students in grades three through eight and grade eleven. These assessments are aligned to the California Academic Content Standards in their respective content areas and are intended to measure student progress toward college and career readiness. Student test results are reported in the following overall achievement levels:

- Level 4—Standard Exceeded
- Level 3—Standard Met
- Level 2—Standard Nearly Met
- Level 1—Standard Not Met

Privacy of Student Records Collected and Maintained by the CDE for CAASPP

To meet its statutory responsibilities, the California Department of Education (CDE) collects and maintains personally identifiable information from the education records of California students. Additional information on the CDE Data Privacy policies may be found at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/dp/>.

The CDE and its CAASPP test administration contractor use student information for the purposes of meeting the CDE’s statutory responsibilities. Neither the CDE nor its CAASPP test administration contractor sells student data or uses student data for any other purposes.

These achievement levels were determined by a standard-setting process.

Each content area of the online assessments consists of a computer adaptive test (CAT) as well as a performance task (PT). Summary results are available online, in the secure Online Reporting System (ORS), first as preliminary results and then, when scores have been received and/or updated for all students, as final results.

Most student responses are machine-scored, while other responses to questions are hand-scored. A student's results from the scores from the CAT and PT are combined to determine an overall scale score for that student. However, because the CAT portions of the test are based on the specific test questions selected as a result of the students' responses to previous test questions, resulting scores are *not* the sum of the number correctly answered.

In addition to achievement levels for the total test, claim achievement categories are also reported, as above standard, near standard, and below standard. These categories were identified after the standard setting for the total-test achievement levels by using the distance a student's performance on the claim is from the Level 3 "Standard Met" achievement level criterion.

Claim achievement categories are based on a smaller collection of items. This makes it more difficult to provide information about a student's claim achievement level without increasing the amount of classification error—more claim achievement levels, coupled with very few items within a claim, will result in more students being misclassified as belonging to one achievement level when they actually belong to another. This classification error is lessened by reducing the number of claim achievement levels, to three.

The claim achievement category indicates that the score on a claim is one of the following:

- If the scale score of a claim is above the "Standard Met" achievement level on the total content-area test, the achievement category for the claim is "Above Standard."
- If the scale score of a claim is at or near the "Standard Met" achievement level on the total content-area test, the achievement category for the claim is "Near Standard."
- If the scale score of a claim is below the "Standard Met" achievement level on the total content-area test, the achievement category for the claim is "Below Standard."

When presented in the Student Score Reports for parents/guardians, the scale scores, error bands, and achievement levels of both the current year and the previous year are included.

For students in grade eleven, the "Standard Exceeded" achievement level is associated with "Ready," suggesting that students are ready for college-level coursework in ELA and/or mathematics. The "Standard Met" achievement level is associated with "Conditional Readiness," suggesting that students are ready for entry-level college courses in ELA and/or mathematics.

Information regarding the EAP can be found on the CDE's Early Assessment Program Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/eapindex.asp>. Additionally, the California State University Success Web site at <http://CSUSuccess.org/> has more information about the steps students can take in grade twelve to be ready for college.

Computer Adaptive Test (CAT)

A CAT is designed to adjust the level of item difficulty, based on the responses provided, to match the ability of a test taker. By adapting to the student's ability as the assessment is being taken, the CAT presents an individually tailored set of questions that is appropriate to each student and provides more accurate scores for all students across the full range of the achievement continuum. A CAT requires fewer questions as compared to a fixed-form assessment—that is, a test where students are given the same questions regardless of the student's responses or ability—to obtain an equally precise estimate of a student's ability.

During the test, if a student gives a wrong answer, the computer will follow up with an easier question; while if the student answers correctly, the next question will be slightly more difficult. Since the answers of items used to estimate the student's ability are machine-scored, the correctness of the student's response can be known immediately, and the successive items are selected to adapt to the current ability of the student. This process continues until the test content outlined in the test's blueprint is covered.

The CAT requires a large pool of test questions statistically calibrated on a common scale to cover the ability range.

Performance Task (PT)

A **PT** is a nonadaptive form designed to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and higher-order thinking skills to explore and analyze a complex, real-world scenario. It is a required portion of the test. Prior to the PT, teachers or instructional staff had the option to conduct a Classroom Activity for all students in the class to ensure that a lack of understanding of the context of the task does not interfere with a student’s ability to address the content of the task. PTs are not targeted to students’ specific ability levels. While students in a school all had the option to receive the same grade-level Classroom Activity, they may receive a different version of the PT whether or not the Classroom Activity was conducted.

Overview of the California Alternate Assessments

The California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) for ELA and mathematics are online, summative, grade-level assessments for students whose IEP teams designate the use of an alternate assessment. The CAAs give students the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of the Core Content Connectors (Connectors), which are derived from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), by taking a test commensurate with their abilities. The Connectors are the alternate achievement standards assessed on the CAAs. The Connectors take the main achievement standards from the CCSS and make them more accessible for students with significant cognitive disabilities. **Student test results are reported in the following overall achievement levels:**

- Level 3—Alternate
- Level 2—Alternate
- Level 1—Alternate

These achievement levels were determined by a standard-setting process.

The CAAs are administered one on one by a test examiner reading scripted instructions to a student. At the start of testing, a test examiner administers a Student Response Check (SRC) using the first one to four items in the test to identify whether the student has a consistent and observable way of indicating responses to test items. For students who do not orient or provide an observable, consistent response, test examiners were directed to end the assessment.

Most student responses are machine-scored, while a few constructed response questions are scored by the test examiner at the time of testing. A student’s results from the machine-scored and examiner-scored items are combined to determine an overall scale score for that student. Note that resulting scores are *not* the sum of the number correctly answered.

In addition to taking the CAAs for ELA and mathematics, students enrolled in or assigned to grades five and eight also take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) for Science. Students in grade ten must take the CAPA for Science but do not take the CAAs.

Overview of the Tests for Science and the Standards-based Tests in Spanish

These CAASPP tests are fixed-form, paper-pencil tests. Students in grades five, eight, and ten will take either the California Standards Test (CST) for Science or, based on a student’s IEP, the California Modified Assessment (CMA) for Science or the CAPA for Science. Optionally, EL students in grades two through eleven take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for RLA. Student test results are reported in the following performance levels:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Basic
- Below basic
- Far below basic

Types of CAASPP Reports

Results for the CAASPP Summative Assessments are delivered in four ways, as follows:

<p>1. Reports in the ORS These reports are described in the <i>Online Reporting System User Guide for California</i>, which is available at http://www.caaspp.org/administration/reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Page Dashboard ▪ Subject Detail ▪ Claim-level Detail ▪ Assessment Target Reports ▪ Listing (Group, Roster, Student) ▪ Student Detail
<p>2. Student Results Report in TOMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Score Data Extract
<p>3. Student Score Reports These reports are printed and available as downloadable PDFs from the Test Operations Management System (TOMS).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Score Report for Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics—Grades three, four, six, seven, and eleven ▪ Student Score Report for Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics and CST/CMA for Science—Grades five and eight ▪ Student Score Report for CAAs for ELA and mathematics—Grades three, four, six, seven, and eleven ▪ Student Score Report for CAAs for ELA and mathematics and CAPA for Science—Grades five and eight ▪ Student Score Report for CST/CMA for Science—Grade ten ▪ Student Score Report for CAPA for Science—Grade ten ▪ Student Score Report for STS for RLA—Grades two through eleven
<p>4. Aggregated Internet Reports (Internet reporting) These reports are available at the Public Reporting Web site at http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smarter Balanced ELA Scores ▪ Smarter Balanced Mathematics Scores ▪ CAA ELA Scores ▪ CAA Mathematics Scores ▪ CST for Science Scores ▪ CMA for Science Scores ▪ CAPA for Science Scores ▪ STS for RLA Scores

Grades and Subjects Reported

CAASPP results are reported for the tests students took. Students who took the grade-level STS for RLA in addition to the required Smarter Balanced assessment(s) and the CST or CMA for Science in grade five or eight will receive two reports, for example: one for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and the science test taken and another for the STS. The matrix in Table I.2 shows, for each grade, the test results that will appear on a report.

Please note that the Student Score Report for Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in grade eleven includes a section that associates the student's overall score and achievement level for ELA and mathematics with the student's Early Assessment Program (EAP) status, which is an early indicator of the student's conditional readiness for college-level coursework. Note that the student's results will not be sent to the California State University (CSU) and participating California Community Colleges (CCCs) unless the student opted to do so after completing the ELA assessment (for ELA results) and mathematics assessment (for mathematics results). Students who did not send their results to the CSU and participating CCCs at time of testing may provide those results upon request at a later date.

Table I.2 Reporting Matrix

Test Name	Grade Enrolled										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments											
English language arts/literacy		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Mathematics		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
California Alternate Assessments											
English language arts/literacy		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Mathematics		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Science											
CST for Science (grade level)				✓			✓		✓		
CMA for Science (grade level)				✓			✓		✓		
CAPA for Science (Levels I, III, IV, V)				✓			✓		✓		
Standards-based Tests in Spanish											
STS for RLA (grade level)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A Note about Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

The “Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress” (Matrix One) Web document is linked on the CDE’s Matrix One: CAASPP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/caasppmatrix1.asp>. Another type of support shown on Part 1 of Matrix One, called an “embedded support,” is available only on computer-based tests. Part 2 of Matrix One includes the non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations that are available for use with all paper-pencil assessments—Smarter Balanced for ELA and mathematics, CSTs for Science, CMA for Science, and STS. Part 3 lists the instructional supports and resources available for the CAAs. Finally, Part 4 of Matrix One describes unlisted resources.

Universal tools are available to all students per student preference and selection; designated supports are available to students by teacher recommendation. Accommodations are available to students with documented need in a student’s IEP or Section 504 plan.

The use of universal tools, designated supports, or accommodations does not change the way scores are reported.

Test administration for the CAAs and CAPA for Science allows for the examiner to provide any instructional support, identified in students’ individual education programs, needed by the students to access the test questions and tasks.

Embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations (Part 1 of Matrix One)

Embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are digital accessibility tools that are available in the online summative assessments and do not change the construct being measured. For example, the use of a large-print version of any CAASPP test does not change what is being measured.

Non-embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations (Part 2 of Matrix One)

Non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations do not change the construct being measured. For example, the use of a braille version of any CAASPP test does not change what is being measured.

Instructional Supports and Resources on the CAAs (Part 3 of Matrix One)

Students taking the CAAs, which are administered one on one by a test examiner, are provided with additional instructional and physical supports when testing in addition to the resources documented in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan. Examples of these include alternate text to describe illustrations and allowing the student test-taker to direct another person, such as an aide or the test examiner, to respond to assessment items.

Unlisted Resources (Part 4 of Matrix One)

“Unlisted resources” are non-embedded accessibility supports that are either listed in Part 4 of Matrix One or are not identified in Parts 1 or 2; they may have been previously identified as modifications or may be unlisted supports. Unlisted resources may fundamentally change what is being measured. All unlisted resources must be listed in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan; a form requesting their use should have been submitted to the CDE before a student was tested. Unlisted resources are not available for the CAPA for Science.

If the CDE determines the unlisted resource changes the construct being measured, the unlisted resource will not be approved but may still be used by the student and the student will receive a Student Score Report. The student will not be counted as participating in statewide testing, which will impact the accountability participation rate indicator for the LEA. (*California Code of Regulations*, Title 5, Section 835.8)

Chapter I.3 Interpreting Results

Scale Scores for the CAASPP System

Scale scores are important measures for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System. Student achievement or performance levels are assigned on the basis of scale scores for all tests.

The advantage of the scale score metric is that it allows a particular score (for example, 2533 on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment for mathematics assessment) to mean the same thing regardless of what items students took for a grade-level, content-area test. Scale scores provide a common reference over the years.

Each program/grade level/content area of the **Smarter Balanced assessments and California Alternate Assessments (CAA)** has its own scale score range.

Teachers and administrators should not use CAASPP results in isolation to make inferences about instructional needs. Anyone using CAASPP results to identify strengths and weaknesses in instructional programs should be familiar with the cautions and procedures described in the next chapter, “Comparing Results.”

Equating and Scaling

When tests are constructed for each grade, every effort is made to make the tests parallel and of the same level of difficulty from one year to another. However, even with those efforts, small differences in test difficulty still exist between test forms. A psychometric procedure called equating makes adjustments for test difficulty so that students in one year are held to the same standards as students in another year.

Details about equating and scaling for the CAASPP System tests are described in each of the following technical reports:

- Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments—*CAASPP Smarter Balanced Technical Report*
- CST—*California Standards Tests Technical Report*
- CMA—*California Modified Assessment Technical Report*
- CAPA—*California Alternate Performance Assessment Technical Report*
- STS—*Standards-based Tests in Spanish Technical Report*

The technical reports for the paper-pencil testing (PPT) science and STS also include raw-score-to-scale-score conversions for the testing year.

The technical report for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments is linked on the California Department of Education’s (CDE’s) CAASPP Technical Reports and Studies Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caaspprptstudies.asp>. **This Web page will also include the forthcoming CAA Technical Report.**

The technical reports for the CAASPP science tests and STS are linked on the CDE’s California Standardized Testing Program and the California Alternate Performance Assessment Technical Reports and Studies Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/technicalrpts.asp>.

Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (Online and PPTs)

Final scores represent the ability estimates for students. Once the responses from the performance task (PT) and computer adaptive test (CAT) portions are merged for final scoring, the resulting ability estimates are based on the responses to the specific test questions that a student answered, not the total number of questions answered correctly. Higher ability estimates are associated with test takers who correctly answer more difficult and more discriminating questions; lower ability estimates are associated with test takers who correctly answer easier and less discriminating questions. Two students will have the same ability estimate if they are scored the same way on an identical collection of items. This type of scoring is called “item pattern scoring.”

After estimating the student’s overall ability, the score for a Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment is mapped onto the reporting scale through a linear transformation:

Mathematics

scale score = 2514.9 + 79.3 * (estimated ability)

English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA)

scale score = 2508.2 + 85.8 * (estimated ability)

The PPT versions of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments use the same scale as the online assessments to report student results.

Scale Score Ranges

Online assessments were scaled vertically, which means that scores for certain questions that were common between adjacent grades were linked. This will make it possible to monitor students' year-to-year progress in assimilating the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and to describe student progress over time across grade levels.

Scale scores offer a more precise way to determine students' performance on the online assessments than achievement levels (which are described in the next subsection) because each level is based on a range of numbers, rather than an individual number like a scale score. Scale score ranges for the Smarter Balanced assessments, which vary from test to test and range from 2114–2795 in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and 2189–2862 in mathematics, are listed in Appendix A, which starts on page 70.

Scale scores for the online summative assessments, in particular, were built on a common vertical scale for each content area, which allows meaningful comparisons between individual students and group comparisons between schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) across grades within the same content area. Student achievement levels are assigned based on scale scores for all tests, which are described in the next subsection.

Achievement Levels

Smarter Balanced overall achievement levels are categorical labels given to particular scale score ranges. The achievement levels are Standard Exceeded, Standard Met, Standard Nearly Met, and Standard Not Met. The minimum and maximum scale scores for each achievement level vary for grade and content area. Achievement levels were set during a process called *achievement level setting*, which established the association between scores and their category of achievement. Achievement level setting also ensures that the achievement levels align to the CCSS.

CAAs

CAA scores reflect estimates of student ability that are based on which items a student correctly answers in a multistage adaptive test setting. A two-stage testing approach adapts the difficulty of a test to each student's ability in order to achieve more precise measurement. The first stage consists of a routing test that provides an initial student ability estimate. The second stage consists of a test that varies in difficulty depending on that initial ability estimate. A student whose initial ability estimate is high will respond to a second stage module consisting of difficult items that will help to determine just how high their ability is. A student whose initial ability estimate is low will respond to a second stage module consisting of less difficult items, and a student whose initial ability estimate is intermediate will respond to a second stage module consisting of items that are intermediate in difficulty. A student correctly responding to 15 difficult items will earn a higher CAA scale score than a student correctly responding to 15 less challenging items.

Scale Score Ranges

Scale scores are used in the evaluation of overall student achievement in the CAA because psychometric analyses underlying these scores account for the variations in difficulty for the questions that students are administered. If equivalent students were administered forms varying in difficulty, student scale scores would still be comparable.

Scale scores are associated with performance levels that describe the underlying student achievement. The ranges of scale scores that are associated with each performance level are held constant from year to year for each grade level and content area, while the number- or percent-correct score (i.e., the raw score) associated with each scale score may change.

Scale score ranges are listed in Appendix A, which starts on page 70.

Performance Levels

CAA overall performance levels are categorical labels given to particular scale score ranges. The achievement levels are Level 1—Alternate, Level 2—Alternate, and Level 3—Alternate. The minimum and maximum scale scores for each performance level vary by grade but are the same within each content area. Performance levels were set during a process called standard setting, which established the association between students' scores and achievement category. Standard setting also ensures that the performance levels align to the CCSS PLDs.

Science and STS Paper-Pencil Tests

Scale scores are used in the evaluation of overall student performance. Unlike raw scores (i.e., number-correct scores or percent-correct scores) that allow only comparisons between students under the same test setting, scale scores provide a common reference statewide, making interpretation easier. The scale score performance-level cut points are held constant from year to year for each grade level and content area, while the number- or percent-correct score (i.e., the raw score) associated with each scale score may change.

Because percent-correct scores are defined in terms of the number of questions answered correctly (the raw score metric) they are, by definition, associated with the specific form of the test taken, unadjusted for difficulty—that is, they are dependent on the difficulty of the test *questions* and the ability level of those who are taking the test.

Scale Score Ranges

The scale score ranges for the performance levels are found in Appendix A starting on page 70.

The range of possible scale scores for the California Standards Tests (CSTs) for Science, California Modified Assessment (CMA) for Science, and Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) is from 150 to 600 for each grade and subject. The scale of 150–600 was selected before the first tests were scaled. When the tests were administered and scored for the first time after the performance standards were set, the number-correct scores were associated with scale scores.

The range of possible scale scores for the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) for Science is 15 to 60 for each grade and each level in all the science tests administered.

Performance Levels

Performance levels for the science assessments and STS are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The goal in California is to have all students perform at the proficient or advanced level.

For all grade levels of the CSTs, CMA for Science, and the STS for reading/language arts (RLA), the minimum scale score for the proficient level is set at 350. The basic level is set at a minimum scale score of 300. For the CAPA for Science, basic is set at 30 and proficient is set at 35.

The minimum scale scores for below basic and advanced differ by content area and grade.

Assessment Target Results

Smarter Balanced

The Smarter Balanced content areas of ELA and mathematics are broken down into claims and assessment targets.

Claims are broken down into content categories, which contain a varying number of assessment targets. An assessment target defines the grade-specific knowledge, skill, or ability that students should know or be able to demonstrate within the domain.¹ For example, the overall claim “Reading” has a content category called “Literary” that contains an assessment target called “Reasoning and Evaluation.”

Claims and their assessment targets are listed in Appendix B. Please note that not all assessment targets are tested for all students given the adaptive nature of the CAT portion of the test.

¹ California Department of Education. (2016.) “Assessment Target Reports Frequently Asked Questions.” Retrieved from <http://www.caaspp.org/rsc/pdfs/CAASPP.target-report-FAQs.2016.pdf>

Claims

Assessment claims are evidence-based statements about what students know and can do as demonstrated by their achievement on the summative assessments. They are defined in the item specifications for ELA and mathematics available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Development and Design Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/>. **There are no assessment claims or claim scores for the CAAs.**

There are four claims (but three reporting categories) per mathematics assessment and four claims per ELA assessment, each with a varying number of content categories (subcategories that may apply to some specific claims) and assessment targets.

Results for claims are presented for individual students on the Student Score Reports and in the Online Reporting System for schools, LEAs, and the state. Achievement on claims is reported as one of three levels:

- Above Standard
- Near Standard
- Below Standard

Achievement levels for claims are very similar to subscores. They provide supplemental information regarding a student’s strengths or weaknesses. Only three achievement levels for claims were developed since there are fewer items within each claim.

A student’s ability, along with the corresponding standard error, are estimated for each claim. Achievement levels for claims are based on the distance a student’s performance on the claim is from the Level 3 Standard Met achievement level. Using the standard error, an interval estimate corresponding to the student’s true performance on the claim is constructed and an interval defined. If the interval does not contain the Level 3 Standard Met criterion value for a particular claim, it would indicate a strength or weakness.

No achievement level–setting occurred for claims.

Assessment Targets

While the claims do not vary among grades, assessment targets for ELA Claims 1–4 and mathematics Claim 1 are unique to each grade. Note that assessment targets are reported for mathematics Claim 1 only, because “For mathematics Claims 2, 3, and 4, items are intended to emphasize the mathematical practices, and therefore, items may align to the content included in several mathematics assessment targets. The best common descriptors of the items included in these claims are the claim labels themselves.”¹

Assessment targets describe what is to be assessed within a claim and are used to develop test questions. Assessment targets are reported at the group level in the Online Reporting System (ORS) and provide information regarding a group’s strengths and weaknesses relative to its achievement on the assessment as a whole. Assessment target reports show how a group of students performed on an assessment target compared to their overall achievement on the content-area assessment.

Strength and weakness indicators on assessment target reporting are as follows:

- Better than performance on the test as a whole
- Similar to performance on the test as a whole
- Worse than performance on the test as a whole
- Insufficient information

For example, while a group of students might have achieved the overall Level 3 Standard Met achievement level on the ELA assessment, their performance on the “Reasoning and Evaluation” assessment target might be “Worse than performance on the test as a whole.” This is not to say that the students lack reasoning and evaluation skills, only that their achievement on that portion of the assessment is not as high, statistically, as their achievement on the entire assessment.

Note, that like all results for the 2015–16 CAASPP administration in the ORS, assessment target report results are partial and may change as additional data are received.

CST, CMA, and STS Reporting Clusters

Reporting clusters are groups of questions related to the same standard on a test. Reporting cluster scores are not reported in 2015–16 for the CSTs and CMA for Science or for the STS for RLA.

Chapter I.4 Comparing Results

Standard 12.10 of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014) states, “In educational settings, a decision or characterization that will have major impact on a student should take into consideration not just scores from a single test but other relevant information.”²

Test results should be interpreted as a student’s achievement on a single assessment. They are meant to represent approximations of students’ mastery of content areas.

Any comparison of groups should not be used for diagnostic, placement, or promotion or retention purposes. Decisions about promotion, retention, placement, or eligibility for special programs may use or include California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System results only in conjunction with multiple other measures including, but not limited to, locally administered tests, teacher recommendations, and grades.

Using the Conditional Standard Error of Measurement (CSEM) to Compare Scale Scores and Achievement Levels for the Online Summative Assessments for Individual Students

In any test, one can assume that scores for an individual would vary if it were somehow possible to give the same test over and over again. For example, students may vary in their performance because of the way they are feeling on the day of the test or they may be especially lucky or unlucky when they guess at questions they do not know. This random variation in individual scores is quantified through the use of a statistic of measurement precision called the conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM). Given a single score for a student, it can be assumed that if the student were to take the test over and over again, the student would score within plus or minus one CSEM of the observed score about 68 percent of the time. In the Online Reporting System, this idea is expressed as follows:

“A student’s score is best interpreted when recognizing that the student’s knowledge and skills fall within a score range and not just a precise number. For example, 2300 (+/-10) indicates a score range between 2290 and 2310.”

For the online assessments, an error band is a useful tool that describes the amount of precision associated with a reported scale score. CSEM is calculated for each student who takes the online assessments. In the 2015–16 reports, the averaged CSEM at each scale score point was used. Error bands are used to construct an interval estimate corresponding to a student’s true ability/proficiency for a particular content area with a certain level of confidence.

Comparing Results for the Smarter Balanced Online Assessments

Because of the vertical scaling of the Smarter Balanced assessments, scale scores for a test may be compared to scale scores for the same student or groups of students in different years for the **same content area**, as well as for between specific grade levels and content areas. This allows users to say that achievement for a given content area and grade was higher or lower one year as compared with another. Scale scores for the Smarter Balanced assessments may be compared across grades since the scales are vertically aligned across grades.

Scores for the paper-pencil versions of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are linear forms but have the same scale as the online tests.

Results for the 2015–16 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are available, as are the results from the 2014–15, which was the first year of operational administration. Aggregate results can be downloaded from the public CAASPP Reporting Web site at <http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov> as well as from the secure Test Operations Management System (for properly credentialed users).

Results for either year are not included if the student met one of the following conditions during testing:

- Not tested by parent/guardian request
- Not tested due to significant medical emergency

² 2014, American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education.