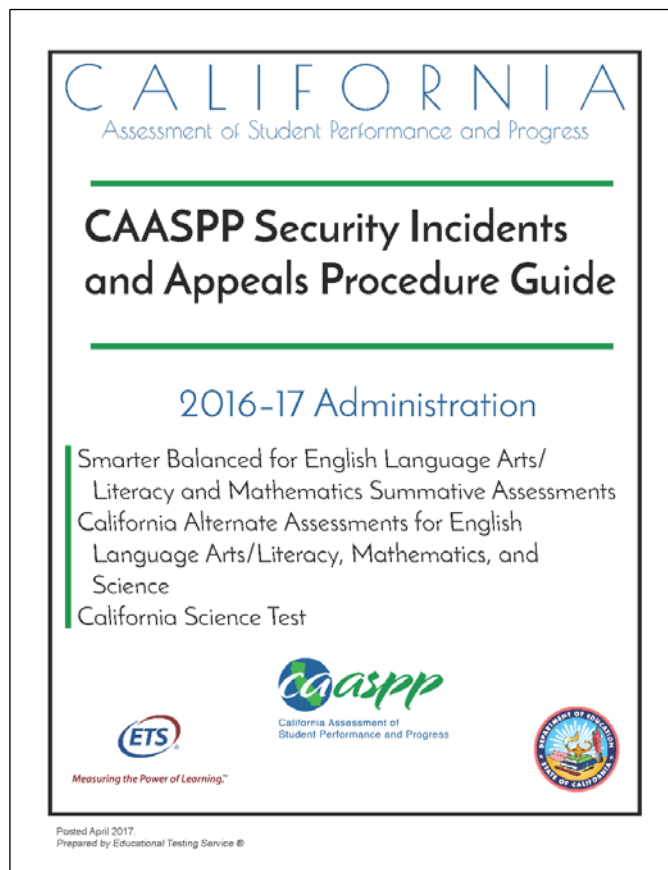


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# Chapter 2. The Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) Process

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# About the Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) Process

## Notes:



- The *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS)* form must be used to report incidents that occur during the administration of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced, California Alternate Assessments, and California Science Test assessments. Incidents associated with the Smarter Balanced paper-pencil tests and the Standards-based Tests in Spanish must be reported directly to the California Department of Education (CDE) at 916-445-8765.
- Incidents that occur during the administration of the interim assessments are handled at the local level and should not be reported using the *CAASPP STAIRS* form.



**Alert:** In the event of a breach involving the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, the local educational agency (LEA) CAASPP coordinator must **immediately** call the CDE at 916-445-8765 and then complete the online *CAASPP STAIRS* form **within 24 hours**.

## Purpose

The online *CAASPP STAIRS* form is the starting point for LEA and test site coordinators to report a test security incident or other testing issue that interferes with the administration and completion of the summative assessments. The STAIRS process is the means by which LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators report and resolve CAASPP summative testing incidents. They *report* by means of the *CAASPP STAIRS* form; they *resolve* by either filing an appeal to reset, reopen, invalidate, or grant a grace period extension to a student's test, or by following other instructions in the STAIRS response e-mail. See Appendix C for a flowchart that maps the STAIRS process.

The CDE will review your form to determine whether your testing issue requires additional action by the LEA.

## Use

The online *CAASPP STAIRS* form, which is available to coordinators through the Test Operations Management System (TOMS), must be used to provide the required information to the CDE when an irregularity is confirmed. The form includes the opportunity to manually enter or securely upload a spreadsheet containing Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) of the students involved in the irregularity. **Do not include student names, only SSID numbers.**

The LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator (with a copy sent to the LEA CAASPP coordinator) submitting the form will receive an e-mail that includes the details that were entered into the *CAASPP STAIRS* form and instructions of the next steps to take (submit an appeal, file the e-mail, or wait to be contacted). **You cannot file an appeal in**

**TOMS without first submitting the CAASPP STAIRS form because the STAIRS case number included in the confirmation e-mail is required to complete the submission of an appeal.** A copy of the e-mail may be sent to the CDE for the following incident types:

- Student cheating
- Security breach (where either a student or an adult exposed secure materials)
- Accidental access to a summative assessment
- Incorrect SSID used (intentionally switched)
- Student unable to review previous answers (20-minute pause rule for the computer adaptive test has been exceeded)

## Coordinator Procedures

The CAASPP test site coordinator:

- Receives notification of an irregularity
- Reviews the information provided and verifies that an irregularity has occurred
- Contacts the LEA CAASPP coordinator and provides all pertinent information or fills out and submits the online CAASPP STAIRS form, if this is the procedure established for the LEA, if the incident has not been reported by the CAASPP test site coordinator, and if the incident is not a breach

The LEA CAASPP coordinator:

- Receives notification of an irregularity from the CAASPP test site coordinator
- Reviews the information provided and verifies that the occurrence is an irregularity
- In the case of a breach, notifies CalTAC for social media breaches and the CDE for all other breaches within 24 hours of the incident
- Fills out and submits the online CAASPP STAIRS form, if this is the procedure established for the LEA
- Responds to and assists the CDE and/or test security personnel as requested
- Keeps any documentation associated with the irregularity for one year

## When Not to Report in STAIRS

You do not need to report an incident using the CAASPP STAIRS form under the following circumstances:

- If student logon information is lost or misplaced, do not report; this is a breach of a student's personally identifiable information that should be addressed at the local level.
- Because the system does not allow students to skip questions or submit a segment where any questions have not been answered, there is no reason to file a report if you think a question was not answered.

- If incorrect Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) were used (SSID swap), LEA CAASPP coordinators must, instead, call the California Technical Assistance Center to report this. CAASPP test site coordinators should contact their LEA CAASPP coordinators for assistance.
- If a student used an electronic device **after** testing is completed during a session, do not report. However, if the student was actively engaged in a testing session or the student completed testing but the LEA can verify that the device was being used to help other students that are engaged in a test session, then report.
- If an English learner enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months as of April 15 and accidentally took the English language arts/literacy, do not report as this student's score will not be used for federal accountability purposes.

## How to Submit the *CAASPP STAIRS* Form

### Additional Resources:



- California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Security and Test Administration and Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) for Summative Assessments Web page—<http://www.caaspp.org/stairs/>
- CAASPP Forms Web page—<http://www.caaspp.org/administration/forms/>

## Required Information

The *CAASPP STAIRS* form requires the following information from you:

- Your contact information
- Date of the incident
- Grade(s) affected
- Total number of students involved in this incident
- Statewide Student Identifier(s) (SSID[s]) for the involved student(s)
  - The spreadsheet template in which the SSIDs are to be loaded is linked on both the *CAASPP STAIRS* form and the [CAASPP STAIRS](#) Web page
  - When you upload the SSID spreadsheet into STAIRS, the file name is the assigned STAIRS case number that appears on the Web form where you upload the template.
  - Not all incident reports require that you upload SSIDs. Incident types reported in STAIRS that will require that SSIDs be uploaded are as follows:
    - Student exposes secure materials
    - Student cheating or accessing unauthorized devices
    - Accidental summative access (if test administrator coached students, students interacted about test questions, or students access unauthorized materials)
    - Issue involving incorrect SSID(s)
    - Validity issues
  - If you are filing an appeal, you will also be required to submit SSIDs.
- Test name and type (for example, the Smarter Balanced mathematics performance task; or the California Science Test)
- The type of incident; incident types are listed in Appendix D; the table in this appendix also includes the details required by the form
- A brief description of the incident (required)

## Cautions When Using the CAASPP STAIRS Form

Note the following about using the CAASPP STAIRS form to report testing incidents:

- You can only identify one test per CAASPP STAIRS form. You must file a separate CAASPP STAIRS form for each test. You cannot combine incidents.
- Mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk (\*).
- Always use the [Back] button on the Web form to return to a previous page. Using your Web browser's [Refresh] or [Reload] button or any other Web browser functionality may cause loss of the data you have entered.
- If you exit the form (close the tab or Web browser), you will lose all the data you have entered.
- You must select the [Complete Submission] button on the *CDE Review Decision* screen, which is the final page of the CAASPP STAIRS form as well as the final step in the STAIRS process. Failure to select this button will result in an invalid STAIRS case number that cannot be used to submit an appeal.
- Check with your e-mail administrator that the e-mail address [DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov](mailto:DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov) is whitelisted and that you are able to receive e-mails from this address. STAIRS e-mail responses should be received within two hours of submittal.

## Steps for Submitting the CAASPP STAIRS Form

### Step 1. Access the CAASPP STAIRS Form.

1. Open an Internet browser.
2. Open TOMS by going to <http://www.caaspp.org/> and selecting the [Test Operations Management System (TOMS)] button to access the TOMS Logon Web form.
3. When you have logged on and TOMS has opened, select the [STAIRS/Appeals] button in the left navigation bar (circled in Figure 1).
4. When the STAIRS/Appeals screen opens, select the [STAIRS] button (also circled in Figure 1).

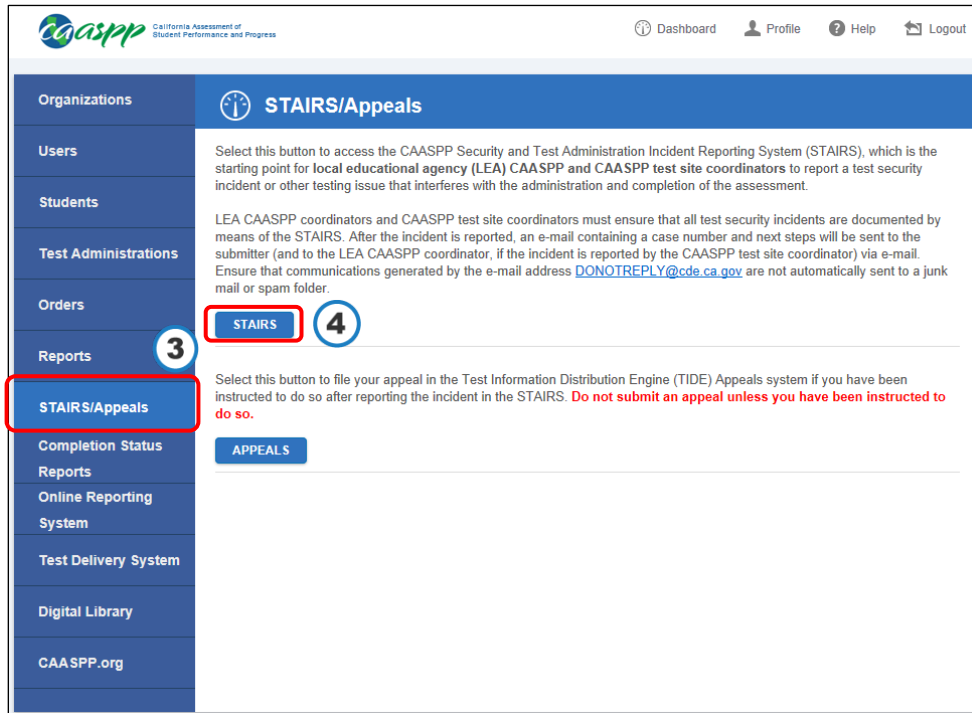


Figure 1. STAIRS/Appeals screen

## Step 2. Submit a Report of a Testing Incident.

1. Select your county from the *County Selection* drop-down list and then select the [Next] button (Figure 2). If you are uncertain of your affiliated charter school’s responsible county and/or LEA associations, select the link provided to look it up.

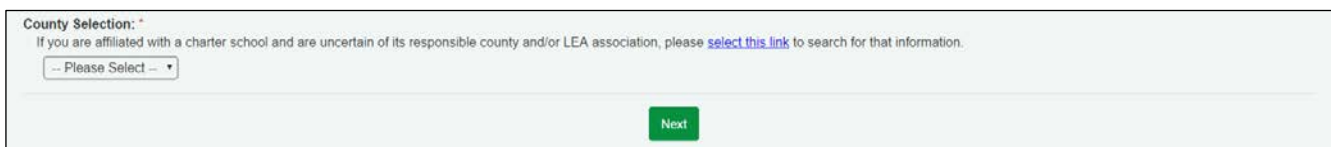


Figure 2. County Selection drop-down list

2. Select your role from the *Role Selection* drop-down list and the LEA from the *LEA Selection* drop-down list (Figure 3) that appears after you have selected your role. Fields may take a few seconds to populate. After you have done so, verify that your local educational agency’s (LEA’s) county/district/school (CDS) code is correct.

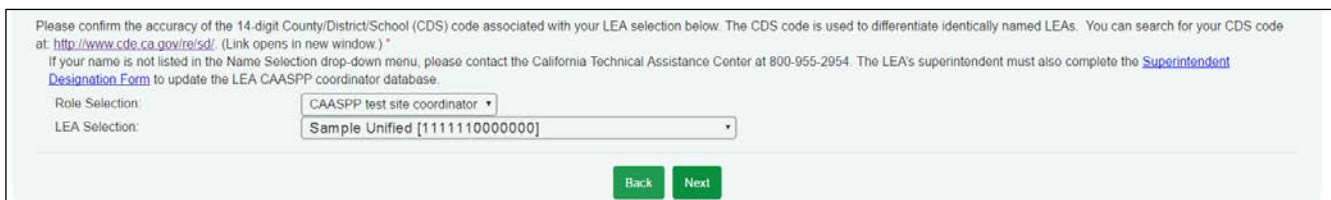
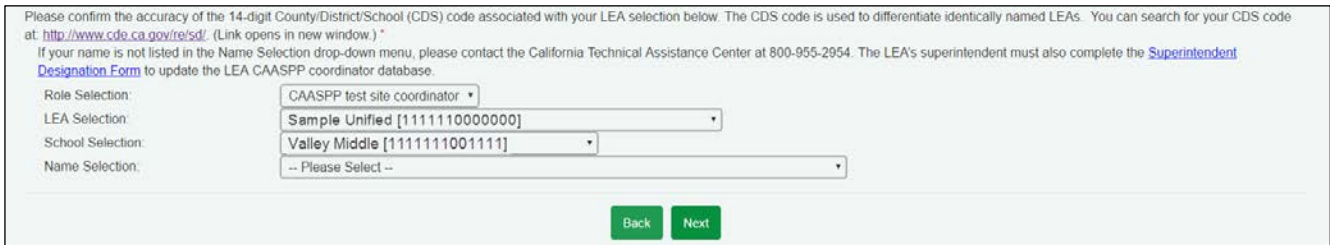


Figure 3. Role Selection and LEA Selection drop-down lists

3. Select the school from the *School Selection* drop-down list that appears after you have selected your role, and then and your name from the *Name Selection* drop-down list (Figure 4).



Please confirm the accuracy of the 14-digit County/District/School (CDS) code associated with your LEA selection below. The CDS code is used to differentiate identically named LEAs. You can search for your CDS code at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/res/sd/>. (Link opens in new window.)  
If your name is not listed in the Name Selection drop-down menu, please contact the California Technical Assistance Center at 800-955-2954. The LEA's superintendent must also complete the [Superintendent Designation Form](#) to update the LEA CAASPP coordinator database.

Role Selection: CAASPP test site coordinator ▾  
LEA Selection: Sample Unified [111111000000] ▾  
School Selection: Valley Middle [111111001111] ▾  
Name Selection: -- Please Select -- ▾

Back Next

**Figure 4. School Selection and Name Selection drop-down lists**

4. Select the [Next] button to continue.



**Note:** If the primary LEA CAASPP coordinator's name is not correct, you must contact your LEA's superintendent to resubmit the *Superintendent Designation of LEA CAASPP Coordinator* form to correct your information. This form is linked on the [Forms](#) Web page on the CAASPP Portal.

5. Enter the details of the incident on the screen shown in Figure 5. Field choices are as follows:

- Date of incident\*
- Grade(s) affected (Choose all that apply)\*
- Total number of students involved\*
- Test Name and Type\*

*Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments*

- Mathematics performance task (Math PT)
- Mathematics computer adaptive test (Math CAT)
- English language arts/literacy performance task (ELA PT)
- English language arts/literacy computer adaptive test (ELA CAT)

*Science*

- California Science Test (CAST)
- California Alternate Assessment for Science (CAA Science)

*California Alternate Assessments*

- English language arts (CAA ELA)
- Mathematics (CAA Math)



### Please enter information regarding this incident.

**Date of incident \***  
Note that California regulations require that irregularities be reported to the CDE within 24 hours (*California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Education, Section 859 [e]*).  
MM/DD/YYYY



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**Grade(s) affected (Choose all that apply) \***

<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12

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**Total number of students involved \***



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**Test Name and Type \***  
If you are reporting an incident involving the Smarter Balanced paper-pencil mathematics or English language arts/literacy test, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS), please contact the California Department of Education (CDE) at 916-445-8765 [🔗](#).

**Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments**

Mathematics performance task (Math PT)

Mathematics computer adaptive test (Math CAT)

English language arts/literacy performance task (ELA PT)

English language arts/literacy computer adaptive test (ELA CAT)

**Science**

California Science Test (CAST)

California Alternative Assessment for Science (CAA Science)

**California Alternate Assessments**

English language arts (CAA ELA)

Mathematics (CAA Math)

**Figure 5. Please enter information regarding this incident screen**



**Note:** If you are reporting an incident involving the Smarter Balanced paper-pencil mathematics or ELA assessment or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish for Reading/Language Arts, please contact the CDE at 916-445-8765.

6. Select the **[Next]** button to continue.
7. Select a testing issue (Figure 6). The issue types will vary based on the test name and type selected on the previous screen. If the issue type is underlined, hover over it to see its definition. Selecting certain issues causes additional questions to appear. Answer the questions to the best of your ability. See Appendix D for a list of issue types, descriptions, and the additional questions that appear after selection and Appendix E for possible responses to appeals filed.

**Testing issue \***  
To see a description of all possible testing issues, please select the link for [the STAIRS Applicable Testing Issues Chart \(PDF\)](#).

Select one answer. An explanation of the testing issue will appear when you hover your cursor over the testing issue.

- Accessibility Issue
- Accidental Summative Access
- Administered Incorrect Assessment
- Administration Error
- Disruption or Technical Issues
- Expired or Accidentally Submitted Test
- Exposing Secure Materials
- Incorrect Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) Used
- Student Cheating or Accessing Unauthorized Electronic Devices
- Student Disruption
- Validity Issue

**Note:** If you are a CAASPP test site coordinator and your testing issue is not listed, contact your LEA CAASPP coordinator. If you are an LEA CAASPP coordinator and your testing issue is not listed, please contact the California Technical Assistance Center (CAITAC):

- Phone: 800-955-2954
- E-mail: [caltac@ets.org](mailto:caltac@ets.org)
- Web site: <http://www.caaspp.org>

Provide a brief description that supports the testing issue reason selected. Do not include names of staff members or students involved. Include details of how the incident was verified and what local action has been taken (if any). \*

Words used: 0 out of 200.

**Figure 6. Testing issue selections**

8. Select the **[Next]** button to continue.
9. Review the details you entered (sample shown in Figure 7). If all the details about the incident are correct, confirm your submission by selecting **[View Decision]**. If not, select the **[Back]** button to return to a previous screen and correct details.

**Confirm your submission**

Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) Submission Information

LEA [CDS code]: Sample Unified [1111110000000]

School [CDS code]: Valley Middle [111111001111]

Date of incident: 01/25/2017

Grade(s) Affected: 7

Total Number of Students Involved: 15

Test Name and Type: Mathematics computer adaptive test (Math CAT)

Testing issue: Student Cheating or Accessing Unauthorized Electronic Devices

Further Description of Testing Issue: A student cheated or provided answers to other students, including passing notes, giving help to other students during testing, or using hand-held electronic devices to exchange information. Describe the testing incident here.

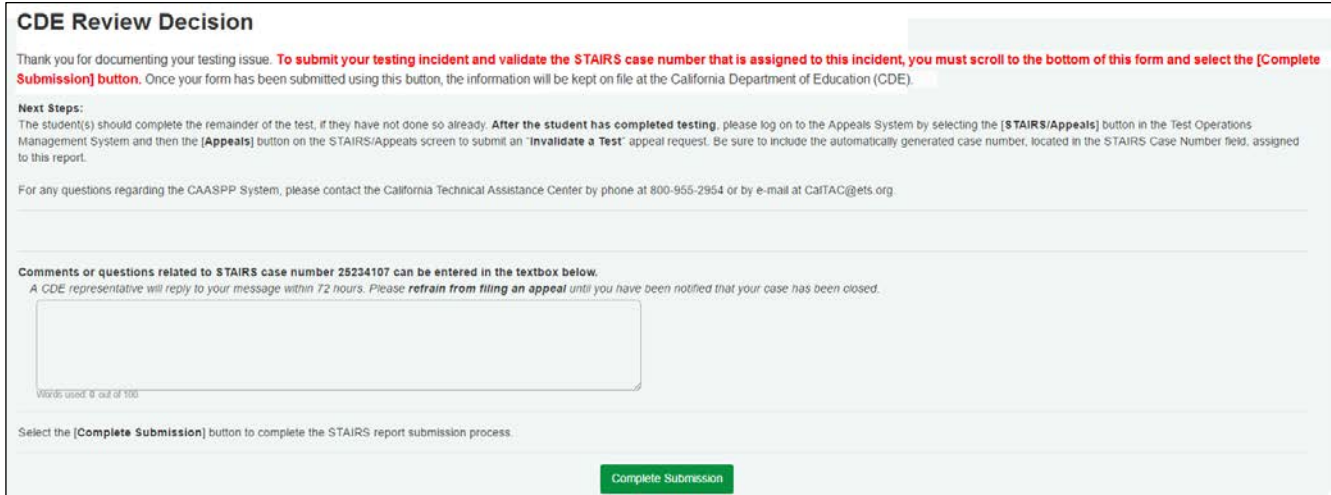
*If the above information is correct, please select the [View Decision] button. The system may require the input of SSID(s) on the following page. If you are not presented with a page requiring entry of SSID(s), you will be shown your CDE Review Decision immediately.*

*If any of the above fields are incorrect, use the form's [Back] button (NOT your browser's [Back] button) to navigate to the page that requires correction.*

**Figure 7. Confirm your submission screen**

10. If you see a screen asking you to upload (Figure 11) or enter individually (Figure 10) the SSIDs of students involved in the incident, continue to step 3 on page 21.
11. If you see the *CDE Review Decision* screen (sample shown in Figure 8), review the information provided. The next steps on this screen will vary based on the testing

incident. Add any additional comments or questions to the provided textbox, and then select the **[Complete Submission]** button. **You must select the [Complete Submission] button to complete the STAIRS process. Failure to do so will result in an invalid STAIRS case number that cannot be used to submit an appeal.**



**CDE Review Decision**

Thank you for documenting your testing issue. **To submit your testing incident and validate the STAIRS case number that is assigned to this incident, you must scroll to the bottom of this form and select the [Complete Submission] button.** Once your form has been submitted using this button, the information will be kept on file at the California Department of Education (CDE).

**Next Steps:**  
The student(s) should complete the remainder of the test, if they have not done so already. **After the student has completed testing,** please log on to the Appeals System by selecting the **[STAIRS/Appeals]** button in the Test Operations Management System and then the **[Appeals]** button on the STAIRS/Appeals screen to submit an **"invalidate a Test"** appeal request. Be sure to include the automatically generated case number, located in the STAIRS Case Number field, assigned to this report.

For any questions regarding the CAASPP System, please contact the California Technical Assistance Center by phone at 800-955-2954 or by e-mail at [CaTAC@ets.org](mailto:CaTAC@ets.org).

Comments or questions related to STAIRS case number 25234107 can be entered in the textbox below.  
A CDE representative will reply to your message within 72 hours. Please **refrain from filing an appeal** until you have been notified that your case has been closed.

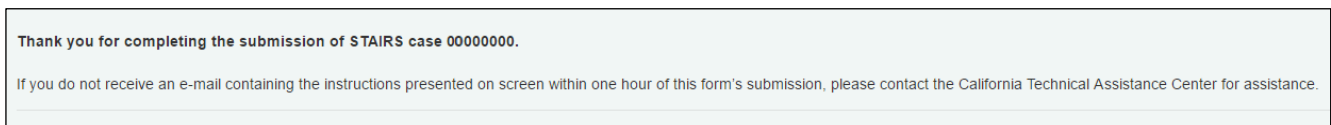
Words used: 0 out of 1000

Select the **[Complete Submission]** button to complete the STAIRS report submission process.

**Complete Submission**

**Figure 8. CDE Review Decision screen**

12. The *Thank you for completing the submission of STAIRS case [#]* screen (Figure 9) will load, confirming your submission is complete; you may close the Web browser or Web browser tab.



Thank you for completing the submission of STAIRS case 00000000.

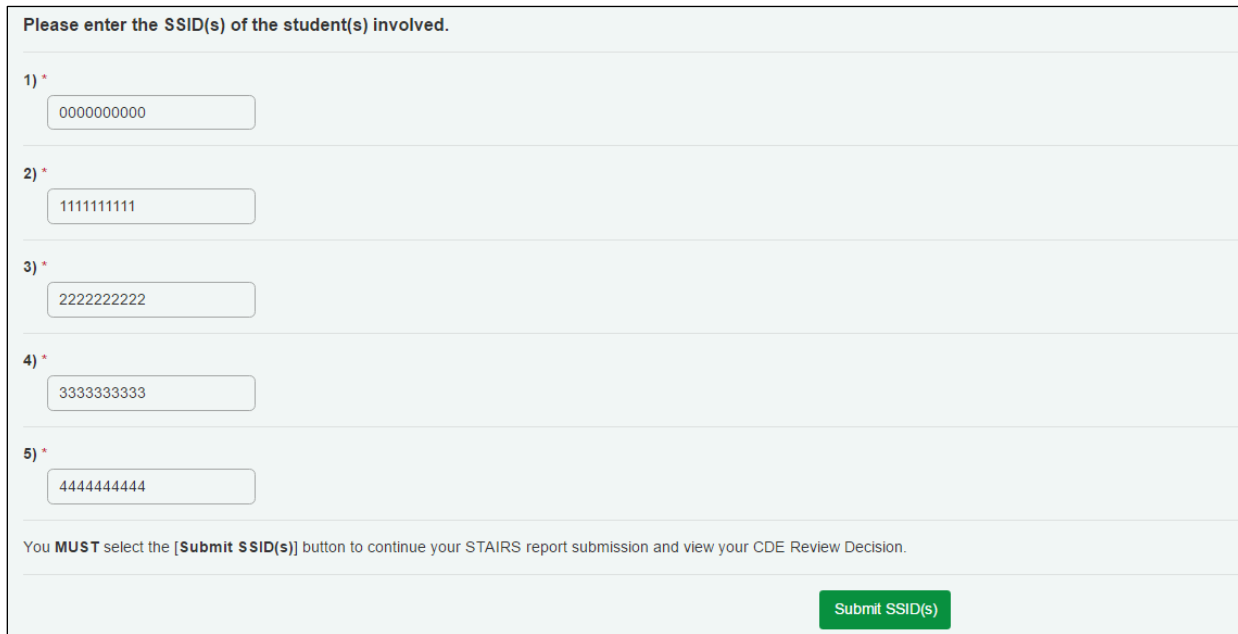
If you do not receive an e-mail containing the instructions presented on screen within one hour of this form's submission, please contact the California Technical Assistance Center for assistance.

**Figure 9. Thank you screen**

### Step 3. Submit SSIDs.

#### *Individually (for 10 or fewer students)*

1. If, instead of the *Thank you* screen, you see a screen asking you to enter the SSIDs of students involved in the incident (Figure 10), enter the SSIDs of the affected students. The number of fields you see will match the total number of students involved that you entered on the *Please enter information regarding this incident* screen (Figure 5).



Please enter the SSID(s) of the student(s) involved.

1) \*

2) \*

3) \*

4) \*

5) \*

You **MUST** select the [Submit SSID(s)] button to continue your STAIRS report submission and view your CDE Review Decision.

**Figure 10. Insert SSID(s) individually**

2. Select the [**Submit SSID(s)**] button when you have entered all the SSIDs of the students involved. You will be directed to the *CDE Review Decision* screen (Figure 8). Review the details provided and select [**Complete Submission**].
3. The *Thank you for completing the submission of STAIRS case [#]* screen (Figure 9) will load, confirming your submission is complete; you may close the Web browser or Web browser tab.

### ***Via Batch Upload (for 11 or more students)***

1. If, instead of the *Thank you* screen, you see a screen asking you to upload the SSIDs of students involved in the incident (Figure 11), select the [Excel file template] link to download the template. You will be required to use the template to upload a list of students in an Excel spreadsheet if 11 or more students were affected by the incident.
2. Enter the 10-digit SSIDs in column B.
3. Save the file as the same file type (.xlsx) using the STAIRS case number as the file name. A sample STAIRS case number/file name is circled in Figure 11.



Using this [Excel file template](#), please upload a list of all the Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) of students involved in this incident. \*

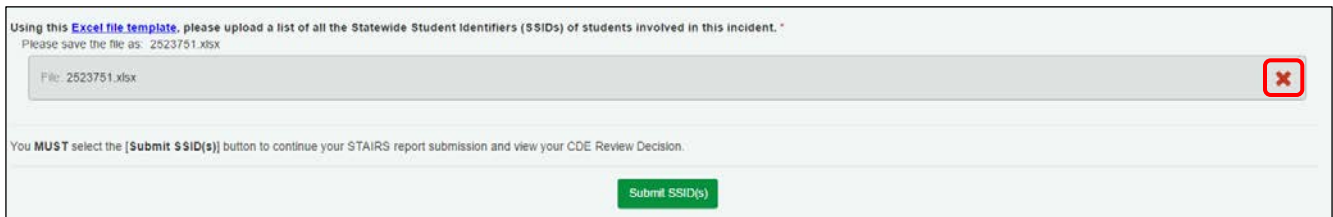
Please save the file as:

You **MUST** select the [Submit SSID(s)] button to continue your STAIRS report submission and view your CDE Review Decision.

**Figure 11. Upload SSIDs screen**

4. Select the [**Browse**] button to find the file on your device or local network (Figure 11). Once you select the file, it will upload automatically.

5. If you upload the incorrect file, select the red [X] button on the right side of the row associated with the file to delete it (circled in Figure 12). Then repeat the previous step to locate and upload the correct file.



Using this [Excel file template](#), please upload a list of all the Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) of students involved in this incident. \*  
Please save the file as: 2523751.xlsx

File: 2523751.xlsx X

You **MUST** select the [Submit SSID(s)] button to continue your STAIRS report submission and view your CDE Review Decision.

Submit SSID(s)

**Figure 12. Uploaded SSID spreadsheet screen**

6. Confirm the correct file has been uploaded and then select the [Submit SSID(s)] button.
7. You will be direct to the *CDE Review Decision* screen (Figure 8). Review the details provided and select [Complete Submission].
8. The *Thank you for completing the submission of STAIRS case [#]* screen (Figure 9) will load, confirming your submission is complete; you may close the Web browser or Web browser tab.

#### Step 4. Take Necessary Action.

1. Shortly after you have submitted your incident report, you will receive an e-mail containing a case number and outlining the next step(s) to take. Possible outcomes are described in Appendix B.



**Note:** In order to receive communications on next steps from the STAIRS, it is essential to:

- Add the [DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov](mailto:DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov) e-mail address to the safe senders list.
  - Ensure that communications generated by the e-mail address [DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov](mailto:DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov) are not automatically sent to a junk mail or spam folder.
2. Please read the e-mail as soon as it is delivered; under certain circumstances (e.g., when you are reporting a security breach), you must call the California Department of Education immediately at 916-445-8765 to report that an adult or student exposed secure materials:
  3. If you are required to file an appeal, you must file it within two business days of receiving the STAIRS response e-mail unless the appeal type is “invalidate,” in which case you should permit the student to finish testing since he or she will receive their actual score on the Student Score Report. See the [Cautions About When to File an Appeal](#) section on page 26 for more guidance on timing the filing of an appeal.

## Communicating with the CDE about a Case

Use the **[Reply]** button in the STAIRS response e-mail to communicate with the CDE regarding the incident you reported; do *not* reply to the confirmation e-mail.

**From:** 2016-17 STAIRS [<mailto:DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov>]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2017 9:10 AM  
**To:** STAIRS Form Submitter  
**Subject:** STAIRS: CDE Reply Notification [Case Number 0000000]  
Dear STAIRS Form Submitter (LEA CAASPP coordinator at Sample LEA [000000000000000]):  
The CDE has responded to your comment related to STAIRS case number 000000.  
**Your Initial Comment [03-30-2017 11:57 AM]:** This is where I can add a comment or question.  
**CDE Response [03-31-2017 09:09 AM]:** Thank you for your comment or question. Here is the CDE's response.  
Please reply to the comment above by selecting the **[Reply]** button below.

**Reply**

Doing so opens the *CDE Review Decision* screen shown in Figure 8; enter your questions or comments in the textbox. When the CDE has responded, you will receive an e-mail with that response. Use the **[Reply]** button in that e-mail if you have additional questions about that case.