



March 3, 2017

Dear Jefferson School District Families:

California's academic standards 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. We anticipate a successful third year of testing in the CAASPP system this school year. Students will take the tests in **grades 3 – 8** from **April 10, 2017 to May 12, 2017**. A more detailed, school specific testing schedule will be available later this month.

### **Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in ELA and Math**

The Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics tests reflect California's rigorous academic standards and allow students to demonstrate analytical writing and critical thinking skills as well as their knowledge of facts. In 2017, parents will be able to compare results across **three years** (2014–15, 2015–16, and 2016–17) to determine their child's progress in meeting the standards. (Exceptions: Only two years of data will be reported for students in grade 4, and only one year of data will be reported for students in grades three.)

To learn more about these tests, please visit the California Department of Education (CDE) 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.

### **The California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) in ELA and Math**

Students in grades three through eight who have an IEP that designates the use of an alternate assessment are eligible to take the CAAs in ELA and mathematics. The goal of the CAAs is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities attain increasingly higher achievement levels and leave high school ready for academic or career options. The test items are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for ELA and mathematics and are based on the Core Content Connectors, which were developed with three tiers of complexity.

If you would like more information or resources about alternate assessments, please visit the CDE's CAASPP Alternate Assessments Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/altassessment.asp>.

### **California Science Test - Pilot Test & CAA for Science - Pilot Test**

California's new state standards for science 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. Students in Grades 5 and 8 will take the California Science Test or the CAA for Science Test. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as designated in their IEP, are eligible to take the CAA for Science. This year students will participate in the tryout of test items for this future assessment. While this tryout will not provide scores for your 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>.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James W. Bridges". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James W. Bridges, Ed.D.  
Superintendent