



POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear PUSD Families,

An important part of your student's academic program is measuring progress through the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments.

Smarter Balanced Assessments

Students across California in grades 3–8 and high school take these assessments each spring to gauge each student's performance in English language arts/literacy (ELA), mathematics, and science. These tests measure the skills called for by the California academic standards, which focus on a student's 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. Parents can use their student's ELA or Mathematics results as one of many indications of their child's performance. Our teachers and principals also use these results to compare a schools' performance toward achieving our state standards.

California Science Test—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. This year students in grade 5, 8 and 10 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.

California Alternative Assessments

The goal of the California Alternative Assessments (CAAs) is to ensure that students with the most significant needs in special education can attain increasingly higher achievement levels and leave high school ready for academic or career options. Students in grades three through eight and grade eleven are eligible to take the CAAs in ELA and mathematics as determined in the annual Individual Education Plan meeting. This year in grades 5, 8 and 10, these students will also take the science alternative pilot assessment. As mentioned above this will also be a tryout of test items to assist in building future assessments.

Participation

Pursuant to California Education Code Section 60615, parents have the right to opt out of any state assessment. It is recommended parents meet with their child's school principal if they are considering this option. Our teachers and principals have found many benefits in having our students participate in this assessment and we want to assure parents that student results from any assessment will not be shared beyond the use of school staff directly involved in your child's education. Section 852 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations further provides that parents or guardians may annually submit a written request to the school to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP for the school year. Therefore, if you wish to exempt your student from testing, notification in writing to your school's principal is required.

We wish all of our students the best as they take these important exams.

Marian Kim-Phelps, Superintendent