

Dear Parents/Guardians,

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 English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments – grades 3 -8 and 11.**

Students across California will take assessments each spring to gauge each student's performance in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. This year your child will take the following test(s), depending on his or her grade level:

- Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in grades three to eight and eleven

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 indicators of their child's performance. Our teachers and principals also use these results to compare their schools' performance toward achieving our state standards.

### **California Science Test (CAST) – grades 5, 8, and 12**

California's 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 has developed a new assessment that emphasizes scientific thinking and reasoning. This year students in grade 5, 8 and 12 will take the CAST assessment. This test is designed to measure how students are performing in relationship to the California science standards.

### **California Alternative Assessments – grades 3 – 8, and 11**

#### **California Alternative Assessment in Science (Field Test) grades 5, 8, and 12**

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 their annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. This year, in grades 5, 8 and 12, special education students will have the opportunity to take the science alternative pilot assessment. .

### **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.

### **How can I help my child get ready for the CAASPP?**

You are an important part of your child's education. Some things you can do to help your child are:

- Talk about the test with your child. Make sure they are not scared or anxious.
- Tell your child that you and his or her teacher have high expectations and that you are both there to help, every step of the way.
- Take a practice test with your child which can be found at [www.caaspp.org](http://www.caaspp.org)
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before testing.