Berkeley PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Berkeley Unified School District

March 22, 2024

Dear Parent / Guardian:

Every year, California students take several statewide tests. When combined with other measures such as grades, class work, and teacher observations, these tests give families and teachers a more complete picture of their child's learning. You can use the results to identify where your child is doing well and where they might need more support.

Your child may be taking one or more of the following California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Pursuant to California *Education Code* Section 60615, parents/guardians may annually submit to the school a written request to excuse their child from any or all of the CAASPP assessments.

There are many ways to measure your child's learning. Your child's teacher uses report card grades, classroom work, teacher observations, and end-of-year statewide test results to get a complete picture of your child's learning. Each year, students participate in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Your child will take the following computer-based tests, depending on their grade level or instructional program:

Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (SBA) for English language arts (ELA) and math, required tests in grades 3–8 and 11
The SBA tests students' knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are computer adaptive tests. Computer-adaptive tests adjust the difficulty of the questions based on the answers that students give. As students answer questions correctly, they receive more challenging questions. Incorrect answers trigger easier questions. This helps keep the test short for many students and makes sure the scores are very accurate, especially for students who score very low or very high.

California Science Test (CAST), a required test in grades 5, 8 and once in high school
The CAST is administered to students in grades 5 and 8 and once in high school, either in grade 10, 11, or 12. This assessment uses questions that bring together science content, practices, and concepts. It also covers all three science domains: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth and Space Sciences.

California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for ELA and Math
Students in grades 3–8 and grade 11 whose individualized education program (IEP) identifies the use of alternate assessments. The CAAs for ELA and math are computer-based tests that are administered one-on-one by a test examiner who is familiar with the student. The California Common Core State Standards through the Core Content Connectors are assessed.

California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science
Students whose IEP identifies the use of an alternate assessment take the CAA for Science in grades 5 and 8 and once in high school, either in grade 10, 11, or 12. Alternate achievement standards derived from the CA NGSS.

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Physical Fitness Test
Students in grades 5, 7, and 9 will take the FITNESSGRAM®, which is the test used in California. The test consists of five performance components: aerobic capacity, abdominal strength, trunk strength, upper body strength, and flexibility.

You are an important part of your child's education. To make sure your child feels comfortable taking tests, you can:

- Explain to your child that these tests are tools to help them learn, and they should not be anxious or scared.
- Explore the practice tests with your child at caaspp.org/practice-and-training/index.html so they can become familiar with the platform and setup of the tests.
- Remind your child that you and their teacher want them to try their best and are there to help, every step of the way.

You will receive your child's results at or before the beginning of the next school year. The results will identify where your child is doing well or needs more help, so you can better support their learning at home and teachers can better support their learning in the classroom.

To learn more about these tests go to the Starting Smarter web page at ca.startingsmarter.org/, or review the Parent Guides to Understanding at cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/parentguidetounderstand.asp.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's school directly.

Sincerely,
Berkeley Unified School District