



BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way | Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear Families of BUSD High School Students:

Your student, along with other public school students throughout California, will take part in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program this spring. Students in grades two through eleven will take the California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests measure how well students are achieving California's content standards for all subjects tested.

The 2012 STAR Program testing and makeup dates for our school district are April 23-30 for High School and May 6-13 for Elementary and Middle School. There will be make-ups for those students absent from school, they will be May 1-4 for High School and May 14-18 for Elementary and Middle School. (See the school for specific testing dates.)

Helping your student achieve on the STAR tests

Families play a very important part in their students' education. Encouraging students to do their best in school and to complete school assignments well and on time can have a positive impact on student learning. Research about how students learn shows that a great deal can be done at home to increase their academic performance.

One question you may have about the STAR Program is, "How can I help my student do better on the tests?" The question really is, "How can I help my student do well in school?" What you do at home can make a very big difference in how well your students achieve in school.

Here are some suggestions for helping your students in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas:

For Reading and Writing

- Talk about what you and your students are reading. Ask questions and discuss words that are difficult.
- Spend time together as a family, reading newspapers, magazines, and books.
- Encourage your students to write lists, notes, thank-you notes, requests, journals, recipes, short stories, and other types of writing used in everyday life.

For Mathematics

- Review homework every day with your students to make sure assignments are completed. Ask your students to explain some of their math problems and how they solved them.
- Have your students help solve "real" mathematical problems as you shop, cook a meal, or prepare to do a home project.
- Help your students read charts or graphs in newspapers and magazines. Read maps when going on a family trip. It is important to help your students apply what they are learning.

For Other Academic Areas

For other academic areas, such as science and history–social science, challenge students to use reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with their knowledge about the subject. As your students read about a subject, ask them to tell you about it. This reinforces what they have learned and promotes the use of their new vocabulary.

You Can Help Your Students Do Better on State Tests

- Discuss with your students the importance of going to school every day and doing their best on assignments and tests.
- Make sure your students have a quiet place to study and that they complete all homework assignments.
- Attend family information meetings. Ask about the major tests given to students and other ways academic achievement is measured.
- Discuss upcoming tests with your students and try to reduce their anxieties about test taking. Reassure them that the test results will provide useful information about what they know and what they still need to learn.
- Make sure your students attend school on testing days, get a good night's rest, and have breakfast before a big test.

Get Involved

Students do better in school when adult family members get involved. You can become involved by attending school events, joining family groups, and visiting your school's Web site. You also are encouraged to contact the school for additional information about your students' academic progress and the tests they are taking at school.

To Find Out More

Additional information on the STAR Program is available on the California Department of Education STAR Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

STAR results will be sent to your home address in a STAR Student Report at the beginning of the school year 2012-2013. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and their student's teacher(s). Please keep these reports for use when talking with your student's teacher(s) about ways to support your student's learning.

If you have further questions, please contact your student's teacher(s) or the school Principal.

Sincerely,



William Huyett, Superintendent