



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Pam Slater

E-mail: [communications@cde.ca.gov](mailto:communications@cde.ca.gov)

Phone: 916-319-0818

## State Schools Chief Torlakson Calls First Year of CAASPP Results California's Starting Point Toward Goal of Career and College Readiness

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson today unveiled the results of new online assessments administered to about 3.2 million students last spring to gauge their progress in learning new, more rigorous academic standards designed to prepare them for college and careers in the 21st century.

Because 2015 is the first year of the new tests and because they are substantially different from their predecessors, Torlakson said the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results will serve as a baseline from which to measure future progress and should not be compared to results from the state's previous assessments, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program.

CAASPP includes a number of assessments, but the most widely given are the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, which evaluate student progress on the California standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy, often referred to as the Common Core.

"The results show our starting point as a state, a window into where California students are in meeting tougher academic standards that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical writing," Torlakson said. "California's new standards and tests are challenging for schools to teach and for students to learn, so I am encouraged that many students are at or near achievement standards. However, just as we expected, many students need to make more progress. Our job is to support students, teachers, and schools as they do."

Preliminary figures indicate that less than 1 percent of California students did not take the assessment resulting from a parental exemption. That shows, Torlakson said, that there is a high level of commitment to the new standards among parents, teachers, students, and business and community leaders.

The new standards and tests enjoy widespread support from leaders in K-12 and higher education who believe they can improve college readiness. California's state universities and most community colleges use the eleventh grade results as an early signal of readiness to take college courses. In English language arts/literacy, 56 percent of the eleventh graders tested are ready or conditionally ready for college work, while in math 29 percent are ready or conditionally ready.

The CAASPP tests for English language arts/literacy and mathematics were given to students in grades three through eight and grade eleven. They consist of two parts. First, is an adaptive test taken on a computer that gives students different follow-up questions based on their answers, thereby providing a more refined picture of a student's abilities. Second, is a performance task that challenges students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. The two parts measure depth of understanding, writing, research, and problem-solving skills.

In contrast, STAR was a multiple-choice, paper-based test in which students, for the most part, filled in bubbles on paper and could more easily guess correct answers.

On CAASPP, students' scores fall into one of four achievement levels: standard exceeded, standard met, standard nearly met, and standard not met.

Statewide in all grades, 44 percent of students met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 33 percent met or exceeded the mathematics standard.

[\(Table 1\)](#)

For English language arts/literacy statewide in all grades: 16 percent exceeded standard, 28 percent met standard, 25 percent nearly met standard, and 31 percent did not meet standard. For mathematics statewide in all grades: 14 percent exceeded standard, 19 percent met standard, 29 percent nearly met standard, and 38 percent did not meet standard. Attached ([Tables 2](#) and [3](#)) provide a breakdown grade by grade in each subject.

The [CAASPP Results](#) Web site contains the results for all counties, districts, and schools across the state, broken down by grade, gender, ethnic groups, and demographics. In addition, the Web site allows users to download results and search individual categories.

The baseline scores reflect, in part, the rigor of the state's new academic standards, Torlakson said. CAASPP focuses on assessing crucial abilities, such as analyzing problems, thinking independently, and writing clearly with evidence. Those skills take time and effort to master but are essential to succeed in today's world.

"California is in the process of transforming its schools with increased funding, higher academic standards, more local control, and additional support for students and schools with the greatest needs—and this will take time," Torlakson said. "This is our first academic check-up on how that work is going, and so I ask parents and educators to take that into account, use this information wisely to help their students, and understand this is a baseline that we will build upon."

One concern, Torlakson said, is the results indicate the state has a persistent achievement gap—significant differences in scores—among students from low-income families, English learners and some ethnic groups when compared to other students. Overall, 31 percent of students in all grades from low-income families met or exceeded standard in English language arts/literacy and 21 percent met or exceeded standard in math, compared with 64 percent and 53 percent for the subjects, respectively, among other students. (Tables [4](#) and [5](#))

Overall, 11 percent of English learners in all grades met or exceeded standard in English language arts/literacy and 11 percent in math, compared with 69 percent and 55 percent for those subjects, respectively, for students proficient in English.

As for scores among all grades for ethnic groups, 72 percent of Asians met or exceeded standard in English language arts/literacy and 69 percent in math, while 28 percent of African Americans met or exceeded standard in English language arts/literacy and 16 percent in math. Other ethnic groups fell between the two. See attached. (Tables [4](#) and [5](#))

"Clearly, we must continue working to eliminate these gaps," Torlakson said. "Much work needs to be done, but we are moving in the right direction with our efforts to provide extra resources and services for students and schools with the greatest needs."

The results also show that teachers, schools, and districts need more time, training and resources to improve student outcomes overall and to meet the high standards California has set, Torlakson said.

Toward that end, CDE helped develop a digital library for districts that contains information to help teachers improve their teaching and to collaborate with each other. In addition, teachers can use interim tests to help them get immediate information about their students' performance so they can adjust teaching during the year.

"Assessments are like satellite photos — they are snapshots taken at one moment in time," Torlakson said. "There are many positive changes underway in California's schools, and I expect CAASPP scores to rise in coming years as students and teachers get more support and more experience with these new standards and assessments."

The CDE also released results of the California Standards Test for science, which is administered to students in grades five, eight, and ten. These tests are not aligned with California's recently adopted Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Assessments based on these standards are currently being developed. Overall, the percentage of students proficient and above dropped from 61 percent in 2014 to 57 percent in 2015. ([Table 6](#))

In addition, the CDE released results from the optional Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for reading language arts. ([Table 7](#))

## California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Results for 2015

**Table 1: Percentage of All California Students by Achievement Level for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics**

Content Area	Number of Students Tested	Number of Students Receiving Parental Exemption <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards

English Language Arts/Literacy	3,154,463	19,070	16	28	25	31
Mathematics	3,169,239	19,311	14	19	29	38

<sup>1</sup> Parental exemptions pursuant to *Education Code* Section 60615 and Section 852 in *Title 5* of the *California Code of Regulations*. These counts are preliminary as local educational agencies have until September 15 to report parental exemptions.

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**Table 2: Number and Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level for English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA)**

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Mean Scale Score	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
Grade 3	470,191	2402.9	18	20	26	36
Grade 4	460,192	2445.7	19	21	21	39
Grade 5	458,127	2487.1	17	27	21	34
Grade 6	453,581	2511.9	13	30	29	28
Grade 7	446,784	2531.7	12	32	25	31
Grade 8	445,851	2552.7	12	33	29	26

Grade 11	419,737	2591.9	23	33	24	20
All California Students	3,154,463	--	16	28	25	31

**NOTE:** Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

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**Table 3: Number and Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level for Mathematics**

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Mean Scale Score	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
Grade 3	473,136	2415.1	14	26	27	33
Grade 4	461,875	2453.8	13	22	35	31
Grade 5	459,918	2480.3	15	15	29	41
Grade 6	456,194	2504.4	15	18	31	36
Grade 7	449,122	2518.5	15	19	29	37
Grade 8	450,101	2534.0	16	17	26	41
Grade 11	418,893	2560.3	11	18	25	45
All	3,169,239	--	14	19	29	38

California Students						
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**NOTE:** Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

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**Table 4: Statewide Percentage of Students by Group and Achievement Level for English Language Arts/Literacy**

Student Groups	Number of Students Tested	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
All Students	3,154,463	16	28	25	31
Male	1,608,190	13	25	25	36
Female	1,546,273	19	30	25	25
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	21,051	9	23	27	41
Asian	284,288	40	32	16	12
Black or African American	183,984	7	21	26	46
Filipino	114,059	26	37	22	15

Hispanic or Latino	1,655,672	8	24	29	39
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	16,153	11	27	29	33
White	781,718	26	35	22	18
Two or More Races	97,538	23	30	23	24
English Learner (EL)	607,010	2	9	24	65
English Only (EO)	1,758,757	20	31	24	26
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	626,680	15	37	32	16
Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)	154,814	34	35	19	12
Migrant	28,344	4	17	27	52
Economically Disadvantaged <sup>1</sup>	1,892,174	8	23	28	41



Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,262,289	29	35	21	15
Students with Disability	313,076	3	9	18	70
Students with No Reported Disability	2,841,387	18	30	26	26

<sup>1</sup> Economically Disadvantaged Students include students eligible for the free and reduced priced meal program (FRPM), foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students for whom neither parent is a high school graduate.

**NOTE:** Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

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**Table 5: Statewide Percentage of Students by Group and Achievement Level for Mathematics**

Student Groups	Number of Students Tested	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
All Students	3,169,239	14	19	29	38
Male	1,615,802	15	19	27	39
Female	1,553,437	14	20	30	36
American	21,013	7	15	29	49

Indian/ Alaskan Native					
Asian	288,012	44	25	19	12
Black or African American	184,291	4	12	27	56
Filipino	114,520	23	29	29	20
Hispanic or Latino	1,663,770	6	15	31	48
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	16,206	9	18	33	40
White	782,968	22	27	28	23
Two or More Races	98,459	20	23	28	30
English Learner (EL)	616,790	3	8	24	65
English Only (EO)	1,759,796	17	22	29	32
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	628,115	14	22	35	29

Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)	155,031	31	24	25	20
Migrant	28,746	3	11	29	57
Economically Disadvantaged <sup>1</sup>	1,901,730	6	15	30	49
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,267,509	27	26	26	21
Students with Disability	312,984	3	6	16	75
Students with No Reported Disability	2,856,255	15	21	30	33

<sup>1</sup> Economically Disadvantaged Students include students eligible for the free and reduced priced meal program (FRPM), foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students for whom neither parent is a high school graduate.

**NOTE:** Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

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**Table 6: Science-Grade Level Tests<sup>1</sup> – Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient and Above<sup>2</sup>**

Grade	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change in Percentage 2015-2014	Change in Percentage Overall <sup>3</sup>
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Grade 5	24	28	32	37	46	49	55	58	60	57	60	55	-5	31
Grade 8	--	--	38	42	52	56	59	63	66	67	66	64	-2	26
Grade 10	--	--	35	35	40	44	46	50	53	54	56	53	-3	18
State Total 5, 8, and 10	--	--	35	38	46	50	53	57	60	59	61	57	-4	22

<sup>1</sup> The California Science Standards Test for grade five was first administered in spring 2004. The California Science Standards Test for grades eight and ten were first administered during spring 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Data for 2004 through 2014 are final statewide data. The 2015 data are preliminary and include results for approximately 99% of the students in the state. This table includes results from the California Standards Tests (CSTs) only. Percentages included in this table may differ from the percentages printed on the reports due to rounding.

Grade 5 data show changes between 2004 and 2015. Grades 8 and 10 show changes between 2006 and 2015.

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## Standards-based Test in Spanish 2008–15

**Table 7: Standards-based Test in Spanish – Reading Language Arts  
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above<sup>1</sup>**

Grade	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change in Percentage 2015-2014	Change in Percentage Overall
Grade 2	36	40	35	39	39	36	30	22	-8	-14

Grade 3	34	37	36	36	39	36	18	22	4	-12
Grade 4	30	35	34	36	36	35	28	24	-4	-6
Grade 5	--	27	28	29	31	28	25	27	2	0
Grade 6	--	30	29	32	33	32	34	28	-6	-2
Grade 7	--	31	30	35	36	35	30	30	-0	-1
Grade 8	--	--	--	--	--	32	33	23	-10	-9
Grade 9	--	--	--	--	--	32	32	23	-9	-9
Grade 10	--	--	--	--	--	36	29	26	-3	-10
Grade 11	--	--	--	--	--	31	35	31	-4	0

<sup>1</sup> This table includes results from the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for Reading Language Arts only. The 2015 data are preliminary and include results for approximately 99% of the students in the state. Percentages included in this table may differ from the percentages printed on the reports due to rounding.