

September 28, 2015

Dear Berkeley Unified School District Parent/Guardian:

Every day, throughout our school district, educators are assessing student learning and the effectiveness of our instructional programs. Feedback about what students know and are able to do helps us to improve our teaching and identify how best to serve our students. That's why we use multiple measures to assess student learning in our district, including teacher observation and local assessments that are administered throughout the year.

New Computer-Adaptive State Test

Shortly before the end of the last school year, your child took part in the 2015 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the new computer-based tests for English language arts/literacy and mathematics that replaced the former paper-based tests for these subjects.

These new exams are part of California's plan for supporting high-quality learning at every school, and we are required by law to administer the CAASPP tests. They are based on California's new, more challenging Common Core standards, which are designed to help all students graduate ready for college and to pursue a career.

Last year, students and teachers were using the new online computer-adaptive* assessment tool for the first time. The tests included a wider variety of questions than on previous state tests, and required students to explain how they solved problems, to think critically, and write analytically.

Enclosed Score Report & Guide

Please take a few moments to review the enclosed score report. You'll notice that along with an overall score for each subject, there is also information about how your child performed on different standards associated with English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The *Guide to Your Student's CAASPP Student Score Report* is included to assist you in reading your student's individual score report.

Our curriculum and instruction has been evolving to help our students adjust to the new standards. Please keep in mind that the test format, and curriculum they are based on, are new to your child. That's why no student or parent should be discouraged by test results.

Multiple Measures of Student Learning

No single standards-based test can explain a student's academic progress. These tests are only one of several measures, including teacher observation and assessment, assignments, and report cards, that help monitor student progress over time. We will continue to use a variety of data and information about student learning to improve our schools and to serve individual student needs.

Parent-teacher conferences are a good time to learn more about how your child is doing in school and what they will be learning this year. We encourage you to talk with your child's teacher on a regular basis to know more about your student's overall progress.

Sincerely,



Donald Evans, Ed.D.

Superintendent, Berkeley Unified School District

*Unlike the former pencil-and-paper tests, large sections of these tests are taken on a computer and are adaptive. Adaptive means that if a student answers the question correctly, the next question will be a little bit more difficult. If a student misses the answer, the next question will be less difficult. So every student's test is different.