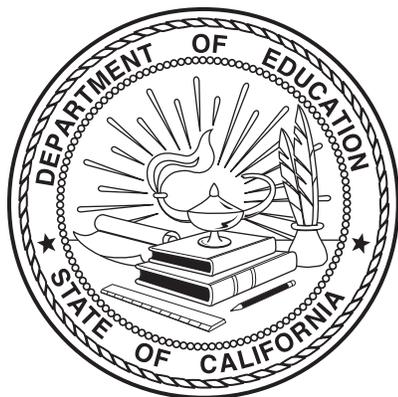


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# Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

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## Understanding 2009 STAR Program Tests

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### Information for School District and School Staff

- What's New in 2009
- Questions and Answers
- Internet Resources

**February 2009**

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Prepared by the  
California Department of Education

# Table of Contents

<b>Purpose of This Packet</b> .....	3
<b>What's New in the 2009 STAR Program</b> .....	6
<b>Questions and Answers</b>	
2009 STAR Program .....	11
California Standards Tests .....	16
California Modified Assessment .....	22
California Alternate Performance Assessment .....	28
Standards-based Tests in Spanish .....	31
<b>Appendixes</b>	
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms.....	35
Appendix B: Resources Available on the Internet .....	43

# Purpose of This Packet

Educating students requires a team effort that actively involves educators, parents, guardians, and students in the learning process. To effectively carry out this shared responsibility, every member of that team must have a common understanding about the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and the role it plays in ensuring that all students achieve California's content standards for core subjects.

The purpose of *Understanding 2009 STAR Program Tests: Information for School District and School Staff* is to help local administrators work with their teachers and support staff to make sure they have the basic information they need to:

- Communicate effectively about the STAR Program with parents, guardians, and students.
- Report and use the results of each STAR Program test to help monitor the academic progress of students and schools.

Assistance materials in this packet are for use by school district and school administrators to prepare teachers and support staff for their roles as key communicators. The packet includes information about changes in the 2009 STAR Program and answers to commonly asked questions about the STAR Program and each of its tests.

## Uses of Information and Materials

All of the assistance materials have been prepared for a variety of uses with various audiences. For example, the "What's New in the 2009 STAR Program" can be copied by the STAR district or test site coordinator and shared with principals at a management team meeting. Those principals in turn can share this information at a weekly faculty meeting. Principals also can use the assistance materials to update parent leaders who perform roles as key communicators. The "Suggested Uses of Information and Materials" chart on page 5 describes each document included in this packet, language versions, and some suggested uses.

A second assistance packet, *Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2009 STAR Program Tests: Resources for Use by School District and School Staff*, provides camera-ready copies of a variety of materials for school district and/or school administrators to duplicate for distribution to parents and guardians. These materials include guides, a brochure, newsletter inserts, and sample letters with attachments for parents and guardians. Administrators can duplicate the guides and brochure for use in mailings or as handouts at information meetings. Parents and guardians can be encouraged to view the materials in this packet directly via the Internet, using step-by-step instructions found in “Accessing the Program Resources Web Page.”

A list of “Resources Available on the Internet” also is provided at the end of each assistance packet. Both packets are posted on the California Department of Education Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

## Special Focus Areas

Some assistance material in this packet is designed to prepare staff for communicating with the parents and guardians of students with disabilities and of students who are English learners. This material is listed in the Table of Contents.

## Suggested Uses of Information and Materials

Document	Description	Suggested Uses
<p><b>What's New in the 2009 STAR Program</b></p> <p><b>Available Language:</b> English</p>	<p>Provides a summary of key test changes in the STAR Program for the spring 2009 test administration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings.</li> <li>■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparation for conferences and other meetings with parents and guardians.</li> <li>■ Post copies in the main school office and on staff bulletin boards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions and Answers</b></p> <p><b>Available Language:</b> English</p>	<p>Five question-and-answer documents provide answers to questions frequently asked by staff, parents, and guardians about the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2009 STAR Program</li> <li>■ California Standards Tests</li> <li>■ California Modified Assessment</li> <li>■ California Alternate Performance Assessment</li> <li>■ Standards-based Tests in Spanish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings (also share with noncertificated staff members).</li> <li>■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparation for school district and school advisory group meetings, site council meetings, information nights, conferences, and other meetings with parents and guardians.</li> <li>■ Post copies in the main school office and on staff bulletin boards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Glossary of Terms and Acronyms</b></p> <p><b>Available Language:</b> English</p>	<p>Briefly describes key terms, with their acronyms, related to the STAR Program for 2009.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide copies for a quick reference for school district staff, school staff, and parent leaders.</li> <li>■ Post the list on staff bulletin boards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources Available on the Internet</b></p> <p><b>Available Language:</b> English</p>	<p>Lists resources for the 2009 STAR Program that are available on the Internet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide copies for a quick reference for school district staff, school staff, and parent leaders.</li> <li>■ Post the list on staff bulletin boards.</li> </ul>

# What's New in the 2009 STAR Program

## State Budget Act of 2008 Eliminates California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey

- The California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey), the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program's designated norm-referenced test (NRT), will not be administered in spring 2009. The Budget Act of 2008 eliminated \$2.5 million in funding for the NRT, and California *Education Code* Section 60640 was amended by Assembly Bill 519 to remove the NRT from subsequent test administrations of the STAR Program. The elimination of the NRT will reduce testing time for students in grades three and seven; however, this will not affect the amount of funding apportioned to school districts for the 2009 STAR Program test administration.
- The NRT had been one of the tests used for calculating the Academic Performance Index (API) for school accountability. The 2008 Base API will exclude the NRT component to ensure that the 2008 Base API and the 2009 Growth API are comparable. Because the NRT had a relatively small weight in API calculations, its elimination is expected to have little impact on the API.

## California Modified Assessment Now Includes Testing Through Grade Eight

- The California Modified Assessment (CMA) will be administered in 2009 to eligible students in grades three through eight. This standards-based assessment is taken by special education students who have disabilities that prevent them from achieving grade-level proficiency on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) with or without accommodations.\* All students in grades three

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\* Grade-level proficiency refers to the student's level of knowledge and degree of mastery of California's content standards for the subjects being assessed. This grade-level proficiency should not be confused with the STAR Program performance levels as reported on the STAR Student Report.

through eight whose individualized education program (IEP) specifies participation in the CMA may be assessed in English–language arts in grades three through eight, in mathematics in grades three through seven, and in science in grades five and eight. The blueprints, which list the specific content standards assessed, are posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) STAR CMA Blueprints Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmablueprints.asp>. The CMA does allow for test variations and accommodations; however, it does not allow for modifications because the CMA is a modified test. CMA eligibility criteria, approved by the State Board of Education, are available on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. The participation criteria provide assistance to IEP teams in determining who should take the CMA and how it is to be administered.

## California Modified Assessment Includes a Writing Test in Grades Four and Seven

- For the CMA for English–Language Arts in 2009, students in grades four and seven will respond to multiple-choice questions and a writing task or prompt. The score on the written response will be combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score for the CMA for English–Language Arts.

## Standards-based Tests in Spanish Now Include Testing Through Grade Eleven

- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics will be administered as the STAR Program's designated primary language test (DPLT) in grades two through eleven in 2009. Questions for the STS are based on the California content standards for the subjects tested. The STS series replaces the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3), which was given in grades eight through eleven in 2008. Blueprints for the STS are available on the CDE STAR STS Blueprints Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/stsblueprints.asp>.

- State law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires all students who are Spanish-speaking English learners to take the STS in addition to the tests in the STAR Program that are administered in English if:
  - They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
  - They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may use the STS to test English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish.

## Performance Level Cut Scores Approved for Two STAR Program Tests

- In fall 2008, performance level-setting panels for the CMA and California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) were convened to recommend cut scores for these two STAR Program tests. The panels were composed of content experts, teachers, and other education professionals from throughout the state. The cut scores for the CMA were based on the CMA blueprints and policy-level definitions approved by the State Board of Education. The cut scores for the CAPA were based on the CAPA blueprints and updated scoring rubrics for the CAPA. The CAPA blueprints, which were approved by the State Board of Education in 2006, established a link between California's content standards and the CAPA for English–Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. In November 2008, the State Board of Education approved the proposed performance level cut scores for both tests following three public hearings.
- Results of the 2009 CMA administration will be reported according to the:
  - Newly approved performance levels for English–language arts and mathematics in grades three through five and for science in grade five

- Percent correct scores for English–language arts in grades six through eight, for mathematics in grades six and seven, and for science in grade eight
- The newly approved performance levels for the CAPA will be used to report results of the 2009 test administration in English–language arts and mathematics for Levels I through V. The performance levels for science will be reported for Levels I, III, IV, and V.

## **Standard Setting Scheduled for Standards-based Tests in Spanish**

- A standard-setting panel for the STS, composed of content experts, teachers, and other education professionals, will be convened in February 2009. Public hearings and State Board of Education approval of the performance level cut scores proposed by the panel are scheduled to follow in spring 2009. It is anticipated that results of the 2009 STS will be reported with scale scores and performance levels in grades two through four. Results of the STS administration in grades five through eleven will show percent correct scores.

## ***Exemplars of CST Questions to be Released***

- *Exemplars of CST Questions* will be released as a new resource for schools, school districts, county offices of education, parents, and guardians. These easy-to-read documents will provide brief descriptions of CST exemplar questions to be used in staff training and for communicating with students, parents, and guardians about the CSTs.

## Updated Resources

- CST released questions, including those from the 2008 test administration, are posted on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. Released test questions are to be used in conjunction with the document *Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments*, which is posted on the CDE Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.
- Teacher Guides to the California Writing Standards Test in grades four and seven are posted on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. These guides include the prompts, sample student work, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics from the 2008 test administration.

# Questions and Answers About the 2009 STAR Program

## *What are the STAR Program tests?*

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is an important part of the state assessment system. Administered annually in the spring in grades two through eleven, the STAR Program was first authorized in 1997 and has been reauthorized until 2011 by state law (*Education Code* Section 60640). Tests in the STAR Program measure how well students in California public schools are learning the knowledge and skills identified in California's content standards. Answers to commonly asked questions about the STAR Program are provided below.

The STAR Program for 2009 consists of four tests:

- The **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** measure students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, science, and history–social science. The CSTs are administered in grades two through eleven.
- The **California Modified Assessment (CMA)** measures students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. This assessment is for students with disabilities who meet CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education. The CMA will be administered in grades three through eight in 2009.
- The **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)** measures students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. This alternate assessment is for students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the CSTs or CMA with accommodations or the CST with modifications. The CAPA is administered in grades two through eleven.
- The **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)** measure students' achievement of California's content standards for reading/language arts and mathematics in Spanish. This assessment is for students who are Spanish-speaking English learners. The STS series is administered in grades two through eleven.

**Who takes the tests in the STAR Program?**

All students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners. In addition to the tests administered in English, state law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires all Spanish-speaking English learners to take the STS, the designated primary language test (DPLT) for the STAR Program, if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may test Spanish-speaking English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish.

Only students whose parents or guardians have submitted written requests to exempt them from STAR Program testing do not take any of the STAR Program tests (*Education Code* Section 60615).

**What is done to assist students with disabilities?**

Some students with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the STAR Program tests. These are listed in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>. A separate *Matrix for the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2009 Administration* is available on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. The CMA does not allow for modifications because it is a modified test.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. The IEPs for students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the CSTs and/or CMA with accommodations or the CSTs with modifications, specify that they are to take the CAPA.

	<p>The IEPs for students with disabilities who have been unable to demonstrate grade-level proficiency* on the CSTs and other measures may specify that these students are to take the CMA. Eligibility criteria, approved by the State Board of Education, are available on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp</a>. The IEPs for these students also are to identify the subject(s) on which the students are to be tested with the CMA and which accommodations, if any, are to be used.</p>
<p><b><i>Is testing below a student's grade allowed?</i></b></p>	<p>No. Testing below a student's grade is not allowed. All IEPs should be reviewed annually in every school district to ensure that any provision for testing below a student's grade has been removed. All students are required to take the test for the grade in which they are enrolled.</p>
<p><b><i>What is done to assist students who are English learners?</i></b></p>	<p>During testing, students who are English learners may use English-to-primary-language translation glossaries or word lists that are regularly used in the classroom and do not include definitions or formulas. This assistance may be provided for all subjects except English–language arts on the CSTs and CMAs. English learners may have test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs and CMAs. English learners also may be tested separately if such a setting is a part of their regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed in <i>Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007)</i>, which is available on the CDE Student Testing Web page at <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/</a>.</p>
<p><b><i>When do parents or guardians get their child's results?</i></b></p>	<p>Student STAR Program test results must be provided to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district has received them from the testing contractor. The STAR Program reports usually are mailed by the school district to each student's home.</p>
<p><b><i>May results from STAR Program tests be used to determine if a student should be retained?</i></b></p>	<p>A school district may use STAR Program test results to help make decisions about student placement, promotion, retention, or other considerations related to student achievement. These test scores should never be used by themselves to make such important decisions.</p> <hr/> <p>* Grade-level proficiency refers to the student's level of knowledge and degree of mastery of California's content standards for the subjects being assessed. This grade-level proficiency should not to be confused with the STAR Program performance levels as reported on the STAR Student Report.</p>

**May parents or guardians excuse their child from the tests in the STAR Program?**

School districts also should consider local assessments, classroom tests, student grades, and teacher recommendations in making these decisions.

*Note:* Parents or guardians should be reminded that their child's test results are confidential and are maintained only by the school district.

Yes. State law (*Education Code* Section 60615) allows a parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the tests in the STAR Program. Such a request must be made in writing to the school. In addition, the request may specify:

- The test(s) from which the student is to be exempted (i.e., all or some tests); and
- The length of time that the parent's or guardian's request remains in effect (i.e., current year or longer).

**May parents or guardians see the tests in the STAR Program?**

No. By law (*Education Code* Section 60616), the tests in the STAR Program are secure tests and must not be seen by anyone other than the parties specified by law (e.g., school board members, legislators). This stipulation helps maintain the integrity of the tests and ensures that the rights of all students are protected. Each year, 25 percent of the test questions used in the CSTs are released and posted on the Internet for public viewing. The released test questions show the content and types of questions that are included on the CSTs. The released test questions are available on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

**Do STAR Program test results go on a student's high school transcript?**

No. A student's results for tests in the STAR Program do not go on the high school transcript unless a parent or guardian signs a release or submits a written request allowing the school or school district to do so. Students, parents, or guardians may authorize the release of a student's results to colleges or universities for the purpose of credit, placement, or admission (*Education Code* Section 60641).

**How can schools help prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program?**

The best way to prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program is to provide classroom instruction and assessments that are aligned to California's content standards. Teachers are encouraged to talk with their students' parents and guardians about what the school district, school, and teachers are doing to make sure the content standards are being taught and tested.

## Additional Information

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

# Questions and Answers About the California Standards Tests

The California Standards Tests (CSTs) are an important component of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Developed exclusively for California's public schools, the CSTs are designed to measure how well students are achieving state content standards, adopted by the State Board of Education. Basic information about the CSTs and other STAR Program tests can be found in the "Questions and Answers About the 2009 STAR Program" section on pages 11 through 15. The California content standards addressed on the CSTs are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Content Standards Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>. Answers to commonly asked questions about grades and subjects tested and the content and format of the CSTs are provided below.

## Which grades and subjects are tested on the CSTs?

### Grades, Subjects, and Test Format

Students take two, three, four, or five CSTs, depending on their grade or the courses they are taking. The CSTs are given for the following grades and subjects:

- Grades two, three, four, six, and seven
  - English–language arts\*
  - Mathematics
- Grade five
  - English–language arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
- Grades eight, nine, and eleven
  - English–language arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - History–social science (may or may not apply at grade nine)

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\* Students in grades four and seven also complete a writing task as a part of the California English–Language Arts Standards Test.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Grade ten           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English–language arts</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science*</li> <li>• History–social science (may or may not apply at grade ten)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><i>What content is tested on the CSTs?</i></b></p>	<p>There are three kinds of CSTs that are based on California’s content standards. First, there are CSTs that are based on content standards for a specific grade and subject, such as mathematics for grade two and English–language arts for grade ten. Second, there are CSTs administered in the secondary grades that are based on the content standards for specific courses, such as Chemistry, World History, and Geometry. These often are referred to as the end-of-course CSTs. Third, there are CSTs that cover selected content standards for a specific subject but for multiple grades. Two examples are the CST for Science (Grade 5), which covers science content standards for grades four and five, and the CST for History–Social Science (Grade 8), which covers history–social science content standards for grades six, seven, and eight.</p>
<p><b><i>Which subjects have end-of-course CSTs?</i></b></p>	<p>Mathematics, science, and history–social science are the three subjects that have end-of-course CSTs.</p>
<p><b><i>What are the end-of-course CSTs for Mathematics?</i></b></p>	<p>There are six end-of-course CSTs for Mathematics. Students in grades seven through eleven take an end-of-course CST for Mathematics in accordance with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The CST for Algebra I is for students in grades seven through eleven who are completing Algebra I. This CST is based on the content standards for Algebra I.</li> <li>■ The CST for Geometry and the CST for Algebra II are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective mathematics course. These CSTs are based on the content standards for Geometry or Algebra II, respectively.</li> <li>■ The CSTs for Integrated Mathematics 1, Integrated Mathematics 2, and Integrated Mathematics 3 are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective Integrated</li> </ul>

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\* Most students in grade ten take two CSTs for Science.

Mathematics course. These CSTs are based on selected combinations of the content standards for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.

In addition to the six end-of-course CSTs noted previously, there are two CSTs for Mathematics administered to students in the following situations:

- The CST for General Mathematics is for students in grades eight and nine who are not enrolled in or not completing a standards-based mathematics course.
- Students in grades nine through eleven will take the CST for Summative High School Mathematics if:
  - They completed or will complete a course higher than Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 in the 2008 summer session or during the 2008-09 school year; or
  - They previously completed Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 and are taking no mathematics course or are taking a higher level mathematics course.

***What are the end-of-course CSTs for Science?***

There are a total of eight end-of-course CSTs for Science. There are four end-of-course CSTs for Science that are based on the content standards for earth sciences, biology/life sciences, chemistry, and physics, respectively. In addition, there are four end-of-course CSTs for Integrated/Coordinated Science that are based on selected combinations of the content standards for earth sciences, biology/life sciences, chemistry, and physics. Students who are completing one of the standards-based science courses listed above must take one of the appropriate CSTs for Science if they are completing, repeating, or taking another course that is aligned to the blueprint for that same test.

***Which CSTs for Science are required for students in grade ten?***

Students in grade ten are required to take the CST for Life Science. This test covers selected content standards for middle school life sciences and high school biology. In addition to this test, most students in grade ten take an end-of-course CST for Science for the course they completed during the summer session or are completing that school year.

***What is the end-of-course CST for History–Social Science?***

The end-of-course CST for History–Social Science is World History. This CST may be taken in grade nine, ten, or eleven.

***Are the CSTs timed tests?***

The CSTs are not timed tests. School districts are provided with recommended times for students to complete the tests, which vary by grade and subject. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time must be allowed more time to complete it.

***What question format is found on the CSTs?***

The questions for all of the CSTs, except the writing tasks in grades four and seven, are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet, and students in grades four through eleven mark an answer document. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored. Released test questions on the CSTs from prior test administrations are posted for public viewing on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

For the CST for English–Language Arts, students in grades four and seven respond to multiple-choice questions and a writing task (prompt). The score on the written response is combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score and the performance level for the CST for English–Language Arts. Teacher Guides to the California Writing Standards Test in grades four and seven from prior test administrations are posted for public viewing on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

***Which content standards are addressed by the writing tasks in grades four and seven?***

The writing tasks in grades four and seven address the writing applications strand of California’s content standards in English–language arts.

In grade four, students are required to produce one of three types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. In grade seven, students are required to produce one of four types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a persuasive letter or essay, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature.

***What results will be reported for the 2009 CSTs?***

The STAR Student Reports for the CST for 2009 will show scale scores and performance levels for all subjects and grades tested. The State Board of Education established five performance levels for reporting CST results: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic.

***How are CST results used?***

## Using CST Results

The CST results provide information that may be used with other achievement data, including the results of the CMA or STS, to identify students' academic strengths and areas that need improvement. Parents or guardians should review areas of concern with their child's teacher(s) to identify the specific help needed to improve their child's learning. The STAR Student Report for the CST is one source of information about the progress students are making in school. Parents, guardians, and teachers also should review grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom and standardized tests for a more complete picture of each student's academic progress.

## Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CSTs is available on the CDE Standardized Testing and Reporting Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

**About the Early Assessment Program...**

In addition to the STAR Program tests, students in grade eleven may participate in the Early Assessment Program (EAP). The EAP is a collaborative effort between the CDE, State Board of Education, and California State University (CSU). The purpose of this assessment program is to help identify a student's level of readiness for college-level work in English and/or mathematics.

Detailed information about the EAP is available on the CSU Web page at <http://www.calstate.edu/eap/> (Outside Source). Information about each subject tested is available on the CSU English Success Web site at <http://www.csuenglishsuccess.org/> (Outside Source) or on the CSU Math Success Web site at <http://www.csumathsuccess.org/> (Outside Source). The EAP handbook released by the CSU for school leaders is available as a CSU Web document at [http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/eap\\_site\\_leader\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/eap_site_leader_handbook.pdf) (Outside Source).

# Questions and Answers About the California Modified Assessment

## *Who is eligible to take the CMA?*

The California Modified Assessment (CMA) is a part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. This test is a modified assessment for students with disabilities who have an individualized education program (IEP) and meet the eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education. Answers to commonly asked questions about participation criteria, grades and subjects tested, the content and format of the CMA, and the California Modified Writing Standards Test (CMA for Writing) are provided below.

## Participation Criteria

The CMA is taken by students with an IEP who meet the following criteria as specified in their IEP:

- **Previous Participation**—The student took a California Standards Test (CST) and scored below basic or far below basic in the subject tested, and may have taken the CST with a modification; or

The student scored proficient or advanced on the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Levels II through V in two previous years.

- **Objective Multiple Measures**—Objective evidence of academic progress (or lack of progress), based on multiple measurements over a period of time, indicates that the student will not achieve grade-level standards as measured by a proficient performance level on the CST, even with accommodations or modifications.
- **Response to Instruction**—Academic progress in response to grade-level instruction, including special education and related services designed to meet individual needs and classroom support for subjects assessed by the CMA, is such that the student will not likely achieve grade-level proficiency, even with instructional intervention.

**How do schools and school districts decide whether a student takes the CMA?**

- **High School Diploma**—Students who take alternate assessments on the basis of modified academic achievement standards are not prevented from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. All students must pass the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) to receive a diploma from a California public high school.
- **Informed Parents or Guardians**—Parents or guardians of students selected for participation in the CMA are informed that their child’s achievement will be measured on the basis of modified achievement standards.

Each student’s IEP team decides whether a student is eligible. The student’s IEP must specify the CMA for STAR Program participation, and it must be revised annually to include CMA participation. The eligible student’s IEP also is to identify the subject(s) to be tested and accommodations, if any, to be used. The criteria for CMA participation are posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

**Must all students whose IEP specifies participation in the CMA take this STAR Program test?**

Yes. All students whose IEP specifies participation in the CMA must take this STAR Program test unless their parents or guardians submit a written request to exempt their child (*Education Code* Section 60615). It is very important that all students take part in the STAR Program; each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in statewide tests in order to meet federal accountability requirements.

**May students with no record of STAR Program testing take the CMA?**

No. The participation criteria for the CMA require that students have results of a previous year’s CST, CMA, or CAPA. Students with no record of STAR Program testing in a previous year may not take the CMA. This is the reason that a CMA has not been developed for grade two.

**Students take the CST for Science for the first time in grade five. How do they qualify for the CMA for Science in grade five?**

Because the science assessments are not given prior to grade five, a student may meet the first part of the participation criteria for the CMA for Science if he or she has taken the CST for English–Language Arts or the CST for Mathematics in a previous year and scored below basic or far below on either test. The student may have taken the CST with accommodations and/or modifications. In addition, the student has

**How do students qualify for the CMA for Science in grade eight?**

received special education and related services to support access to and progress in the general curriculum in which he or she is enrolled.

A student may meet the first part of the participation criteria for the CMA for Science in grade eight if, in a previous year, he or she scored:

- Below basic or far below basic, even with accommodations or modifications, on the CST for English–Language Arts or the CST for Mathematics; or
- Proficient or advanced in the English–language arts or mathematics portion of CAPA Levels II through V.

In addition, the student has received special education and related services to support access to and progress in the general curriculum in which he or she is enrolled.

**Are there testing variations and accommodations for the CMA?**

Additional testing variations and accommodations may be provided to students as specified in the *Matrix of the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2009 Administration*. This matrix is posted on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. Modifications are not allowed because the CMA is a modified test.

## Grades, Subjects, and Test Format

**Which grades and subjects will the CMA assess in 2009?**

In spring 2009, the CMA will be administered to eligible students in grades three through eight for English–language arts, in grades three through seven for mathematics, and in grades five and eight for science. Students taking the CMA for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven also will complete a writing task as a part of the assessment. The score on the written response will be combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score for the CMA for English–Language Arts.

**What question format is found on the CMA?**

Questions on the CMA, except the writing tasks in grades four and seven, are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from three possible response options. The CMA questions are presented differently from questions on other STAR Program tests in that the type is larger, reading passages are shorter, and more graphics are included. Students

**May the multiple-choice test questions for the CMA and/or the writing prompt for the CMA for Writing be read aloud?**

in grade three mark their answers in the test booklet, and students in grades four through eight mark an answer document.

Yes. If a student with disabilities has an IEP specifying that the test questions for the CMA and/or the writing prompt for the CMA for Writing are to be read aloud, the text and/or prompt may be read aloud.

**Is the CMA a timed test?**

The CMA is not a timed test. School districts are provided with recommended times for students to complete the test, which vary by grade and subject. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time must be allowed more time to complete it.

**Where can I see examples of CMA questions and how they differ from CST questions?**

Examples of the format changes between the CSTs and the CMA are available on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

**How are the CMA results reported?**

The reporting process for the CMA is much like the process used for other tests within the STAR Program. School districts receive STAR Student Reports for the CMA for distribution to parents and guardians. School districts also receive school and school district reports for use by district and school staff. In addition to the individual reports, group CMA results for schools, school districts, counties, and the state are posted annually on the CDE Standardized Testing and Reporting Results Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov/>.

*Note:* Parents and guardians should be reminded that their child's test results are confidential and are maintained only by the school district.

**What results will be reported for the 2009 CMA?**

The STAR Student Report for the CMA for 2009 will show scale scores and performance levels for English–language arts and mathematics in grades three through five and for science in grade five. The STAR Student Report will show percent correct scores for English–language arts in grades six through eight, for mathematics in grades six and seven, and for science in grade eight.

## CMA for Writing

***Were the content standards for writing modified for the CMA?***

No. The CMA for Writing addresses the same content standards for writing in grades four and seven as does the CST for Writing.

***Which content standards are addressed by the writing tasks in grades four and seven?***

The writing tasks in grades four and seven for the CST and CMA address the writing applications strand of the content standards for English–language arts.

***Does the CMA for Writing follow the same format as the CST for Writing?***

In grade four, students are required to produce one of three types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. In grade seven, students are required to produce one of four types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a persuasive letter or essay, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature.

The CMA for Writing follows the same format as the CST for Writing, but with some differences. The CMA writing prompts are developed specifically to be accessible to students who take the CMA for English–Language Arts. This means that the prompts used in any given year will not be the same as those used in the CST for Writing. The features of the CMA for Writing that provide accessibility to these students include: shorter reading passages, language that is more accessible, wider lines in the student-response booklet, and a graphic organizer, or writing map. (A graphic organizer is a pictorial or graphic chart used to organize ideas and information to facilitate writing. Graphic organizers are contained in textbooks currently adopted by the State Board of Education for the English–language arts curriculum.)

***Will the scoring rubrics for the CST for Writing also be used for the CMA for Writing?***

Yes. Readers will use the CST rubrics to score the CMA writing component, but the responses used with the rubrics for scoring student writing will be CMA responses. CMA responses will be compared only to other CMA responses. In other words, a score of 4 on a CMA student's response will not be compared to a score of 4 on a CST student's response.

***Do the prompts for the CMA for Writing and CST for Writing address the same genre in a given year?***

Not necessarily. Students taking the CMA for Writing may be responding to a different genre than students taking the CST for Writing in any given year.

## Using CMA Results

### *How are CMA results used?*

CMA results are used in many important ways. The IEP team—including teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and support staff—uses CMA results to help monitor each student’s academic progress. These results also are used to determine whether students should take the CMA or CSTs in subsequent years. Individual student results are combined to prepare reports by grade and subject for each school, school district, county, and the state. These results are used with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs. The CMA scores also are used, with results of other state tests, to meet state and federal accountability requirements.

## Additional Information

For more information about the CMA and other STAR Program tests, see “Questions and Answers About the 2009 STAR Program” on pages 11 through 15. Additional information about the STAR Program and the CMA is available on the CDE Standardized Testing and Reporting Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

# Questions and Answers About the California Alternate Performance Assessment

The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA) with accommodations or the CSTs with modifications. The CAPA was added to the STAR Program in 2003 to ensure that all California students could participate in statewide assessments. Answers to commonly asked questions about the CAPA are provided below.

***Who are “students with significant cognitive disabilities?”***

Generally, the term “students with significant cognitive disabilities” refers to a small number of students whose intellectual and adaptive capabilities are far below those of typical students at the same grade or age. Students with significant cognitive disabilities require intensive support and services that may be provided in a regular or special education classroom.

***Must all students take the CSTs, CMA, or CAPA?***

Yes. All students enrolled in grades two through eleven are required to participate in the STAR Program by taking the CSTs, CMA, or CAPA. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are in ungraded programs also take the CAPA.

***What is an “ungraded” program?***

Generally, “ungraded” programs for students with disabilities involve the placement of students of different ages in the same classroom without designated grades.

***How do schools determine whether a student takes the CAPA and which level of the CAPA he or she takes?***

Each student’s individualized education program (IEP) team determines whether a student takes the CAPA and which of the five levels of the CAPA he or she takes. That determination must be specified in the student’s IEP. Most students eligible for the CAPA take the level that corresponds to their grade placement.

To determine the grade for students in ungraded programs, subtract five from their chronological age on December 2, 2008. For example, a student who was eleven years old on December 2 would be given the grade six tests ( $11 \text{ years} - 5 = \text{grade six tests}$ ).

**What are the five CAPA levels offered?**

The five CAPA levels are as follows:

- Level I — grades two through eleven (the most significantly cognitively disabled students)
- Level II — grades two and three
- Level III — grades four and five
- Level IV — grades six through eight
- Level V — grades nine through eleven

**Which subjects will be assessed by the CAPA in 2009?**

For the 2009 CAPA administration, students will be assessed in English–language arts and mathematics. Students taking the CAPA in grades five, eight, and ten also will be assessed in science. The CAPA is linked to the California content standards that are appropriate for students taking the CAPA.

**Who administers the CAPA?**

A certificated or licensed member of the school staff who has been trained in CAPA testing procedures administers the CAPA.

**How are CAPA questions asked?**

The CAPA is administered individually. The examiner asks the student to perform a task, observes the performance, and scores and records the performance according to a specific scoring rubric (guide).

**How are the CAPA results reported?**

The reporting process for the CAPA is much like the process used for other tests within the STAR Program. School districts receive STAR Student Reports for the CAPA for distribution to parents and guardians. School districts also receive school and school district reports for use by school district and school staff. In addition to the individual reports, group CAPA results for schools, school districts, counties, and the state are posted annually on the California Department of Education (CDE) Standardized Testing and Reporting Results Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov/>.

*Note:* Parents and guardians should be reminded that their child’s test results are confidential and are maintained only by the school district.

**What results will be reported for the 2009 CAPA?**

The CAPA reports for the 2009 test administration will show how well students performed in accordance with California’s content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. Results will show the student’s CAPA scale score and performance levels for English–

**Are there changes in the  
CAPA for 2009?**

language arts, mathematics, and science. The State Board of Education established five performance levels for reporting CAPA results: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic.

Yes. New performance levels for CAPA have been established and approved by the State Board of Education for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. These performance levels will be used to report results of the 2009 test administration in English–language arts and mathematics for Levels I through V. The performance levels for science will be reported for Levels I, III, IV, and V. In addition, the scoring rubric for CAPA Level I has been updated. The revised Level I scoring rubric is contained in the *CAPA Examiner’s Manual*, which is posted on the Educational Testing Service STAR Program Web page at <http://www.startest.org/capa.html> (Outside Source).

**How are CAPA results  
used?**

## Using CAPA Results

CAPA results are used in many important ways. The IEP team—including teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and support staff—uses CAPA results to help monitor each student’s academic progress. These results also are used to determine whether students should take the CAPA, the CMA, or the CSTs in subsequent years. Individual student results are combined to prepare reports by grade and subject for each school, school district, county, and the state. These results are used with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs. The CAPA scores also are used with results of other state tests to meet state and federal accountability requirements.

## Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CAPA is available on the CDE Standardized Testing and Reporting Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

# Questions and Answers About the Standards-based Tests in Spanish

**How does a school district determine whether a Spanish-speaking English learner is eligible to take the STS?**

All students in grades two through eleven who are English learners must participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program by taking the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and/or the California Modified Assessment (CMA) in English. In addition, state law (*Education Code Section 60640*) requires that all eligible students who are Spanish-speaking English learners take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for their grade. The STS series is the designated primary language test (DPLT) for the STAR Program. Answers to commonly asked questions about the STS are provided below.

Spanish-speaking English learners are required to take the STS in addition to the CSTs if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may test English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish. The STAR Program does not include DPLTs for English learners who speak primary languages other than Spanish.

**What is done to assist English learners on the STAR Program tests administered in English?**

English learners may use English-to-primary-language translation glossaries or word lists that are regularly used in the classroom and do not include definitions or formulas. This assistance may be provided for all subjects except English–language arts on the CSTs and/or CMA. Students taking the STS also may have test directions translated for them and may ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs and/or CMA. English learners may be tested separately if such a setting is a part of their regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed in the *Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessment (October 2007)*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

**When is the STS series to be given in spring 2009?**

School districts are required to give the STS during the same 21-day window established for the CSTs. Within this window, the STS may be administered before or after the CSTs.

**How much time are students given to take the STS?**

The STS series is not timed. School districts are provided with recommended times for students to complete the test, which vary by grade and subject. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time must be allowed more time to complete it.

**May parents or guardians see the STS?**

No. State law (*Education Code* Section 60616) states that all of the tests in the STAR Program, which include the STS, are to remain secure. This means that the STS must not be seen by anyone other than the students who take the tests and the parties specified by law (e.g., school board members, legislators).

**What is done to assist students who are English learners with disabilities?**

Most students who are English learners with disabilities take the CSTs, CMA, or STS along with other students under standard conditions. Some English learners with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the CSTs, CMA, or STS. These are listed in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the CDE Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>. A separate matrix, *Matrix for the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2009 Administration*, is located on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. The CMA does not allow for modifications because it is a modified test.

**What question format is found on the STS?**

Questions for all of the STS are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet. Students in other grades mark their answer choices on a separate answer document. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

***When do parents or guardians receive their child's STS report?***

As required for all tests in the STAR Program, STAR Student Reports for the STS must be distributed to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district has received them. Individual reports for the STS should arrive in all school districts by the end of September. Reports for the STS are provided in Spanish.

*Note:* Parents or guardians should be reminded that their child's test results are confidential and maintained only by the school district.

***What information will be included on the STS or student report?***

The STAR Student Reports for the STS will provide results that describe how well students achieved the identified California content standards for reading/language arts and mathematics. Results of the 2009 administration of the STS will be reported according to performance levels in grades two through four. The STS results for 2009 in grades five through eleven will show percent correct scores.

## **Using STS Results**

***How are STS results used?***

The STS results provide information that may be used with other achievement data, including the results on the CSTs or CMA, to identify Spanish-speaking English learners' academic strengths and areas that need improvement. Parents or guardians should review areas of concern with their child's teachers to discuss specific help needed to improve their child's learning.

The STAR Student Report for the STS is one source of information about the progress Spanish-speaking English learners are making in school. Parents, guardians, and teachers also should review grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom and standardized tests for a more complete picture of each student's academic progress.

## **Additional Information**

Additional information about the STS or other tests in the STAR Program is available on the CDE Standardized Testing and Reporting Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

# **Understanding 2009 STAR Program Tests**

## **Information for School District and School Staff**

### **Appendixes**

**Appendix A**  
Glossary of Terms  
and Acronyms

**Appendix B**  
Resources Available  
on the Internet

## Appendix A

# Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

### Academic Performance Index

The Academic Performance Index (API) is a state requirement under the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999. The API is a single number that ranges from 200 to 1000 and indicates how well a school performed academically the previous year. A complete explanation of all API criteria is available on the California Department of Education Academic Performance Index Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>.

### accommodations

Accommodations are variations in the administration of an assessment. Accommodations include variations in scheduling, setting, timing, response mode, presentation format, and others. The term “accommodation” commonly refers to changes that do not alter in any significant way what the test measures or a comparability of scores. Accommodations are identified in a student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan and should be used regularly during classroom instruction and assessments. A complete list of the allowable accommodations is outlined in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the California Department of Education Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

### adequate yearly progress

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a requirement under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Under the NCLB criteria, schools and local educational agencies (i.e., school districts and county offices of education) must meet or exceed specified criteria annually in order to make AYP. A complete explanation of all AYP criteria is available on the California Department of Education Adequate Yearly Progress Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/>.

## **Apr enda: La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición**

The Apr enda: La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Apr enda 3) measures students' achievement of general academic knowledge in Spanish. In 2008, this norm-referenced test was for students who were Spanish-speaking English learners in grades eight through eleven. (*Note:* This test was administered under the STAR Program through 2008; it will no longer be administered.)

### **average percent correct**

This statistic is the arithmetic mean or average of the percent correct scores for groups of students who took the test for each grade and subject tested.

### **blueprints**

The blueprints outline the specific California content standards addressed and the number of questions by grade, subject, or course for each standards-based test component of the STAR Program.

## **California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey**

The California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) was used to measure students' achievement of general academic knowledge in core subjects. The norm-referenced tests of the CAT/6 Survey provided national comparisons for students in grades three and seven only. (*Note:* This test was administered under the STAR Program through 2008; it will no longer be administered.)

## **California Alternate Performance Assessment**

The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) measures students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts and mathematics for Levels I through V and for science for Levels I, III, IV, and V. The CAPA is an alternate assessment for students in grades two through eleven who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the CSTs, even with accommodations or modifications.

## California Modified Assessment

The California Modified Assessment (CMA) measures students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts in grades three through eight, for mathematics in grades three through seven, and for science in grades five and eight. This assessment is for students with disabilities who meet CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education.

## California Standards Tests

The California Standards Tests (CSTs) measure students' achievement of California's content standards in English–language arts, mathematics, science, and history–social science. The CSTs are for students in grades two through eleven.

## content standards

Adopted by the State Board of Education, California's content standards are statements that describe what all students in California public schools should know and be able to do in particular subjects or courses and grades. These standards define for administrators, teachers, parents, guardians, students, and the community what is expected for all students.

## end-of-course

The end-of-course designation on the Internet reports summarizes the results for all students across grades within a school, district, county, or the state who took each course-specific California Standards Test (CST), such as Algebra I, Biology, or World History.

## mean scale score

A mean scale score reported for the California Standards Tests (CSTs), California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey), or Aprenda: La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3) is the arithmetic mean or average of the scale scores for groups of students who took the test without modifications. A mean scale score reported for the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is the arithmetic mean or average of the scale scores for all students who took the CAPA at the relevant grade and CAPA level. (*Note:* The CAT/6 and

Appendix 3 were administered under the STAR Program through 2008; these tests will no longer be administered.)

## modifications

A modification is a change to the testing conditions, procedures, and/or formatting; therefore, the results are counted differently for accountability and reporting purposes. A complete list of the allowable modifications is outlined in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the California Department of Education Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

## national percentile rank

A national percentile rank (NPR) is the percentage of scores in a national sample, tested in the same grade and at a comparable time of the school year, that falls below a given score. For example, if a student scores at the 60th NPR, this means that the student scored as well as or better than 60 percent of the students in the national sample (norm group). (*Note:* The NPR relates to the reporting of the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey [CAT/6 Survey] and the Aprenda: La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición [Aprenda 3]. These tests were administered under the STAR Program through 2008; they will no longer be administered.)

## No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is a federal law enacted in January 2002 that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The NCLB mandates that all students (including students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency) in all grades meet the state's content standards for proficiency in English–language arts and mathematics by 2014. Schools, school districts, county offices of education, and the state must demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward achieving that goal.

## norm-referenced test

A norm-referenced test (NRT) is a test in which individual student or group performance is compared to that of a larger group. Usually, the larger group (norm group) is a national sample representing a wide and diverse cross section of students. The California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) and Aprenda: La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3) are NRTs. (*Note:* The CAT/6 and Aprenda 3 were administered under the STAR Program through 2008; these tests will no longer be administered.)

## performance levels

Performance levels are ranges of scores in which students have demonstrated sufficient knowledge and skills to be regarded as performing at a particular achievement level. California has identified five performance levels for reporting individual student and group test results of the California Standards Tests (CSTs), the California Modified Assessment (CMA), the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), and the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS). The five levels are: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The State Board of Education set proficient or advanced as the target performance level.

## released test questions

Released test questions (RTQs) are selected questions taken from prior test administrations (2003–2008) of the California Standards Tests (CSTs) for English–Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and History–Social Science. These questions cover a selection of California’s content standards, demonstrate a range of difficulties, and represent a variety of ways in which content standards can be assessed. Because RTQs are released to the public, they will not appear on future CSTs.

## scale score

Scale scores are derived from the number or percentage of questions that students must answer correctly to score at each performance level. Higher scale scores indicate higher levels of performance, while lower scale scores indicate lower levels of

performance. The scale scores for the California Standards Tests (CSTs) range from a low of 150 to a high of 600. The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) scale scores range from a low of 15 to a high of 60. These scale score ranges do not change from year to year.

### **scoring rubric**

Scoring rubrics are guidelines that are used to score the student work written in response to the writing tasks that are a part of the California Standards Test (CST) and California Modified Assessment (CMA) for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven. The criteria in the rubrics address the standards for writing strategies, writing applications, and written conventions that are a part of California’s English–language arts content standards. Readers use the rubrics to assign a score from 4 (high) to 1 (low) to each student’s written response. The score is then doubled and combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score for English–language arts.

### **standardized assessments**

Standardized assessments have a consistent set of procedures for designing, administering, and scoring the assessments. The purpose of standardization is to ensure that all students are assessed under the same conditions so that their scores will have the same meaning and will not be influenced by differing conditions.

## **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program**

First authorized by law in 1997, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is administered annually to California’s public school students in grades two through eleven. The purpose of this program is to measure how well students are learning the knowledge and skills of the state content standards, adopted by the State Board of Education, for English–language arts, mathematics, history–social science, and science. The STAR Program for 2009 has four components:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs)
- California Modified Assessment (CMA)

- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)

## standards-based assessments

Standards-based assessments are developed to align with specific California content standards. Results on standards-based assessments are reported on the basis of clearly defined performance categories or levels. The California Standards Tests (CSTs), California Modified Assessment (CMA), and California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) are standards-based assessments.

## Standards-based Tests in Spanish

The Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) consist of achievement tests in Spanish, developed exclusively for California's Spanish-speaking English learners. The STS series is designed to assess the academic knowledge of these students with respect to California's content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics.

## State Board of Education

The State Board of Education (SBE) is the state education agency that sets education policy for kindergarten through grade twelve in the areas of standards, instructional materials, assessment, and accountability. The SBE adopts textbooks for kindergarten through grade eight, adopts regulations to implement legislation, and has the authority to grant waivers of the *Education Code*. The SBE has eleven members who are appointed by the Governor.

## subgroup

A subgroup is a well-defined group of students. For example, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 identifies specific subgroups of students who must achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). These identified subgroups are race or ethnicity, students with disabilities, limited-English proficient, and socioeconomically disadvantaged.

## test variations

A test variation is a change in the manner in which a test is presented or administered or in how a test taker is allowed to respond. It includes, but is not limited to, accommodations and/or modifications. A complete list of the allowable test variations for students with disabilities and variations for students who are English learners is outlined in the following documents:

- *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>
- *Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007)*, available on the CDE Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>
- *Matrix of the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2009 Administration*, available on the CDE California Modified Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>

## writing prompt

A writing prompt is a task that a student is to complete. The prompt includes all pertinent information the student needs to write a response. Writing prompts are included in the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and the California Modified Assessment (CMA) for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven. Each of these tests includes one writing prompt.

## Appendix B

# Resources Available on the Internet

### California Department of Education Resources

#### Academic Performance Index

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>

#### Adequately Yearly Progress

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/>

#### California Reading List

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>

#### California Standards Test Released Questions

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

#### Content Standards

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>

#### DataQuest Parents Reference Page

<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQP.htm>

#### ***Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)***

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>

#### ***Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007)***

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>

#### ***Matrix of the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2009 Administration***

(Note: This document can be found in “Appropriate test variations and accommodations for the 2009 administration of the California Modified Assessment [CMA] based on the study of item format and delivery mode from the CMA.”)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>

**Program Resources**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

**Standardized Testing and Reporting**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>

**STAR CAPA Blueprints**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>

**STAR CMA Blueprints**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmablueprints.asp>

**STAR CST Blueprints**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/blueprints.asp>

**STAR STS Blueprints**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/stsblueprints.asp>

**STAR 2008 Test Results**

(Note: School, district, county, and statewide summary results are available on this Web page.)

<http://star.cde.ca.gov/>

**Teacher Guides to the California Writing Standards Test**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

**Outside Sources****California State University English Success**

<http://www.csuenglishsuccess.org/> (Outside Source)

**California State University Math Success**

<http://www.csumathsuccess.org/> (Outside Source)

**Early Assessment Program**

<http://www.calstate.edu/eap/> (Outside Source)