



Top 10 Things Parents Should Know about **The New California Assessments**

1. We Are Expecting Students to Think Differently

The new assessments are aligned with our new state standards, which were designed to encourage critical thinking, analytical writing, and real-world problem solving. These are skills students will need in order to be successful in college and career.

Questions that require abstract thinking, synthesis, and analysis will make up 50 to 60 percent of the new state assessments. This is a dramatic increase in rigor over past state assessments.

2. Proficiency Levels Are Set High

California has set high proficiency levels on the new state assessments, raising the bar for all students.

Based on projections from field tests in California and other states, it's likely that fewer students will score at the higher achievement levels on the new assessments, especially in the first few years. However, this doesn't mean that students have fallen behind or learned less. It simply means that we're expecting more from them and aligning what's being taught in the classroom with what they will need to know when entering college or the workforce.

3. The Assessments Measure What Students Will Need to Succeed in College and Career

The system-wide changes we've begun are focused on helping students succeed in the long run, achieving their dreams of college and a career.

4. We've Moved Beyond Simple Multiple-Choice Questions

There will be fewer multiple-choice questions and more short answers and extended responses that will require a deeper understanding of key concepts.

Along with reading to follow a story, students are learning to read to cite evidence and draw logical conclusions. They are learning to use math to solve real-world problems rather than merely pick out the right multiple-choice answer.

5. These Are Computer-Based Assessments

Students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 will use computers or tablets to take the state assessments. The computer-based testing will include embedded supports that will give students the opportunity to fully demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of the state standards in English language arts and mathematics.

6. The Assessments Measure Different Skills in New Ways

The things we expect students to know and be able to do in order to be successful in college and career have changed, so our assessments had to change as well.

7. Test Scores Will Be Reported This Spring

This is first year for the new assessments. Parents and educators will get the results in late spring. Statewide Academic Performance Index, or API, scores won't be released for at least another year.

8. Results Shouldn't Be Compared to Earlier State Assessments

The new assessments are fundamentally too different from the old exams to make any reliable comparisons between old scores and new ones. Rather, this year's results will establish a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time. Think of it as pushing the reset button on assessment results and getting a fresh start.

9. State Assessments Are Only One of Many Measures

These results should be looked at in context with other measures—including district assessments, report card grades, and portfolios of student work—to determine how well students are learning.

10. The new standards are a critical component in our students' future success.

The new assessments are part of a larger plan for ensuring high-quality teaching and learning in every school. The plan also includes higher academic standards, more decision-making in the hands of schools and communities, and more resources dedicated to schools and to students with the greatest needs.

This is an exciting and important transition that will ultimately benefit students and parents.

Learn more at <http://www.luciamarschools.org> or <http://www.caaspp.org/>