



Smarter Balanced Assessments: Frequently Asked Questions

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What's on the tests?

The Smarter Balanced tests consist of two parts, a computer adaptive portion and a performance task. The tests are designed to measure student knowledge of grade level subject matter, critical thinking, analytical writing, and problem solving skills. Assessments are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts/literacy and mathematics.

The blueprints below provide information about the content of the Smarter Balanced tests, including the number of items and depth of knowledge associated with each assessment target.

- [ELA Smarter Balanced Blueprint](#)
- [Mathematics Smarter Balanced Blueprint](#)

How are the tests scored?

Results of the computer adaptive portion and performance task are combined to yield an overall score in both English-language arts/literacy and mathematics. Students receive 3 types of scores, including (1) an overall numerical score, or scaled score (2) an achievement level, which shows how a student performed compared to the standards, and (3) claim level scores, which show how a student performed on smaller skills within each subject.

Additional Resources from the California Department of Education:

- [Sample Student Score Report](#)
- [Electronic Score Reporting \(video\)](#)
This five-minute video provides information about the benefits of electronic score reporting.
- [Smarter Balanced Scaled Score Ranges](#)
This link provides the minimum and maximum scaled scores for each grade level and subject area.

How will results be used?

Like class assignments and report cards, scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessments provide one way to assess student progress. These scores provide one piece of information about your child's English language arts and math skills and serve as a starting point for conversations with their teacher. Scores will NOT be used as the sole determining factor for any high stakes decisions, including but not limited to promotion or retention, intervention, or qualification for special programs.

What can I do to help prepare my child for the tests?

- [Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests](#)
Practice and Training Tests help students become familiar with the look and feel of the Smarter Balanced Assessments, and provide practice using the embedded tools, supports, and accommodations. While these tests do not provide scores or predict student performance on the actual test, answer keys can be found [here](#).
- [Starting Smarter](#)
The Starting Smarter website provides information to help parents/guardians understand their child's results, sample test questions, and additional free resources to support student learning.

What is the Early Assessment Program?

Through the Early Assessment Program (EAP), California State Universities (CSU) and participating California Community Colleges (CCC) may use 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment results as an early indicator of student readiness to take college level courses.

Please note the important points below:

- To participate in EAP students must authorize the release of their Smarter Balanced results for both English language arts and mathematics to the CSU and CCC systems. Students who do not release results at the time of testing may later submit a copy of their score report to the CSU or community college in which they have enrolled.
- The release of Smarter Balanced results will NOT impact a student's application for admission. Results will only be used to determine a student's course placement after they have been admitted to the university.
- Smarter Balanced Assessments provide one tool for determining college readiness and course placement. Advanced Placement (AP), ACT, and SAT scores may also be used.

For additional information including criteria for course placement, a list of participating community colleges, and information for students, please visit the California Department of Education's [Early Assessment Program website](#).

How did IUSD perform overall on the Smarter Balanced Assessments?

- [Scores for Schools, Districts, and Counties](#)
The California Department of Education website provides CAASPP scores by school, district, county, and state.

Where can I find additional information?

- [Starting Smarter](#)
The Starting Smarter website provides information to help parents/guardians understand their child's results, sample test questions, and additional free resources to support student learning.
- [Student Accessibility Resources](#)
This site provides information about accessibility resources available for the CAASPP assessments. Video tutorials that demonstrate the various tools and how they can be accessed within the tests are also available at [this link](#).
- [Smarter Balanced Achievement Levels](#)
This page contains additional information about Smarter Balanced Achievement Levels, including how achievement levels were determined.