

STAR

2009 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

Parent/Guardian Guide to the 2009 STAR Program

The tests in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program are an important part of the state assessment system. These tests are administered each spring to measure how well students in California's public schools are achieving the California content standards. These achievement tests target English–language arts and mathematics in grades two through eleven. In addition, tests in science and history–social science are given in selected grades.

Educating students is a team effort. Parents, guardians, students, schools, and communities benefit when there is a shared responsibility for learning. To fully participate as part of this team, parents and guardians should have a thorough understanding of the role the tests in the STAR Program play in making sure that all students achieve California's content standards.

Answers to commonly asked questions about the 2009 STAR Program are provided below. Additional information about specific tests in the STAR Program is available in this packet.

Questions and Answers About the STAR Program

Who participates in the STAR Program?

All students in grades two through eleven in California's public schools participate in the STAR Program each spring. This includes students with disabilities and students who are English learners.

What are the tests in the 2009 STAR Program?

- The **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** measure students' achievement of California's content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, science, and history–social science. These tests are given 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. In 2009, this assessment will be given to students with disabilities in grades three through eight who meet the CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education.

- 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 given to students in grades two through eleven who have significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to take the CSTs or CMA with accommodations or the CSTs with modifications.
- The **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)** measure students' achievement of California's content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics in Spanish. These assessments are given to Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven.

Must all students participate in STAR Program testing?

Yes. All students must participate unless their parents or guardians have submitted a written request to the school to exempt them from STAR Program testing (*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 assessments in order to meet federal accountability requirements.

When will I receive my child's STAR Student Report?

Most parents or guardians will receive their child's STAR Student Report by the end of September 2009.

What information will my child's report include?

Your child's STAR Student Report will provide results for the CSTs, CMA, CAPA, or STS, depending on the test taken. The STAR Student Report for the CSTs will show scores and performance levels for each subject tested. It will include scores for specific content areas within each subject tested and a California Reading List (CRL) number.

The STAR Student Report for the CMA for 2009 will show scores and performance levels for English–language arts and mathematics in grades three through five and for science in grade five. It 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.

The STAR Student Report for the CAPA for 2009 will show scores and performance levels for English–language arts and mathematics in Levels I through V and for science in Levels I, III, IV, and V.

The STAR Student Report for the STS for 2009 will show scores and performance levels for reading/language arts and mathematics in grades two through four. It will show percent correct scores for grades five through eleven. The STAR Student Report for the STS is provided in Spanish.

Performance levels of proficient or advanced on the STAR Student Report indicate that your child is meeting or surpassing the state's target for academic achievement. Performance levels of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicate areas of learning that need improvement. An explanation about all of the information included in your child's report will accompany the report.

Note: Your child's test results are confidential and are maintained only by the school district.

What is the CRL number?

The CRL number is an index based on each student's score on the CST for English–Language Arts. Parents, guardians, students, and teachers may use the CRL to access a list of books that are at a student's reading level. The list is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) California Reading List Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>. Parents and guardians may find this list helpful when selecting books for their children to read at home.

How are the 2009 STAR Program results used to improve my child's education?

- STAR Program results provide information about each child's progress that is used to help parents, guardians, and teachers work together to improve student learning.
- Schools use STAR Program results to help make decisions about how best to support student achievement.
- STAR Program results also can be used along with other available data to assist in identifying students for promotion or retention and for special intervention or enrichment programs. Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a student's education.

How to find out more...

If you have additional questions about California's content standards or the STAR Program tests, please direct them to your child's teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR Program on the CDE Program Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. California's content standards can be reviewed on the CDE Content Standards Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>.