

New parent information about student testing

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) require that students with disabilities be included in statewide testing. In California, this is called the Standardized Testing And Reporting (STAR) program. Until last school year, a student with a disability took one of two tests:

California Standards Test (CST) with or without accommodations and/or modifications. All general education students and most students with disabilities in grades 2-11 take this test.

California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The CAPA is designed primarily for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Now, there's a new testing option for grade 3-8 students

Starting in Spring 2008, a new test called the California Modified Assessment (CMA) was available as another option for students with disabilities in grades 3-5. In Spring 2009, grades 6, 7, and 8 will be added. The CMA differs from the CST in the following ways:

- The CMA questions are aligned to state standards, but they are less challenging than the questions on the CST.
- The reading passages are shorter.
- The formatting of the questions is designed to provide less visual distraction than the CST. For example, there is additional white space and font sizes are larger.
- On multiple choice questions, there are three answer choices instead of four.
- The CMA uses graphics for many items as opposed to the CST.



Your child may be eligible for the new test

You are receiving this notice because your child may be eligible to take the CMA this spring and we want to ensure that you are informed about your options. To determine if your child is eligible to take the CMA in the spring of 2009, an IEP team meeting will be held or an IEP amendment will be developed for your consent.

In order for your child to be eligible to take the CMA, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must have taken the CST in a previous year and scored Below Basic or Far Below Basic in either English-Language Arts or Mathematics.
2. Based on the results of other testing and data, he/she will not achieve grade-level proficiency and will not receive a proficient score on the CST, even with accommodations.
3. You, as parents, must be informed about the CMA and be involved in the decision to have your child take this test through the IEP team process.

For more information: A brochure developed by the California Department of Education that further explains the statewide testing process for students with disabilities is attached, along with some test samples that illustrate the differences between the CMA and CST. If you have any questions, please contact your child's special education teacher. 