



# CAASPP in Action

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Sharing Practices  
in Implementing  
the CAASPP System  
to Improve Teaching  
and Learning

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California Assessment of  
Student Performance and Progress

**Data Analysis Protocol—Using Interim Assessments  
to Build a District Assessment System  
Santee School District**



# Data Analysis Protocol—Using Interim Assessments to Build a District Assessment System

# Santee School District



## MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure a quality education by empowering students to achieve academic excellence, and to develop life skills needed for success in a diverse and changing society.

## OUR VISION

Santee School District will be an innovative leader in education, inspiring students to realize their unique potential.

## DISTRICT PROFILE

Santee School District consists of nine traditional schools plus one alternative home school program, each serving transitional kindergarten through grade eight. The district has seen modest enrollment growth over the past several years, with a 2016–17 enrollment totaling 6,761 students.

The student population is comprised of 56 percent White, 28 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Asian, 2 percent African American, 9 percent two or more races, and 3 percent other. Approximately 40 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. About 9 percent are classified as English learners. Primary languages include Spanish, Arabic, Chaldean, Kurdish, Japanese, and Mandarin. Approximately 12 percent of the students have special needs requiring special education services, and less than 4 percent of the students are classified as foster youths.

Santee School District's mission is to ensure a quality education by empowering students to achieve academic excellence and to develop the life skills needed for success in a diverse and changing society. The district strives to be an innovative leader in education, inspiring students to realize their unique potential.

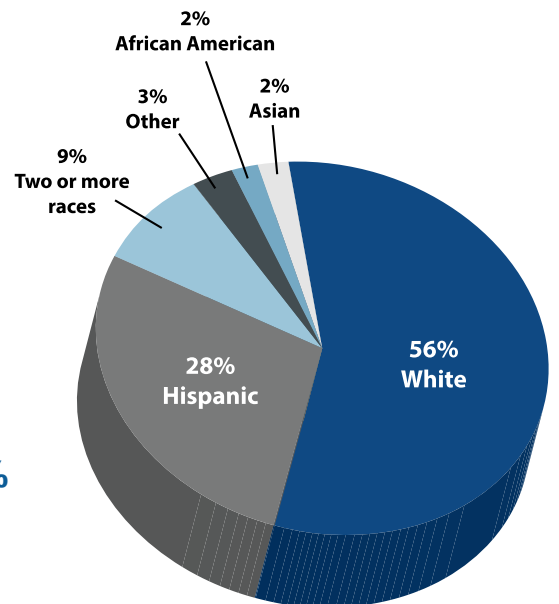
GRADES SERVED **TK–8**

TEACHERS **318**

ENROLLMENT **6,761**

ENGLISH LEARNERS **9%**

SPECIAL EDUCATION **12%**



ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS

Information provided by Santee School District.

## GOAL

Santee School District identifies the following two-pronged goal:

- Continuing the implementation of a comprehensive district assessment system;
- Incorporating common core-aligned assessment data, including results from Smarter Balanced assessments, into the ongoing cycle of inquiry used within professional learning communities (PLCs) to develop SMART<sup>1</sup> goals and inform teaching and learning

District leaders felt it was essential that the district's own assessment structure evolve to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the new state assessments. They believed that the implementation of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments would support teachers and students in building capacity with the online assessment system as well as provide additional data to inform teaching and learning. The district began implementing a comprehensive, districtwide data analysis protocol in the 2015–16 school year, and the interim assessment results served as one component in a cycle of inquiry.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessments and the incorporation of assessment results into the district's data analysis cycle were guided by the Director of the Assessment and Learning Support Department, with the full support of the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services as well as the District Superintendent.

The Assessment and Learning Support Department provided resources and assessment support to teachers and administrators in the district for the implementation of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System as well as district assessments given each trimester for writing, English language arts, and mathematics, which gauge student learning toward achieving the CCSS.

The Assessment and Learning Support Department worked closely with the Technology Department to ensure that the necessary hardware and infrastructure were in place for the Smarter Balanced Summative and Interim Assessments. The Director collaborated with the Special Education Department to promote the appropriate assignment of accessibility supports for students with disabilities.

## APPROACH

### ***Integrated Smarter Balanced Assessments into the Districtwide Assessment System***

As part of the transition to the CCSS and the implementation of the CAASPP System, the District leaders felt it was essential to modify their own district assessment structure to align with the new standards and state assessments.

When the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments were made available by the state during the 2014–15 school year, the district attempted a districtwide implementation of the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) in grades three through eight. This task proved daunting in terms of the time commitment for both test

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<sup>1</sup> SMART: Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Results-focused, Time-bound.





## APPROACH, continued

administration and hand scoring. As a result, for the 2015–16 school year, the district instead administered, for each grades three through eight, four Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) that did not require hand scoring. This implementation was expanded to six or seven blocks in 2016–17 (generally, four for English language arts and two to three for mathematics). Each IAB was administered twice—once as a pre-test during the first trimester and again as a post-test during the second trimester. Before administering an IAB, teachers were encouraged to take the assessments themselves through the Interim Assessment Viewing System to review the range of assessment item types and evaluate the depth of knowledge at which the content would be assessed.

Believing in the use of multiple measures to assess student performance and progress, the district assessment system also included Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) reading tests, Achieve 3000 LevelSet tests, Schoolnet benchmark mathematics assessments, and district-developed English language arts performance tasks. The district has identified a comprehensive set of assessments for each level, kindergarten through grade eight, to be administered within specific time frames throughout the school year.

### ***Used All Available Assessment Results in a Formal Cycle of Inquiry***

The district began the use of a common data analysis protocol in the 2015–16 school year to engage teachers in a cycle

of inquiry within their PLCs. The data analysis process is guided by tools adapted from the School Reform Initiative (SRI) Data Drive Dialogue protocol,<sup>2</sup> which included four phases:

- **Making predictions**, providing teachers with opportunities to activate prior knowledge and surface assumptions in order to predict what the data might show
- **Going visual** by creating large visual representations of the data being analyzed (such as charts or graphs) that can be written on to highlight points of interest during the data dialogue
- **Generating observations**, with participants making specific factual statements about the data without any explanations, conjectures, or conclusions
- **Developing inferences**, with teachers generating possible explanations, identifying additional data that are needed, and proposing possible actions

This analysis process was followed by a collaborative investigation of supporting literature and resources, the development of an action plan using the SMART goal process, the implementation of the identified strategies, and the collection of data to inform the next cycle. Additional tools have been developed or adapted to support the entire inquiry cycle, all of which are available to staff via the district Web site.

### ***Made Use of Available Resources***

During the 2013–14 school year, an administrative team from Santee School District, including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Director of the Assessment and Learning Support Department

<sup>2</sup> For further information see [http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/data\\_driven\\_dialogue.pdf](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/data_driven_dialogue.pdf).



**Assessment analysis allows teachers to develop methods for preparing students for the CCSS and future testing.**

attended daylong conferences offered by the San Diego County Office of Education titled “Getting Smarter About Common Core Assessment.” The district team brought back many ideas to support the district’s implementation of the CAASPP System to support teaching and learning.

In addition, the district has made use of tools available from the California Department of Education and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, including the summative and interim assessment blueprints, tables that align the claims and targets with the CCSS, and the California curriculum frameworks. The district created a specific IAB schedule for each grade level that identified the IABs to be administered each trimester; included charts that specified the number of items, assessment targets, depth of knowledge, and standards associated with each block; and included the Smarter Balanced blueprint for each designated block. These tools have helped teachers understand not only which blocks are to be administered for their grade level, but the

underlying content as well as the depth of knowledge at which the content is to be assessed. All of these resources are readily accessible to both teachers and administrators through the district’s Assessment and Learning Support Department Web site.

Results from the district assessments, including the IABs, were used formally within this cycle of inquiry during each trimester.

The results were coupled with teacher observations and student feedback about the assessment experience. Students were asked:

- What did you find challenging about the assessment?
- Which item types were easier or more difficult for students to inform the data analysis and goal-setting process?

Teachers have found that the analysis of the various district assessment results was a powerful tool to support their efforts to prepare students to handle the rigor of the CCSS, and the assessments themselves were a powerful tool for students to demonstrate what they knew and were able to do across a range of item types and item difficulties.

In addition to the formal trimester cycle of inquiry, teachers have met weekly within PLCs as part of the district’s professional development plan. These sessions allowed dedicated time for teachers to review classroom assessment data, investigate item types, consider curriculum resources, develop lesson plans, and make other preparations in response to recognized need.



## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The first two years using the Smarter Balanced assessments were a time of learning and building. Districtwide implementation of ICAs in 2014–15 brought challenges: the time required, the technical challenges associated with the test administration, and the time needed for hand scoring the constructed response items. The decision to use preselected IABs in 2015–16 reduced testing time, eliminated the need for hand scoring, and provided an opportunity to build teacher and student capacity with the test delivery system. Now, administrators and teachers believe strongly that the experience with the IABs not only provided valuable information to inform teaching and learning, but also increased student and teacher capacity with the assessment delivery system itself.

Integrating the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments into the district assessment system has validated the district's understanding that multiple measures are needed to evaluate student performance and progress and inform teaching and learning. Implementing a consistent data analysis protocol districtwide has provided a common approach to exploring student achievement data and developing action plans based on specific findings and needs. The cycle of inquiry has become an expected part of PLCs districtwide

and has expanded from the formal data analysis to include a variety of informal, formative analyses of teaching and learning progress.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### *Emphasize How New Assessments Fit Into Existing Structures*

- Part of Santee School District's success comes from having an established districtwide assessment system coupled with a common data analysis protocol.
- Phasing Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments into the assessment system supported the transition and promoted success.

### *Provide Clear Timelines, Tools, and Support for Ongoing Assessment and Data Analysis*

- Santee School District's Assessment and Learning Support Department provides a comprehensive Web site for staff that includes the timelines, tools, and resources to support the implementation of the district assessments and the data analysis protocol. Samples of the tools and resources can be found on Santee's Web site at <http://www.santeesd.net>. Included are tutorial videos on how to create a test session and audio tutorials.



**Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Resources are available on the Santee School District Web site.**



- The district publishes an annual assessment calendar that delineates all of the state and district assessments.

“One of the keys [to success],” as reported by the Director of Assessment and Learning Support, “is to recognize that the work is not over and to continually acknowledge that the entire district is on the path to better teaching and learning.”

## NEXT STEPS

The Santee School District plans to build on its success by:

- Continuing to use preselected Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as part of its district assessment system.
- Some teachers are independently opting to administer additional IABs that include hand scoring to take advantage of the valuable information gleaned from the scoring process, which they consider a valuable window into student thinking and understanding.
- Annually reviewing the entire set of district assessments to ensure that they are providing the necessary range and depth of information to support teaching and learning.



**Continued use of the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments will lead to improvements for educators and students.**

- Providing enhanced online resources and tools to support the implementation of the data analysis protocol both at the formal trimester intervals as well as on an ongoing basis within PLCs.
- Exploring the item-level results in the newly released Interim Assessment Reporting System in fall 2017 for the IABs, which Santee School District staff believe will provide even more valuable information to incorporate into the cycle of inquiry.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**CDE CAASPP Web page**  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca>

**CAASPP Portal**  
<http://www.caaspp.org>