California Department of Education

Executive Office

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** December 10, 2021

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Assessment and Accountability Meeting Series and Outreach Updates

## Summary of Key Issues

This Information Memorandum provides information about the 2021 Assessment and Accountability Information Meeting series and a new outreach approach by the California Department of Education (CDE) and testing contractor Educational Testing Service (ETS) to provide greater assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs).

## Background

The Assessment Development and Administration Division conducts continuous outreach to California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) coordinators and English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) coordinators. This outreach includes weekly communications, monthly webinars, and a start-of-the-year series of meetings to provide updates on new developments for the coming school year. Throughout the 2020–21 school year, the CDE and ETS held weekly coffee sessions and office hours to communicate to LEAs and share developments, tools, and resources as state assessments pivoted to remote test administrations. Questions and feedback from these meetings helped inform further actions to meet the needs of LEAs.

### **Assessment and Accountability Information Meeting Series**

This annual meeting is designed and delivered to equip CAASPP and ELPAC coordinators and accountability coordinators with updates on California’s assessment and accountability systems. Due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and in response to the needs of LEAs, this meeting, formerly an in-person event held in both Northern California and Southern California, shifted for the second year to a virtual platform and was delivered as a series of meetings.

The meetings consisted of six 90-minute meeting sessions that were held weekly from July 29 through September 2. The sessions provided coordinators with the latest information on the following topics: Director's Message, Accessibility, and the Test Operations Management System; ELPAC and California Spanish Assessment; English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) and Mathematics; Science; Interim Assessments and Tools for Teachers; and Accountability.

In all, 1,388 unique viewers attended these meetings. Details about the meetings are provided in the *2021 Assessment and Accountability Information Post-Meeting Report* (refer to Attachment 1).

#### **Success Agents to Work with Local Educational Agencies**

The 2020–21 administration year brought about a number of changes to policies and testing guidelines for the statewide assessments, and communicating those changes to the LEAs became paramount. To that end, the CDE and ETS hosted virtual coffee sessions and office hours that provided LEAs with real-time interaction with CDE and ETS staff as well as with other LEAs. New test administration websites and training videos provided testing coordinators, educators, and parents/guardians with up-to-the-minute information about the statewide tests. The CDE received positive feedback from the field about the new communications methods, with many emphasizing that the transparency and immediacy of the communications lowered the stress of administering the assessments during remote instruction. This positive feedback prompted the CDE and ETS to reevaluate how they work with LEAs throughout the year.

Beginning with the 2021–22 administration, the CDE and ETS introduced a new LEA support model to assist LEAs in preparing for and administering the CAASPP and ELPAC assessments. A California Outreach Success Agent is assigned to a California region according to the Regional Assessment Network (RAN) map, which is located at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/caregionalranmap.asp>. Success Agents will assist the LEAs within their assigned RAN throughout the year, from the initial preparation to launching assessments to the end of testing to, finally, receiving the data and student reports.

The Success Agents will provide individualized support to their assigned LEAs. Instead of waiting for LEAs to contact ETS with questions and issues, Success Agents will proactively reach out to LEAs to remind them of required tasks, offer additional trainings, guide new coordinators through administration set-up, and communicate any new test administration policy or changes. The CDE and ETS anticipate that this new, proactive model will not only continue but enhance the ongoing support to LEAs and educators in preparing for the statewide assessments throughout the year. More specifically, each Success Agent will:

* Build a relationship with the LEA coordinators in the assigned region.
* Provide a single point of contact, ensuring that LEA coordinators will always know whom to call about unexpected issues.
* Assist LEA coordinators in preparing for testing by maintaining familiarity with test administration calendars.
* Respond to the LEA coordinators’ requests, questions, and concerns through a variety of support channels, including through direct contact.
* Develop strategies and identify potential opportunities with the LEA coordinators to improve their experiences with the assessments.
* Understand and monitor LEA coordinators’ expectations and recurring issues.
* Build a sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership between the LEA coordinators and the California Assessment System.

LEAs coordinators now have three different paths to obtain assistance:

1. California Technical Assistance Center (CalTAC)
2. Self-service options through the CAASPP (<https://www.caaspp.org/>) and ELPAC (<https://www.elpac.org/>) program websites
3. California Outreach Team Success Agents

The current phone number for CalTAC, 800-955-2954, will remain active to handle the incoming calls that are quick to resolve, such as those requesting the steps to change a password. The CAASPP and ELPAC program websites offer information, videos, communications, and tools for LEAs as well as links to the CAASPP and ELPAC manuals website ([https://ca-toms-help.ets.org](https://ca-toms-help.ets.org/)), where the web-based manuals reside. LEA coordinators will now engage primarily with their designated Success Agents, providing them with timely and comprehensive customer support.

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: *2021 Assessment and Accountability Information Meeting Report* (9 Pages)

2021 Assessment and Accountability Information   
Post-Meeting Report

 California Department of Education | October 2021



Introduction and Background

The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) hosted the 2021 Assessment and Accountability Information Meeting (AAIM) under contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) Assessment Development and Administration Division. This annual meeting is designed and delivered to equip California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), and accountability coordinators with updates and information on California’s assessment and accountability systems.

Prior to 2020, this meeting was held in person twice each year, once in Northern California (Sacramento) and once in Southern California (Ontario), as well as via live webcast from one of the two locations. In 2020, however, the AAIM was held entirely on a virtual platform for the first time, and in 2021, it was again held virtually. Table 1 lists the schedule of the 2021 AAIM sessions.

Table 1: 2021 AAIM Sessions, by Date and Topic

| **Date** | **Topic** |
| --- | --- |
| Session 1—July 29 | Director’s message, Accessibility, and Test Operations Management System (TOMS) |
| Session 2—August 5 | ELPAC and California Spanish Assessment (CSA) |
| Session 3—August 12 | English language arts/literacy (ELA)  and mathematics |
| Session 4—August 19 | Science |
| Session 5—August 26 | Interim assessments and Tools for Teachers (T4T) |
| Session 6—September 2 | Accountability |

In response to coordinator feedback from the previous year, this year’s meeting was structured differently than in the past. The changes included, but were not limited to, the following:

* Spreading the sessions out across several days.
* Using the Q&A feature in Zoom to collect questions.
* Holding a Q&A session at the end of each day.
* Training presenters on accessible and effective presentation best practices.

Summary of Participants

**Attendance**

On average, about half of all registrants attended the sessions they had registered for. Although this is lower than the 65 percent attendance rate from the previous year, we know that the 2020 attendees attended only parts of the full-day session, whereas the attendance rate for 2021 stayed consistent for the duration of each of the sessions.

**Session 1—Director’s message, Accessibility, and TOMS**

1,157 registrants

660 attendees

57 percent attendance rate

**Session 2—ELPAC and CSA**

1,295 registrants

663 attendees

64 percent attendance rate

**Session 3—ELA and Mathematics**

1,233 registrants

584 attendees

47 percent attendance rate

**Session 4—Science**

1,213 registrants

530 attendees

44 percent attendance rate

**Session 5—Interim Assessments and T4T**

1,231 registrants

528 attendees

43 percent attendance rate

**Session 6—Accountability**

1,222 registrants

588 attendees

48 percent attendance rate

**Survey Responses**

Attendees received a post-meeting survey request on the days of the last two sessions. In addition, they received a reminder email one week before the survey closed and second reminder email the day before the survey closed. The survey response rate of   
7 percent on par with some prior years’ results:

* 663 attendees
* 44 survey respondents

**The survey had a 7 percent response rate.**

**Registration Demographic Information**

As a part of registration, registrants were asked about their role in the assessment process. As shown in figure 1, below, more than halfof all registrants said that theywere LEA-level CAASPP or ELPAC coordinators. Registrants were able to choose more than one answer to this question; therefore, the total of the responses listed below equals more than 100 percent.

Figure 1: Registrants’ Roles in the Assessment Process

![LEA CAASPP coordinator 75%
LEA ELPAC coordinator 70%
Site CAASPP coordinator 20%
Site ELPAC coordinator 18%
Test Administrator 18*%
Other 11%
CALPADS coordinator 9%]()

Findings

The findings contained in this report are organized into three sections:

* CAASPP and ELPAC Updates
* Accountability Updates
* Multiday Series Format

**CAASPP and ELPAC Updates**

The CAASPP and ELPAC presentations were held across several sessions. They provided information about the new features of the assessment system and updates on topics that included the Smarter Balanced assessments for ELA and mathematics, science assessments, alternate assessments, the Spanish language assessment, and the ELPAC.

Participants were asked to rate how helpful these updates were.

98% said the information about enhancements and updates to the CAASPP assessments were helpful.

100%said the information about enhancements and updates to the ELPAC assessments were helpful.

**Accountability Updates**

The last session in the series was about updates to the accountability system. This presentation included information about the growth model. Respondents were asked whether the information about accountability and the growth model was helpful.

98% said the information about accountability and the growth model was helpful.

***Thank you so much! We know it is hard to manage so many assessments and LEAs. Keep up the good work.***

**—Survey respondent**

**Multiday Series Format**

Participants were asked whether they preferred this meeting as a multiday series or as a full-day session. More than 70 percent of respondents said that they preferred a series of short meetings held over several days. Several commenters indicated that they like these virtual meetings spread out over several days but that they would like the option to meet in person as well.

***I'd like both options. To get all the info early would be great and then attend the series to address specific issues.***

**—Survey respondent**

Summary and Recommendations

The SCOE has reviewed the costs of the 2021 meeting, the feedback from meeting participants, and the experience of the CDE and SCOE teams. For the 2022 meeting, the SCOE proposes to continue some practices as well as implement several changes.

**Recommendations for Continued Practices**

The SCOE team recommends the continuation of the following practices for future Assessment and Accountability Information Meetings:

* Conduct the meeting virtually in several short sessions across multiple dates.
* Continue to hold Q&A sessions after each presentation.
* Provide participants with electronic copies of the notetaking guide before the meeting.
* Provide the PowerPoint slide decks to participants after the meeting.
* Use an electronic question submission system.
* Hold the meetings in August.
* Use data visualization best practices when creating the PowerPoint presentations and notes.

**Recommendation for Changes for Future Meetings**

The SCOE team recommends changes to the following practices for future Assessment and Accountability Information Meetings:

* Meeting structure to be modified to three sessions, each lasting two hours, in order to provide all the information early in August, reducing the time commitment required of presenters and attendees.
* Send the survey link at the end of each presentation and a reminder one week later as well as the day before the survey closes.
* Encourage “watch parties” at county offices of education so attendees can share information and best practices with their peers.

To that end, the SCOE proposes the following schedule of webinars throughout August 2022, although final dates, times, and topics are flexible and can be determined by the CDE during the 2022 planning process.

Table 2: Sample 2022 Assessment and Accountability Information Meeting Schedule

| Topic(s) | Date | Time |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Director’s Message, Accessibility, ELA and Mathematics | August 4 | 2 p.m. |
| ELPAC, CSA, and Science | August 11 | 2 p.m. |
| Interims, Tools for Teachers, TOMS & Accountability | August 18 | 2 p.m. |

Appendix A

**Open-Ended Comments**

*All comments have been kept in their original format, with no editing.*

**Presentations**

* Please make a note on the documentation when something is new or updated.
* I don't understand the note titled "2020-21 Reclassification" on page 9 of the August 5 Notetaking Guide. The statement "Scores must be consecutive for the ELPAC and basic skills tests." I've reached out to support services and have not received an answer to clarify this statement.
* We need more support regarding the Alternate ELPAC, especially how to implement 2nd scoring. Are there any models? Also, please be aware that using subs as 2nd scorers or to release teachers is not practical due to severe shortages due to COVID.
* knew alot of the information already from previous roles
* Still a bit confused about stability report but I'll wait for resources.
* I don't really have anything to do with accountability.

**Meeting Format**

* Short virtual meetings over several days.
* If it's a webinar, then multiple meetings. If in person, then single day.
* One full day, preferably in person when possible.
* My only wish is that the scheduled dates were a bit earlier. Afternoons were perfect!
* I would prefer two half days.
* I'd like both options. To get all the info early would be great and then attend the series to address specific issues.

**Notetaking Guide**

* LOVE these!
* Much better than in years past when important details were left out to "make us pay attention".
* I appreciate having the key links and concepts in the guide.
* The reading of the ppt and notetaking are not necessary as we all can read the materials we don’t need explanation.

**Additional Comments and Suggestions**

* Thank you for supporting us.
* ALL the questions that went unanswered in Chat OR were marked for "want to answer live" left many incomplete. Some Districts see a shared Google Sheet, that lists questions, answers, respondee and questioneer. This allowed a record to exist after the meeting and most if not all questions get answered.
* Great organization. The people that needed to be there to answer questions were always there, even if they weren't always paying attention.
* Although virtual is a convenient and cost-effective delivery of the content, participants lose the networking and collaboration opportunities available during the in-person meetings. It helps to process the information with others in the field. Please consider returning this meeting to an in-person format when health conditions allow.
* Thank you for all you hard work to keep us informed! You are appreciated!
* I appreciate the real-time Q&A that the shorter, virtual sessions offer. I appreciate how accessible CDE and ETS staff have been over the last year and a half. Thank you for all you do to support our work.
* I really appreciate the openness and time dedicated to answering questions.
* Thanks for providing links and answers to our questions.
* Thank you so much! We know it is hard to manage so many assessments and LEAs. Keep up the good work.