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California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP): 2020 Case Study Report

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CAASPP 2020 Case Study Report

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to California *Education Code (EC)* Section 60649, the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) conducted an independent evaluation of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System from July 2018 through December 2020. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide objective technical advice and consultation to the California Department of Education (CDE) on activities related to the implementation of specific components of the CAASPP.

The multiple systems that form the California assessment environment are complex. Across the state, local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and teachers continue to implement the various components of the expanded CAASPP System, which now includes two science tests (the California Science Test [CAST] and the California Alternate Assessment [CAA] for Science); the new English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC); and the California Spanish Assessment (CSA). The CDE, its testing contractors, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium continue to enhance the Smarter Balanced components. The CAASPP System includes assessments as well as resources to help teachers, administrators, students, and parents prepare for the assessments and understand subsequent results. HumRRO's Case Study addresses three well-established Smarter Balanced components: Summative and Interim Assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics, and the Digital Library (DL), which includes formative assessments and instructional resources.¹

In accordance with the 2018–2020 CAASPP Evaluation Plan, HumRRO completed the following studies during the three-year independent evaluation:

- Instruction and Student Learning Case Study (a two-year study, hereafter, Case Study)
- California Science Test (CAST) Alignment Study
- California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science Alignment Study

The 2018–2020 CAASPP Evaluation Plan is presented in HumRRO's *2018 CAASPP Independent Evaluation Report*. The report consists of the CAASPP System's theory of action (CDE, 2018a) and detailed plans for each evaluation study. Full details of all aspects of the first year of the Case Study, conducted during the 2018–2019 school year, are presented in HumRRO's *2019 Impact Case Study Report*.

¹ During the period of this study, the DL was the system available to educators. The DL was retired in May 2020 and replaced by a new system (Tools for Teachers) in June 2020.

This stand-alone report includes full details of all aspects of second year of the Case Study, conducted during the 2019–2020 school year. Information about each year of the Case Study is also included in HumRRO’s annual independent evaluation reports. All of HumRRO’s CAASPP evaluation reports are publicly available on the CDE’s website, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caaspprptstudies.asp>.

This executive summary provides an overview, a summary of the major findings, and recommendations for improvement to the studied CAASPP components for year two of the Case Study. Detailed descriptions and findings of the year two study are presented in chapter 2 and Appendix C and D, and a more in-depth presentation of conclusions and recommendations is presented in chapter 3.

Instruction and Student Learning Case Study

Overview

The primary goal of the two-year Case Study was to elicit concrete examples of how and why specific Smarter Balanced English language arts (ELA) and mathematics components are used and the perceived benefits and challenges of using them. The three components are the summative assessments; interim assessments (IAs), which include Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and longer Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs); and DL. For year two, HumRRO collaborated with six LEAs, including one direct-funded charter, and a subset of their schools (15 schools in all) to study their use of the Smarter Balanced components. The LEAs and schools within the LEAs were selected based on their extensive use of IAs during the 2018–2019 academic year.

The candor and thoughtfulness of study participants’ responses to questions during all phases of data collection were the foundation of this study. Many of our LEAs and schools continued to participate in data collection activities even as they experienced COVID-19 related school closures requiring extraordinary efforts to move to virtual learning. HumRRO researchers express our deep gratitude for the time, collaboration, and contributions made by LEA and school staff to this important work.

Summary of Findings

The following high-level summaries describe how educators across the small sample of LEAs and schools in the study used the Smarter Balanced components during the 2019–2020 academic year:

- **Summative Assessments.** Most school staff participating in the study reviewed summative assessment data from the prior year, often as a school-wide or grade-level team. Almost all school leaders and teachers at the elementary and middle schools (a) reviewed achievement level results by grade and (b) compared performance across similar districts and schools. Some schools also reviewed more detailed results (e.g., claims) and used those results to help identify annual

achievement goals or influence instructional foci or the selection of IABs administered during 2019–2020.

- **Interim Assessments.** All schools in the study used IAs in both ELA and mathematics, except for one elementary school. Some LEAs mandated IA use, and some of these LEAs also specified which IAs were to be administered per subject and grade level. Many teachers cited benefits of IAs for monitoring student progress and informing instructional decisions, beyond their usefulness for preparing students for the summative assessments. The most positive perceptions about IABs were from teachers who had input into decisions about giving IABs, which allowed better alignment of assessments with their curriculum.
- **Digital Library.** The studied schools reported extremely limited use of the resources of the Digital Library, though most teachers were aware of the resources and had logged in at least once. Many teachers noted time constraints, difficulty finding useful resources, difficulty navigating through the system, and availability of sufficient materials through their curriculum or other familiar sources as reasons for not using the DL.

Summary of Best Practices

Across the studied LEAs and schools, HumRRO identified the following sample of best practices used by participating LEAs for successful implementation of the Smarter Balanced components. Each “best practice” is an approach that (a) aligned well with the intended purpose of and guidance for implementing components within the CAASPP System and (b) resulted in educators having a positive experience using the CAASPP System to inform their teaching.

- Use summative assessment data to monitor school-level performance and, in combination with other data, to identify school-wide goals.
- Use IAs as a teaching tool. For example, review commonly missed items as a full class, small group, or partner exercise.
- Use IA data to identify gaps in student understanding and determine content that should be retaught to the full class or select groups of students.
- Provide support and training at the school and local educational agency (LEA) levels for using CAASPP resources.
- Provide leadership guidance and encouragement for using CAASPP components while allowing teachers flexibility regarding which IAs and DL resources to incorporate into their classrooms.
- Facilitate school-wide data discussions to ensure teachers know how to access and interpret summative assessment results, and how these data can inform instructional practices.

- Provide time and resources to support collaboration among grade-level and/or content-area professional learning communities (PLCs) to plan instruction and use interim and formative assessments effectively.

Recommendations

HumRRO reviewed the full scope of study findings to develop suggestions for the CDE to consider as part of its continuous improvement of the CAASPP System. Based on data from year two—from a small number of teachers within a small number of schools in a small number of LEAs—we offer the following recommendations to the CDE. Most of these are already being addressed by significant enhancements the CDE will implement during the 2020–2021 school year. Expanded recommendations and descriptions of enhancements being implemented are described in chapter 3.

Recommendation 1: Continue providing training opportunities and updated online resources for LEA- and school-level staff.

Recommendation 2: Work with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to provide an expanded pool of ELA and mathematics IAs, particularly Focused IABs (FIABs), and develop multiple versions of existing IAs.

Recommendation 3: Use the CAASPP website to address the issues of version control and changing CAASPP component guidance to ensure educators are aware of new releases and use current resources.

Recommendation 4: Consider adding reporting elements and resources directed toward students at the upper grade levels, providing them with information and tools to enhance their own learning.

Recommendation 5: Continue efforts to increase usability of online platforms.

Recommendation 6: Seek ways to improve online access to high quality, free, Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned formative assessment resources for school-level staff.

Summary and Next Steps

HumRRO’s two-year Case Study provided an in-depth look at how a modest number of diverse LEAs and schools are implementing Smarter Balanced components, especially the interim assessments. Overall findings indicate the IABs, which are high quality, CCSS-aligned online assessments, are still mainly used by some LEAs to prepare students for the rigor and format of the summative assessments. However, for the general education population of students, teachers are increasingly using IABs, along with other measures of student progress, to assist with instructional decisions, plans, and goals. Ongoing LEA and school support for training on the use of and access to the many resources is essential, and we fully support the CDE’s continued efforts to implement solutions to areas identified for improvement, internally and by our independent evaluation.

This stand-alone report along with the Comprehensive Report for 2018–2020 are the two final deliverables for HumRRO’s CAASPP independent evaluation. HumRRO has been honored to be the independent evaluator for CDE’s assessment programs since 1999, contributing our objective and high-quality research efforts to support the continuous improvement of first the California High School Exit Examination and now the CAASPP System.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System has been the statewide student assessment program since 2014. It is intended to assist teachers, administrators, students, and parents by promoting high-quality teaching and learning using a variety of assessment approaches and item types. The Smarter Balanced English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics tests monitor progress in implementing effective instruction aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA and mathematics; the California Alternate Assessments in ELA and mathematics have been operational since 2016. The California Science Test (CAST), which became operational in spring 2019, and the California Alternate Assessment in Science (CAA Science), which will be operational during the 2020–2021 school year, are aligned to the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS). The CAASPP System also includes an optional Spanish reading language arts test, the California Spanish Assessment (CSA), which became operational in 2019. These assessments aim to shift the focus away from accountability toward a comprehensive plan for promoting teaching and learning for all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English learners (ELs). The CAASPP System includes sophisticated online tools for reporting assessment results and represents a substantial financial investment by the state as well as a significant investment of educator and student time.

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 60649(a) requires the independent evaluation of the CAASPP System, stating that “evaluation activities may include a variety of internal and external studies such as validity studies, alignment studies, and studies evaluating test fairness, testing accommodations, testing policies, and reporting procedures, and consequential validity studies specific to pupil populations such as English learners (ELs) and pupils with disabilities.” The law requires development of a plan to conduct independent evaluation activities, and it prohibits duplication of studies conducted as part of a federal peer review process or by California Department of Education (CDE) assessment contractors.

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) served as the first CAASPP System evaluator from 2015 to 2018. Copies of our annual and comprehensive final reports are available on the CDE Web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tq/ca/caaspprptstudies.asp>).

The CDE awarded the contract for the 2018–2020 independent evaluation of the CAASPP System to HumRRO in July 2018. The current contract calls for annual evaluation reports that summarize all work completed during the previous year, stand-alone reports for individual research studies, and a comprehensive final report. Within a few months of the award, HumRRO submitted to the CDE the first required annual evaluation report (Hardoin et al., 2018). That report’s core contents included the 2018–2020 Evaluation Plan, which described the design of three research studies approved

by the CDE and scheduled within the contract period. The present report is the third annual report and describes results from the studies concluded during 2019–2020. A Comprehensive Final Evaluation Report 2018–2020 will be delivered in 2020 and will summarize evaluation findings and recommendations from each of the three annual reports.

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak had a significant impact on the CAASPP System and the delivery of instruction at all grade levels across the state. All CAASPP testing was suspended on March 20, 2020. Local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and teachers who had been implementing the various components of the expanded CAASPP System faced widespread school closures and conversion to full- or part-time distance learning, which impacted the Instruction and Student Learning Case Study but did not affect the alignment studies.

An ongoing evaluation is important to support the goal of continuous improvement to help California achieve the intended return on its investment in the CAASPP System. The evaluation can provide evidence to demonstrate the validity of intended interpretations of test scores used as measures of student learning relative to targeted content standards. It also can offer recommendations for potentially improving alignment between what an assessment is intended to measure and what it actually measures. The evaluation can also provide insight into how CAASPP results are used to improve instruction at the student, classroom, school, local educational agency (LEA), and statewide levels.

2018–2020 Evaluation Plan Goals and Timeline

HumRRO developed the 2018–2020 Case Study plan with guidance from the CDE and input from the CAASPP Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The Case Study was designed to provide information about how well specific elements of the CAASPP System as delivered meet the intended goals of the program expressed in the CAASPP System theory of action. The plan in its entirety is available in the *2018 CAASPP Evaluation Report* (Hardoin, M. M., et al., 2018). The following key activities were identified for the duration of the two study years:

- Collaborate with and gather extensive qualitative data (case studies) from a small sample of schools and LEAs, purposefully selected based on their use of CAASPP components and resources. The small sample will aim to broadly represent the diversity of the state with respect to geographic location, academic achievement, and size (student enrollment), as well as student population characteristics (i.e., socioeconomic disadvantage and EL status).
- Investigate the context and various approaches used by the small sample of schools and LEAs to implement and integrate the CAASPP System components to inform instruction and improve student learning.
- Case Study reports will each describe in detail one school year’s findings of the studied LEAs’ and schools’ use of CAASPP components and their impacts on

instruction and student learning. The report will document in detail the local context for each case study.

- Conduct year one data collection activities with initial set of LEAs and schools in 2018–19.
- Complete year one data analysis and develop stand-alone year one report in 2019.
- Conduct year two data collection activities with second set of LEAs and schools in 2019–20.
- Complete year two data analysis and develop stand-alone year two report in 2020.

Implementing the 2018–2020 Case Study

A summary list of key activities and time frames for implementing the Case Study aspects of the 2018–2020 evaluation is presented in table 1.1, along with a status of the work as of December 15, 2020.

Table 1.1 Schedule and Status of Evaluation Activities for 2018–2020

Activity	Time Frame	Status
Orientation Meeting with CDE staff: In-person meeting to review all tasks and project timeline and to address questions and concerns.	July 2018	Completed
Management Meetings with CDE staff: Biweekly calls to discuss progress, plans, and issues.	July 2018–December 2020	Completed
State Board of Education (SBE) Meetings: Meet with SBE staff and provide presentations at Board meetings.	As requested, up to two times annually, July 2018–December 2020	Not Scheduled
TAG Meetings: Meet with and provide presentations, including detailed designs, review of progress on studies, preliminary findings from studies, and Evaluation Plan updates.	Three times annually, July 2018–December 2020	Completed
CAASPP Contractor Annual Planning Meeting: Attend meeting to learn of planned updates to the system, concerns, processes, scope, and schedule.	Annually, July 2018–June 2020	Completed
Conduct the Case Study and deliver two stand-alone study reports.	Annually, July 2019–December 2020	Completed

Table 1.1 (cont.)

Activity	Time Frame	Status
Develop and deliver annual report.	Annually, July 2018–December 2020	Completed
Develop and deliver final comprehensive report.	July–December 2020	In Progress
Maintain comprehensive plan and schedule for project activities and deliverables.	July 2018–December 2020	Completed
Submit monthly written progress reports to describe evaluation progress, plans, and issues.	July 2018–December 2020	Completed

Background Research on Updated CAASPP System

The CAASPP system has continued to evolve during the course of this independent evaluation. Following are important changes and additions implemented by the CDE during 2019–2020 that affected HumRRO’s Case Study:

- Addition of 73 more ELA and mathematics Smarter Balanced Digital Library (DL) Connections Playlists, providing links to DL resources on the basis of students’ Interim Assessment Block (IAB) performance
- Launch of 40 new Smarter Balanced Focused IABs (FIABs) for ELA and math, and corresponding DL Connections Playlists
- Transition from CAASPP Test Operations Management System (TOMS) to MyTOMS, a new “one-stop shop” for CAASPP and English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) (September 2019)
- New statewide in-person training opportunity, the California Assessment Conference (October 2019)
- Transition from the Interim Assessment Reporting System and the Online Reporting System (ORS) to the new California Educator Reporting System (CERS), which will eventually become the “one-stop shop” for interim and summative assessment results for all CAASPP and ELPAC assessments
- Updates to Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments resources, including the 2019–2020 Interim Assessments Overview, *2019–2020 Interim Assessment User Guide*, *Interim Assessment Video Series*, and CERS Sandbox training tool
- First release of operational test questions (more than 100) from the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in ELA and math, as well as annotated anchor items (February 2020)

- Optional access to Smarter Balanced ELA and math Interim Assessments for use in distance learning (April 2020)
- Launch of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s Tools for Teachers, and decommissioning of the Digital Library (May 2020)

HumRRO researchers engaged in a number of activities to be fully aware of these updates to the CAASPP System to understand how schools and LEAs might learn about and make use of each of the new enhancements. HumRRO researchers subscribed to the Assessment Spotlight, CDE’s weekly email to educators from kindergarten to grade twelve. Launched on July 5, 2018, this publication includes information about CAASPP as well as the ELPAC. HumRRO’s project management team participated in biweekly calls with the evaluation contract monitor, Science Program staff, and DL and IA Liaison. HumRRO also attended the semiannual planning meetings conducted by the CAASPP testing contractor. Researchers reviewed new publicly available online information and attended educator training sessions supported by the CDE to understand how the updates to CAASPP components were presented to California teachers, administrators, and district staff.

For year two of the Case Study, HumRRO’s study design for qualitative data collection required current knowledge of the Smarter Balanced summative and interim assessments and reporting systems, as well as the Digital Library (replaced with Tools for Teachers in June 2020). HumRRO’s project manager, the Case Study Director, and a Case Study researcher each observed the following CAASPP training sessions:

- *2019 Summer Institute — Analyzing Student Work and Using the Interim and Digital Library Systems to Inform Teaching and Learning.* HumRRO observed two of the eight sessions offered throughout the state, the July 8–9 session in Sacramento and the July 16–17 session in Los Angeles. Each two-day workshop was conducted by the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) in partnership with WestEd and the CDE.
- *2019 California Assessment Conference* (October 16–18, Oakland). This inaugural statewide two-and-a-half-day conference was conducted by SCOE in partnership with the CDE. Educators from all roles (e.g., LEA CAASPP coordinators, professional development staff, and curriculum specialists) attended to learn how to use the state’s comprehensive system of assessments (formative, interim, summative) to support teaching and learning in their schools and classrooms.

CDE’s online training materials and in-person workshops for the Smarter Balanced System components emphasize the potential to impact teaching and learning when the CAASPP System tools are used in conjunction with each other. HumRRO’s work with these resources is discussed in more depth in chapters two and three of this report.

Safeguarding Confidential Data

HumRRO fully understands the importance of adhering to policies that protect and monitor access to sensitive information, such as confidential test materials and data from focus groups, interviews, and online polling, while carrying out the independent evaluation activities. HumRRO researchers are cognizant of federal policies such as the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well as policies pertaining to governmental agencies in California and those specific to the CDE.

For the CAASPP evaluation, HumRRO staff security program training focused on three key areas: (a) proper administration of nondisclosure agreements and implementation of the “need to know” principle for all personnel working on the contract; (b) comprehensive training on specific security requirements related to HumRRO’s CAASPP work, including but not limited to, specific data security and incident report procedures; and (c) clear explanation of pertinent laws and regulations governing—and the procedures related to protecting—the safeguarding of certain types of information relevant to the contract. Taken together, these areas of our security program ensure all procedures are administered in an efficient and effective manner.

Organization and Contents of the 2020 Case Study Report

The remaining chapters of this report describe work completed during 2019–2020 for the Case Study.

- Chapter 2, “Instruction and Student Learning Case Study,” presents HumRRO’s methods and data collection activities conducted during year two of the study. The goals of the study were to learn how educators use the CAASPP Smarter Balanced System components (i.e., summative and interim assessments and the Digital Library) to inform ELA and mathematics instruction and student learning. HumRRO collected and analyzed extensive qualitative data about the use of the components in the specific context of a small number of LEAs and a small subset of each LEA’s schools. HumRRO conducted in-person focus groups/interviews and monthly email polling with LEA and school educators, end-of-year web-based focus groups with LEA and school points of contact, and student questionnaires. The chapter provides, for each research question, the overarching themes and unique aspects discovered in the LEAs’ use of Smarter Balanced System components.
- Chapter 3, “Conclusions and Recommendations,” provides (a) an overview of the Case Study HumRRO completed during 2019–2020, (b) a summary of findings and conclusions reached, (c) a list of best practices for effective use of the Smarter Balanced components, (d) recommendations for improvement to the studied CAASPP components, and (e) planned changes to the CAASPP System that are anticipated to respond to several of the recommendations.

The following appendices provide additional information about year two data collection for the study and more in-depth findings of CAASPP component use by each LEA and its study schools:

- Appendix A, *2019 Eligibility Survey*, presents the questionnaire HumRRO administered online to a subset of LEAs in the summer of 2019 for the purpose of identifying potential participants in year two of the study.
- Appendix B, *2019–2020 Case Study Data Collection Instruments*, presents three data collection instruments. First, the focus group protocol used to collect information from groups of teachers during site visits with participating schools. HumRRO’s study included similar protocols with different question foci for school leaders and LEA staff. Second, a comprehensive list of monthly polling questions asked of LEA and school points of contacts (POCs) to learn about their ongoing use of summative assessments, Interim Assessments (IAs), and Digital Library (DL) resources. Third, an optional student survey administered by some participating schools to obtain student perspectives on the IAs.
- Appendix C, *2019–2020 Detailed LEA-Specific Findings from the Case Study*, provides an in-depth summary of the Case Study findings specific to each LEA and its study schools. This section highlights the LEA and school context and their experiences with each of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced components.
- Appendix D, *2019–2020 Summaries of LEA-Specific Findings from the Case Study*, provides summaries of the key points outlined in Appendix C for each of the LEAs.

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Chapter 2: Instruction and Student Learning Case Study

The two-year Instruction and Student Learning Case Study (hereafter, Case Study) uses a case study approach to deeply investigate and produce a richly detailed summary of the CAASPP System’s impact in a modest number of local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools. The primary goal of the study was to elicit concrete examples of how and why specific CAASPP components (i.e., Smarter Balanced components for English language arts/literacy [ELA] and mathematics) were used and their impact on instruction and student learning, as well as the perceived benefits, strengths, and challenges of using the components. During the 2018–2019 school year, the first year of the study, HumRRO collaborated with seven LEAs, including one direct-funded charter school. The full, stand-alone report of year one of the study is available online (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/Ta/Tg/ca/documents/caasppimpactcasestudy19.pdf>). This chapter presents the activities and results of year two of the case study.

Creswell (1998) described a case study as an appropriate research approach when one is interested in the in-depth study of a “case” bounded in time or place. Patton (2015) noted that a “case” can be many different things, depending on the focus and field of study. Moss and Haertel (2016) use the label “Small N or Comparative Case Studies” (CCS) for studies with “more than one case, but typically fewer than fifty, purposively chosen to illuminate the question or phenomenon of interest. Typically, cases are chosen so as to contrast with respect to some set of key features. In CCS, within-case analyses are supplemented by cross-case comparisons, which help to support generalization.”

For this study, a case was defined as an LEA that had fully implemented the CAASPP System in 2018–2019 and planned to continue implementation during the study year, 2019–2020 (see description in Selection of LEA Cases). To conduct a case study, one should gather a large amount of data to provide an in-depth picture of the “case” (Creswell, 1998). Like other forms of qualitative research, case studies tend to rely on use of inductive reasoning, rather than beginning with specific hypotheses (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). Consistent with these approaches, HumRRO’s study methods relied on inductive reasoning guided by a set of research questions. HumRRO incorporated multiple types of data collection, as described further in this chapter, to provide an in-depth look at the implementation of CAASPP for a selection of LEAs and a sample of their schools.

The candor and thoughtfulness of study participants’ responses to questions during all phases of data collection were the foundation of this study. Many of our LEAs and schools continued to participate in data collection activities even as they experienced COVID-19 related school closures requiring extraordinary efforts to move to virtual learning. HumRRO researchers express our deep gratitude for the time, collaboration, and contributions made by LEA and school staff to this important work.

This first section of this chapter describes the CAASPP components studied. The second section presents an abbreviated version of the study design and describes the recruitment and selection of LEAs and their associated schools. The detailed design of the Case Study is included in the 2018–2020 CAASPP Evaluation Plan, which is presented in the publicly available *2018 CAASPP Evaluation Report* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/caaspp18evalrpt.pdf>).

The current report provides briefer descriptions of each aspect of the study design, including modifications made during implementation of the study, to give context for the reporting of findings.

The final section of this chapter presents general findings regarding CAASPP component use across all the LEAs studied this second year, organized by the research questions of the study. This section includes HumRRO’s evaluation of contextual implications, common experiences, best practices, and challenges. The outcomes of year two of the Case Study will inform the CDE about successes as well as obstacles and suggest where potential future improvements can be made to increase the CAASPP System’s intended utility to positively impact classroom instruction and student learning.

CAASPP Smarter Balanced Components and Resources

The CAASPP System comprises multiple components intended to measure student performance and progress and serve as tools for increasing student learning in the classroom. This Case Study focused only on the CAASPP Smarter Balanced components for ELA and mathematics. This section gives an overview of the components and resources available to LEAs and schools during the 2019–2020 school year.

All the Smarter Balanced components were intentionally designed to align to the content and rigor of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). A hierarchy of overall domain claims (most general level), sub-domain claims, assessment targets, and standards (most specific level) guide test development and contribute to analyzing and understanding the different types of Smarter Balanced scores. There are four sub-domain claims for ELA (reading, listening, writing, and research/inquiry) and four sub-domain claims for mathematics (concepts and procedures, problem solving, modeling and data analysis, and communicating and reasoning). Test results for mathematics collapse two of the mathematics claims (problem solving and modeling and data analysis) into one score reporting category. During the 2019–2020 school year, a new web tool, the Smarter Balanced Content Explorer, was launched to help educators make connections between their plans for CCSS-aligned classroom instruction and activities and the test development language of claims, targets, standards, and item specifications.

As the Smarter Balanced assessments and tools have evolved and the resources to support them expanded, finding information about a specific topic online can be challenging. The CDE maintains public web pages with information about the CAASPP

System and links to documents, archived workshop presentations, webcasts, online manuals, and videos. There are also links to the CAASPP website, where online practice and training tests can be accessed.

The CAASPP website can also be accessed directly at caaspp.org (see figure 2.1). Educators use this site to access the test administration systems, training resources and materials, the latest CAASPP news, and updates regarding administering the CAASPP tests. The site has a search field and provides a wealth of information about the Smarter Balanced assessments, including updated user manuals (Resource Tab), a link to the new Smarter Balanced Content Explorer, and information about in-person or web-based training sessions (Training tab). The 2019–2020 Training Opportunities web page provided an at-a-glance view of summer and upcoming school year offerings, described the goals of in-person professional development sessions and their target audience (e.g., classroom teacher, CAASPP coordinator), and provided links to archived videos and webcasts of sessions and materials.

CDE’s online resources and in-person workshops for the Smarter Balanced System components emphasize the potential to impact teaching and learning when the CAASPP System tools are used in conjunction with each other. Additionally, CDE training materials highlight the critical purpose of student assessment: to gather evidence to make informed and appropriate instructional, policy, and programmatic decisions based on data. While encouraging educators to use all the free components, guidance in the various resources emphasizes there is no single best way to maximize the information provided by the CAASPP components. Instead, the importance of implementing CAASPP components in a manner that suits the context of a classroom, school, or district, along with other formative processes, is vital to the teaching and learning cycle.

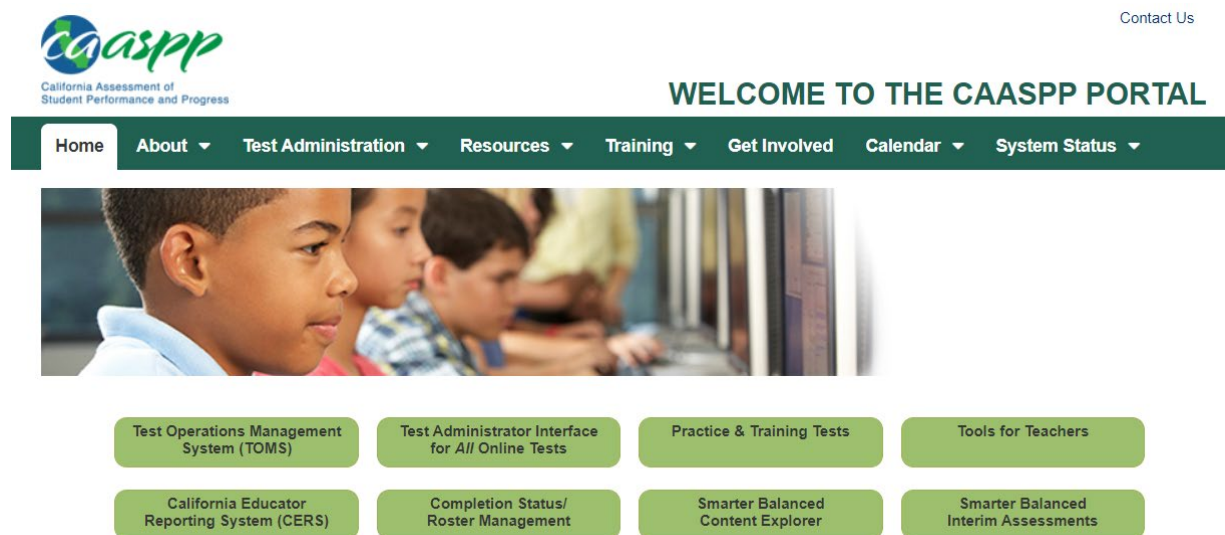


Figure 2.1 Screenshot of the home page of the CAASPP website.

Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments

The summative assessments, delivered online to students in grades three through eight and eleven, are the only Smarter Balanced component required for use in a standardized manner by all California public schools, including charter schools, in a typical academic year.² The summative assessments “accurately describe both student achievement (how much students know at the end of the year) and student growth (how much students have improved since the previous year) to inform program evaluation and school, district, and state accountability systems” (<https://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/>).

Each summative assessment includes a computer adaptive test (CAT) and a performance task (PT). The CAT includes a variety of item types such as selected response, constructed response, table, fill-in, and graphing. The PTs are extended activities that measure integration of knowledge and skills across multiple standards and typically require lengthier responses. The CDE provides access to aggregate results from the summative assessments on its public website (e.g., for students, parents, educators, researchers). Individual student reports are available only to LEA CAASPP coordinators and school test site coordinators and to parents or guardians and may be obtained only from the schools and districts where students were tested. LEAs and schools have access to a variety of score reports for their students in the Online Reporting System (ORS), and they may also download data from that system.

The CAASPP website offers educators detailed guidance and resources to support summative assessments, including:

- Online test administration manual
- Test administrator instructions (e.g., Quick Reference Guide, Checklist)
- Information about online calculator availability and sample calculators
- Information about non-embedded resources (e.g., translated test directions)

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

The IAs are not required but are available to California schools throughout the school year. Two main types of IAs in ELA and math were offered during the 2019–2020 school year, Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs).

- IABs are brief assessments (10 to 15 items) focused on small sets of assessment targets (up to eight); IABs provide detailed results for instructional purposes. In fall 2019, Smarter Balanced began using the name Focused Interim Assessment

² 2019–2020 was not a typical year as California received a waiver for accountability testing from the Federal Government in 2019–2020 due to COVID-19 school closures.

Blocks (FIABs) to identify IABs that measure a narrower scope of knowledge. Two main types of IAs in ELA and math were offered during the 2019–2020 school year, Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and Interim Comprehensive Assessments content (only one to three targets). As noted in chapter one, 42 new FIABs were made available for the 2019–2020 school year.

- ICAs cover the full range of targets and are built using the same blueprints as the summative assessments and provide results on the same scale. In 2019–2020 ICAs were released for administration to students in ninth and tenth grade to aid in early detection of college readiness. These ICAs are similar to the eleventh grade ICAs but with a grade-specific cut score for ninth and tenth grades.

All ICAs and some IABs include constructed response items; responses to these items are not machine scored and thus require hand scoring by educators, which is a local responsibility. The CDE’s contractors provide hand scoring support to LEAs in the form of in-person training (e.g., at CAASPP Summer Institutes) as well as videos, online training guides, exemplars, and other training resources for use in a group setting of educators. Starting in the 2019–2020 school year, the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Reporting system was modified to include historical and future summative assessment results and was renamed to the California Educator Reporting System (CERS) to reflect that change. IA results include group-level analysis (average scale score and distribution of scores across performance levels), group item-level analysis (proportion of students at each score point and item information, including item difficulty and the claim, target, and standard assessed), student-level analysis (item information, including depth of knowledge, and student responses), key and distractor analysis, and writing trait scores. Depending on how the IA was administered, results can be used by teachers “to identify students who have a strong grasp of the material and need enrichment activities to support expansion of their skills; group students by knowledge/skill level for differentiated instruction; and pinpoint areas to emphasize during classroom instruction” (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2019).

The CAASPP website offers educators resources to support interim assessments, as illustrated in figure 2.2, a screen shot taken from the Interim Assessments link under the Resources tab. Selecting a green-shaded shape opens the link in a new browser window.

These resources support the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

Interim Assessment Viewing System
Select this button to access the interim assessments for professional development and/or training purposes.

Test Operations Management System (TOMS)
Select this button to assign user roles for Tools for Teachers and the California Educator Reporting System, and to view student test settings, including accommodations, before interim testing begins.

Note: To create/manage student groups, go to the California Educator Reporting System.

Test Administrator Interface for All Online Tests
Select this button to access the Test Administrator Interface that is used to access all CAASPP online assessments including the summative, interim, and alternate assessments.

Completion Status/Roster Management
Select this button to access the system that will allow you to see the completion status for students taking the interim assessments.

Hand Scoring Training Guides and Exemplars
Select this button to access the interim assessment hand scoring training guides and exemplars. Upon selecting this button, select the **[Resources]** tab at the top.

Interim Assessment Hand Scoring System
Select this button to access the system that will allow you to score student responses to interim assessment items that require hand scoring.

California Educator Reporting System (CERS)
Select this button to access interim assessment results or, for group administrators only, create/manage student groups.

Reporting System Sandbox
Select this button to access the sandbox training tool. Username and password are not required, but users are prompted to select a role before entering the sandbox.

Figure 2.2 Interim Assessment Administration Resources in the CAASPP website.

In addition to the online resources, the CDE and its CAASPP partners also offer in-person training about IAs. As noted in chapter one of this report, HumRRO observed two sessions of the **2019 Summer Institute**, “Analyzing Student Work and Using the Interim Assessment and Digital Library Systems to Inform Teaching and Learning.” The workshop gave researchers insight to the content and format of educator training, which was attended by some of Case Study participants, as well as an opportunity to learn about the latest system updates.

Following are a few highlights of the training noted by HumRRO researchers:

- This workshop consisted of eight modules, each including a mix of presentation of content and “table talk” among participants. Several participants told researchers they planned to share what they learned with others at their site.
- After an initial discussion of the importance of a balanced, comprehensive system of student assessments, modules covered the basics of each Smarter

Balanced component, with a deeper focus on how to hand score item responses (including a performance task), how to access IA results in the online CERS, and how to find resources within the DL.

- The hands-on modules were particularly engaging and instructive for those who had not ever accessed these resources before or had not accessed them since additional enhancements were made to the features, functions, and filters of the online resources. One example was the new single sign-on system implemented to streamline access to all California student assessment systems. With one sign-on to MyTOMS, a user can access the Test Operations Management System (TOMS), CERS, and the DL. Teachers who had been frustrated with the prior need to log in separately to each system were very enthusiastic about the single sign-on.
- Participants were given a sneak preview of additional new online resources available during the 2019–2020 academic year including the Smarter Balanced Content Explorer, a searchable database to find item specifications that link claims and assessment targets to the content standards, and the Reporting System Sandbox, an open source demonstration site for learning about the functionality and reports available in CERS.

Smarter Balanced Digital Library

The DL provides instructional resources for educators to use during daily instruction in support of the formative assessment process. Individual resources can be accessed through a search by subject, grade level, specific CCSS or target, intended student population (e.g., English learners [ELs], students with disabilities [SWDs]), and other characteristics. Alternatively, educators can access playlists, which are collections of DL resources focused on similar content and organized by progressions of skills or understandings. Playlists and individual resources are also accessible through links in the IA Reporting System. This functionality allows teachers to be connected directly to DL resources that target their students' needs. The DL also provides professional learning resources with teaching strategies. Smarter Balanced replaced the DL near the end of the 2019–2020 school year with a new online resource, “Tools for Teachers.” This report refers to the DL that was functional throughout the period of data collection for the Case Study, although a preview of Tools for Teachers was made available to LEA staff in June 2020.

Study Design and Selection of LEA Cases

Research Questions

The Case Study addresses 13 key research questions pertaining to the CAASPP components of interest. Questions are organized into three general areas: (a) contextual questions and those pertaining to the full suite of Smarter Balanced components in the CAASPP System, the Summative Assessments, IAs, and DL of formative assessment tools; (b) questions related only to the Smarter Balanced

Summative Assessments; and (c) questions related to the Smarter Balanced IAs and DL resources. The CAASPP Theory of Action (CDE, 2018a) was used as a guide to define these questions. Table 2.1 presents the research questions and the components they address. These questions serve as the organizing structure for presentation of the findings. HumRRO's investigation of the research questions was limited to collecting data from participating staff from the small sample of selected LEAs and their few selected schools.

Contextual conditions influence the implementation of policies and practices to a considerable degree, as noted in a recent literature review of interventions to support educators' use of data to guide decision making and practices (Marsh, 2012). Contextual conditions can be tied directly to use of data, such as the "capacity of the intervener" (e.g., guide or deliverer of training for data interpretation) and data properties (e.g., ease of interpreting outcomes of multiple measures). Broader contextual conditions include "leadership, organizational structure, time, [and] policy," as well as "interpersonal relationships and belief and knowledge."

HumRRO explored LEA and school context in terms of many factors—student demographic characteristics; academic achievement in ELA and mathematics; teacher turnover; class scheduling considerations; available curricular, technological, and other resources; professional development opportunities; and the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) of all types. For this evaluation, the acronym PLC is used as an umbrella term for organized small groups of teachers who meet regularly to collaboratively develop practice-based professional learning.

Table 2.1 CAASPP Components and Case Study Research Questions

CAASPP Components Addressed	Research Questions for Sampled LEAs and Schools
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	1. What are the characteristics and contexts of sampled schools/LEAs that have implemented the full suite of Smarter Balanced components?
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	2. How does implementation of Smarter Balanced components vary across schools/LEAs? What instructions and supports are provided to educators for implementing the components?
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	3. What aspects of Smarter Balanced components are perceived as most beneficial for improving classroom instruction and student learning across schools/LEAs?
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	4. What changes to the components and supporting resources do LEA and school staff believe would improve support for their use to improve classroom instruction and student learning?
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	5. How do educators/schools/LEAs use and integrate results from the summative, interim, and formative assessment resources for each content domain with each other and with other measures to enhance classroom instruction and student learning? What challenges are faced and how are they overcome?
Summative, IABs and ICAs, DL	6. How do students from schools that use the full suite of components perceive classroom opportunities to learn about summative assessment item types and topics?
Only Summative assessments	7. How do educators/schools/LEAs use summative assessment data to inform classroom instruction and make decisions?
Only IABs, ICAs, and DL	8. What interim assessments are used for ELA/literacy and mathematics for schools/LEAs that have implemented the full CAASPP System, and at what grade levels and frequency?
Only IABs, ICAs, and DL	9. What decision-making processes are used by educators/schools/LEAs to determine what interim assessments to use, who should administer them, and how frequently?
Only IABs, ICAs, and DL	10. To what extent have educators/schools/LEAs incorporated IABs into their classes? What, if any, classroom assessments have been replaced in the process? Why, and what are the implications?
Only IABs, ICAs, and DL	11. How do educators/schools/LEAs use information from ELA/literacy and mathematics interim assessments to track individual student progress and/or inform classroom instruction?
Only IABs, ICAs, and DL	12. How is information on student/school/LEA performance on interim assessments used at the school/LEA level to determine the effectiveness of practices and curricular materials for teaching the targeted standards?
DL	13. How is the DL used to improve classroom instruction?

LEA Sample

For the Case Study, HumRRO’s goal was to identify and recruit six LEAs (including one charter school) that used all three CAASPP Smarter Balanced components (summative assessments, IAs, and DL) according to criteria developed jointly between HumRRO and CDE at the onset of the study (Hardoin, Thacker, Dvorak, Becker, 2018):

These LEAs should have demonstrated [during the prior school year] at least a “modest threshold” of use of both of the optional Smarter Balanced CAASPP components (a) IAs, with or without ICAs and hand scoring, and (b) the Instructional Resources of the Digital Library, with or without use of Professional Learning resources and Playlist resources. “Modest threshold” means a sufficient amount of use beyond simply investigating system features and will be defined based on Digital Library log-on data and interim assessment data provided to HumRRO. Eligible LEAs need not be the heaviest users in the state.

In addition, HumRRO revised the definition for year two of the study to require some use of IAs to inform classroom instruction. In year one, we found many of our participating schools indicated they used IAs only, or primarily, to prepare students for the summative assessments. HumRRO intended to include one or two LEAs from year one to continue in year two; however, all LEAs that collaborated with HumRRO in year one who were invited to continue in year two declined.

After a review of 2018–2019 school year IA usage data and discussions regarding our desire for including schools with IA use to inform instruction, HumRRO identified the thresholds for LEA participation in the second year of the study and received CDE’s approval for these eligibility criteria. HumRRO’s cut point for IA usage required LEAs to include at least one school that administered at least 500 IABs in ELA and 500 IABs in mathematics during 2018–2019. No requirement was established for ICA administration, as ICA usage was much less extensive than IAB usage. Based on lessons learned during year one of our evaluation, we did not set a threshold requirement for DL logins. We learned that the login data did not capture every use of the DL when resources were accessed indirectly. In addition, many logins turned out to be teachers who accessed the system during professional development and never actually used the resources.

After using the IAB criteria to prescreen potential LEAs, HumRRO administered the 2019 Eligibility Survey to all LEAs that met the minimum requirements. The director of the CDE’s Assessment Development and Administration Division emailed the county and district superintendents and charter school administrators of the prescreened LEAs to invite them to participate in the 2019 Eligibility Survey, encourage their LEA’s response, and endorse the Case Study. The 2019 Eligibility Survey was similar in content to the 2018 survey, though we made slight modifications to ask if the LEA used IABs to inform classroom instruction beyond preparing for the summative assessments (see Appendix A). HumRRO administered the brief survey to further refine the set of eligible LEAs by collecting additional information about their CAASPP involvement including use of IABs to inform instruction, school characteristics, and willingness to

participate in the Case Study. HumRRO sent an invitation to complete the online survey to LEA CAASPP Coordinators. Table 2.2 summarizes survey respondents by LEA type (overall 33% response rate) and interest in participating in the study.

Table 2.2 2019 Eligibility Survey Invitees, Respondents, and Respondents' Interest in Study Participation

Respondent Type	Number of Invitees	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents "Interested"	Number of Respondents "Possibly Interested"	Number of Respondents "Not Interested"
LEA (non-charter)	348	110	36	46	28
Charter	85	34	16	11	7
Total	433	144	52	57	35

Explanation of table contents: Line 1 shows that we invited 348 non-charter LEAs to participate in our Eligibility Survey. Of these, 110 (or 32%) responded. Of the 110 respondents, 36 (33%) reported they would be potentially interested in participating in the Case Study, 46 (42%) reported they were possibly interested, and 28 (25%) were not interested.

To choose cases from the eligible LEAs, HumRRO implemented the sampling plan outlined in the *2018 CAASPP Evaluation Report*. The goal was to identify LEAs that would very broadly represent the diversity of the state in terms of geographic region, student enrollment and demographics, and academic achievement. Based on results from the 2019 Eligibility Survey, HumRRO identified a list of the strongest candidates (15 districts and 7 charter schools) to recruit for participation. HumRRO submitted the list to the CDE for review and approval. Recruitment began with an email from HumRRO to the LEA CAASPP coordinator giving an overview of the study, followed by a teleconference call to discuss the data collection requirements of the study. For each participating LEA, HumRRO sought to include one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. HumRRO did not seek a representative sample of schools from each LEA, but rather identified a sample of schools that were strong implementers of the Smarter Balanced components. HumRRO communicated with 19 LEAs to reach the target number of cases.

HumRRO encountered various challenges when recruiting the LEAs, which resulted in a staggered start of LEAs joining the study. First, multiple LEAs that met our criteria and indicated interest in participation were dealing with evacuations and school closures for parts of their LEA due to nearby wildfires and associated power outages. In addition, many LEAs indicated participation in other studies or initiatives that would make it difficult to participate in the Case Study. By the end of 2019, HumRRO had successfully recruited two LEAs, we gained participation of two additional LEAs in January 2020, and the final two LEAs joined the study in March 2020.

Each collaborating LEA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with HumRRO, agreeing to participate in a specified set of data collection activities for the duration of the 2019–2020 school year. The MOU identified a point of contact (POC) for

the LEA, listed the participating schools, and identified a POC for each school. The MOU stated, in summary form, the key research questions the study sought to answer. The MOU also stated that the LEA and each school would receive a \$900 honorarium for participating. Five LEAs and their schools accepted the funds, with each participating school given freedom in how these funds were used. One LEA declined its honorarium but provided an honorarium from the district to its participating schools. Due to the COVID-19 school closures, HumRRO loosened requirements for the final months of the study and provided additional honorariums for (a) administering and submitting student questionnaires and (b) participating in a web-based meeting to review preliminary findings. Despite the school closures and voluntary nature of the final months of our study, many schools continued to provide monthly polling data and participated in end-of-year virtual focus groups.

To preserve confidentiality and maintain anonymity, LEAs are identified only by number in this report (LEA-1 through LEA-6). Table 2.3 summarizes the characteristics of the six participating LEAs, which include one charter, in terms of academic achievement in ELA and mathematics and select student demographics. Data in the table are from 2018–2019. The table also indicates enrollment of students in the state or LEA who are in grades eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments.

As shown in table 2.3, statewide approximately 51 percent of students met or exceeded the grade-level standard in ELA and 40 percent did so for math. Our study LEAs spanned a range of achievement levels – LEA-4 had 81 percent of students who met or exceeded the grade-level standard in ELA and 78 percent for math, far exceeding the state average percentages. Whereas LEA-2 fell below the state average with 38 percent who met or exceeded the grade-level standard in ELA and 25 percent for math. Regarding the percentages of students meeting or exceeding the standards, readers should note that the California State Board of Education, and other states, adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA and mathematics in 2010. The CCSS are generally considered more rigorous than California’s previous standards and include some reorganization of content across grade levels. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are aligned to the CCSS and first became operational in 2015, replacing paper and pencil assessments. Because of the substantive changes to the content standards and the time needed to implement them at the LEA and school level, the CDE anticipated the test would be very challenging to students in the initial years until adjustments to instruction caught up with the changes. In keeping with typical patterns following implementation of new standards, the statewide percentages of students meeting or exceeding the standards have been gradually increasing over time (from 2015 to 2019, an increase of 6.87% in ELA and 6.73% in mathematics) along with students’ opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills measured by the assessment (Cal Matters, <https://calmatters.org/education/k-12-education/2019/10/california-schools-test-scores-2019-achievement-gap-caaspp-smarter-balanced/>).

Table 2.3 Characteristics of LEAs Participating in Case Study

Case Study LEA #	Total Enrollment	# CAASPP Eligible Students	% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	% SE Disadvantaged	% SWD	% EL
LEA-1	103,194	48,480	55%	46%	58%	14%	21%
LEA-2	13,870	7,051	38%	25%	84%	9%	31%
LEA-3	48,936	24,745	40%	27%	90%	12%	24%
LEA-4	32,138	17,015	81%	78%	6%	9%	5%
LEA-5	9,782	4,953	43%	28%	64%	13%	24%
LEA-6	1,833	1,093	69%	49%	25%	8%	8%
All CA	6,186,278	3,189,956	51%	40%	61%	12%	19%

Explanation of table contents: Line 1 shows that the LEA we labeled LEA-1 had a total enrollment (across all schools, including those not participating in the study) of 103,194 students in 2018–2019. Of these, 48,480 were eligible to participate in the CAASPP summative assessments. Of those who took the summative assessment, 55% met or exceeded the ELA state standards, and 46% met or exceeded the math state standards. In LEA-1, 58% of students were socioeconomically (SE) disadvantaged, 14% were SWDs, and 21% were ELs.

The eligibility screening for threshold IAB usage in the sample was effective in predicting continued usage during the study year and identifying schools that used IABs to inform instructional decisions, as evidenced by information presented later in this chapter (e.g., table 2.4 below).

Data Collection

Based on the study design, HumRRO gathered data from various sources to describe the context and use of CAASPP components by each LEA and its study schools. Though HumRRO attempted to collect all information from all participants, this was challenging given the varying levels of LEA and school participation.

HumRRO collected the following data from extant sources:

- *Statewide assessment data.* Records of summative assessment administration results and counts of IAs administered in each content domain.
- *Demographic records.* Data with LEA characteristics, including student population, number of schools, student demographics, and achievement on summative assessments.

HumRRO generated data about LEA and school use of CAASPP components during the 2019–2020 academic year through the following activities:

- *Data from in-person or virtual visits to LEAs and schools.* Two HumRRO researchers prepared interview and focus group protocols (topic guides) and presented them to the CDE for review in advance of the first LEA site visit. HumRRO conducted two site visits in November 2019, two in January 2020, and two in March 2020. Because LEA-6 did not join the study until the end of February 2020 and the site visit was scheduled for mid-March, which coincided with COVID-19 school closures, HumRRO conducted interviews virtually for the POC and teachers in that LEA. See Appendix B for an example of the interview and focus group protocols.
- *Data from monthly polling of LEA and school POCs.* For five months of the study (December through April), HumRRO worked with POCs to gather LEA and school staff responses to one to three questions related to the use of Smarter Balanced components. HumRRO emailed a link to an online form that POCs could simply forward to their staff to distribute the questions, with HumRRO receiving the online responses. HumRRO informed the CDE of the question topics and provided an opportunity each month for the CDE to suggest additional questions. POC's encouraged LEA leaders, school leaders, and teachers to provide their multiple-choice and narrative responses within about one month. Due to the rolling start of cases in the study, some LEAs and schools received different questions in a particular month than did other LEAs and schools. The two late-starting cases (LEA-5 and LEA-6) did not receive the full set of monthly polling questions, and the two starting in January had “catch-up months” that incorporated multiple months of questions. See Appendix B for the full roster of school-level and LEA-level questions asked during the 2019–2020 school year.
- *Data from end of school year Web-based focus groups with LEA and school POCs.* One HumRRO researcher facilitated three online focus groups: one with LEA POCs, one with elementary school POCs, and one with middle/junior high school and high school POCs. A second researcher took detailed notes of LEA and school POCs' responses. The focus groups were audio-recorded.
- *Data from student questionnaires (optional activity).* HumRRO asked each school POC if they were interested in collecting responses to an online questionnaire from their students to understand their experiences with IABs. HumRRO asked that each participating school provide the name of one or more math and/or ELA IABs they had recently administered and would like to survey students about. HumRRO prepared all materials for the student questionnaire, including (a) parent/guardian notification letter (English and Spanish versions) that described the goal of the questionnaire and offered parents/guardians the opportunity for their students to opt out of this activity; (b) guidelines for IAB and student selection; (c) series of step-by-step instructions for collecting student responses (excluding all personally identifiable information), including options to use an online form created by HumRRO or developing their own questionnaire using a

format of their choice. HumRRO emailed materials on April 27, 2020, to the school POCs who chose to participate, along with a request to collect information from students before the end of the school year. HumRRO received student responses from four schools representing four of the LEAs (LEA-1-HS, LEA-3-HS, LEA-5-ES1, and LEA-6).

Data Analysis Methods

The Case Study primarily involved collecting qualitative data through site visits, monthly POC polling, virtual end-of-year POC focus groups, and student questionnaire responses. HumRRO reviewed the data collected on an ongoing basis to inform questions asked during monthly polling and end-of-year focus groups. Prior to analyzing the qualitative data, HumRRO conducted several quality checks. First, immediately following each data collection activity (e.g., in-person or virtual interviews and focus groups), HumRRO researchers reviewed their notes against the audio-recording to verify accuracy of the contents and fill in any information gaps. HumRRO produced Word documents of the transcribed data. Second, HumRRO compiled monthly polling data and student response data in Excel files and conducted initial high-level coding within the file to provide indication of whether each polling question addressed summative assessments, IAs, the DL, or other topics. Monthly polling and student questionnaire data were collected using online forms and therefore did not require cleaning beyond compilation across LEAs (when separate forms were used) to prepare for analysis. After the quality assurance steps were completed, HumRRO analyzed all data sources concurrently and triangulated information to describe each LEA and its schools.

HumRRO used the text analysis features of the MAXQDA software package to analyze the qualitative data collected for the Case Study. MAXQDA is a software program designed to assist with qualitative and mixed methods data analysis. First, HumRRO created and applied a naming convention to identify the LEA and school associated with each source document. HumRRO then organized source documents by file type (e.g., LEA POC interview transcripts, teacher focus group transcripts, January monthly polling responses) and formatted them to facilitate importing. Next, HumRRO researchers imported the cleaned data files into MAXQDA. The Case Study director and researchers conducted reviews of the data in each document to (a) identify major themes and (b) revise codes identified during the year based on these data. For example, the researchers found most codes from year one regarding IAB use were still relevant in year two; however, they identified new codes related to use of FIABs. HumRRO also included codes to address the COVID-19 school closures. Though the research questions did not focus on this event, the school closures had a significant impact on the final months of our study and the topic provided important contextual information that impacted CAASPP component use. The full set of codes were reviewed and refined in an iterative fashion. The final coding system was incorporated into a single Excel document that included descriptions, and then imported into MAXQDA. HumRRO analysts used the coding system to mark text segments with similar content. Organizing and structuring the data gathered throughout the year allowed HumRRO to identify key content used to develop major themes regarding case study findings.

Four analysts were individually assigned to lead the data analysis for one or more of the six LEAs. Each analyst began with the same MAXQDA template file, preloaded with all source documents and the coding system. Using the template file, each analyst reviewed and coded data relevant only to their LEA. Analysts reviewed all text for their LEA and its schools. If text relevant to the research questions was identified but did not fit the existing codes, analysts identified new codes. The analysts communicated regularly about the coding process, especially to discuss the application of codes when the data were unclear.

For consistency in reporting the findings by LEA, the study director provided analysts a report template, along with guidance on where and how to address coded themes. Following the coding process, each analyst retrieved and reviewed coded segments to develop a draft summary of findings for their LEA(s). Two HumRRO researchers with first-hand involvement in collecting the data reviewed the LEA findings for accuracy, clarity, and consistency across sections. Analysts then reviewed, revised, and finalized their LEA sections. As a final check, HumRRO held data verification virtual meetings with LEA and school POCs who agreed to participate. To increase participation rates, POCs were offered an additional honorarium. POCs from five of the six LEAs participated in the meetings. HumRRO provided the POCs a summary of the findings relevant to their LEA or school and requested input on the accuracy. In addition to verifying that interpretations were accurate, we asked if any important information was missing regarding their use of CAASPP components. During these meetings we found HumRRO's data interpretations were highly accurate, and only a few minor clarifications were needed.

HumRRO's qualitative analysis process ensured data were systematically analyzed in a manner that captured all key information shared by LEAs and schools and treated information as similarly as possible across all LEAs. Each LEA's findings follow the major themes of the research questions (contextual factors, use of summative and interim assessments, and use of the DL). These detailed findings also include unique aspects about how each entity used the CAASPP System. The detailed LEA-specific findings are presented in Appendix C.

HumRRO's next step was to develop a summary for each LEA, consolidating the detailed LEA-specific findings and concisely reporting on the contextual factors, use of summative and interim assessments, and use of the DL. The summaries of LEA-specific findings are presented in Appendix D.

The final analysis step involved developing summaries of major themes across all schools and LEAs and relating them back to the key research questions. This was accomplished by reviewing each of the individual LEA-level summaries and noting common themes across the group of LEAs for each CAASPP component (i.e., summative assessments, IAs, and DL).

Overall Findings of the Case Study

This section summarizes the experiences of collaborating LEAs and schools during the 2019–2020 academic year, which we present as evidence to respond to the 13 Case Study research questions.

School/LEA Context and Use of Full Suite of CAASPP Components

According to the theory of action for the CAASPP program, the Smarter Balanced components—working together to accurately assess student achievement relative to grade-level curriculum standards (i.e., the CCSS)—provide information to educators to help improve instruction and thus improve student achievement. The Case Study examined LEAs that are implementing the full system of components to explore how the theory of action for CAASPP components may be driving efforts for improving student achievement. The theory states that educators who use information from the system of components support high expectations, increase learning opportunities for students, and take advantage of curriculum and instructional materials and rich professional development resources to help effectively teach the content embodied by the standards.

1. What are the characteristics and contexts of sampled schools/LEAs that have implemented the full suite of Smarter Balanced components?

Although the plan was to identify a demographically diverse set of LEAs to participate in this study, the ultimate focus was to identify strong, collaborative CAASPP implementers who used IAs extensively, including to influence classroom instruction. Our sample met this description and included districts of various sizes, academic achievement, and demographic characteristics, as shown in table 2.4. We considered two of our five non-charter LEAs to be large, two medium, and one small. Across our six LEAs, three had a higher percentage of students who met or exceeded the ELA and mathematics grade-level standards than the state overall (51% ELA, 40% math), and three had a lower percentage of students who met or exceeded the standards. We included LEAs in southern, central, and northern California. Our LEAs included various student populations. For example, in LEA-4 only six percent of its students were classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged and only five percent as EL. In contrast, LEA-2 had 84 percent socioeconomically disadvantaged students and 31 percent classified as EL.

Though the LEAs chosen for the study were diverse in size, demographic location, and student population, we noted consistencies of learning context among them. For example, all the studied LEAs devoted time for professional learning communities (PLCs). They consistently reported schools had dedicated time in their schedules for collaboration. School leadership and teachers corroborated this information; they expressed having set out time to discuss assessment decisions, assessment data, and instructional planning. In addition, school staff across these schools were offered assistance or training regarding use of IAs and possibly other CAASPP components (exact training differed by school). LEA and school leadership across the study were also similar in how they used their data, including CAASPP assessment data, for goal

and/or decision-making purposes. Staff used summative assessment data to assist with LEA- and school-level annual planning and goal generation. The participating schools had good access to technology, with the majority having one laptop or tablet per student. Similarly, district and school leadership, and most teachers who provided data at all schools participating in the case study in year two, showed high regard for the quality of the content of the IAs and the value of IAs as measures of student progress toward grade-level standards in ELA and math. The schools selected for the study had used IABs for multiple years, and teachers were generally very familiar with how to administer them and report and use results.

Table 2.4 Characteristics of LEAs Participating in Case Study

Case Study LEA #	Location	Size	ELA Achievement	Math Achievement	% SE Dis-advantaged	% SWD	% EL
LEA-1	Southern	Large	55%	46%	58%	14%	21%
LEA-2	Central	Medium	38%	25%	84%	9%	31%
LEA-3	Southern	Large	40%	27%	90%	12%	24%
LEA-4	Northern	Medium	81%	78%	6%	9%	5%
LEA-5	Northern	Small	43%	28%	64%	13%	24%
LEA-6 (charter)	Northern	Small	69%	49%	25%	8%	8%

2. How does implementation of Smarter Balanced components vary across schools/LEAs? What instructions and supports are provided to educators for implementing the components?

There were some consistencies across LEAs and their schools in use of Smarter Balanced components. For example, IABs were used to some degree by all schools in HumRRO’s year two study, with some schools administering only one or two per subject area, and others electing to administer most or all IABs (see Appendix C for usage data by school). Summative assessment data were examined by LEA and school leadership and generally used as one piece of evidence to generate goals. Most schools indicated presenting data from the 2018–2019 academic year during a staff meeting early in the 2019–2020 academic year. The studied schools were mostly consistent in their use of the digital library. Though the LEAs and school administrators did not require its use, they made sure teachers were aware of its availability. The majority of the teachers across schools did not use DL resources because they did not find it easy to locate materials or they felt they already had sufficient resources through their curriculum or other sources.

LEA administrators offered various levels of support to their school sites. Across LEAs, staff were provided support to attend official CAASPP trainings. School administrators, CAASPP site leads, and often teachers were provided training by LEA staff. For

example, LEA-1 provided an optional training annually, open to all school staff across the district, and a help desk available on an ongoing basis for technical issues. LEA-2 developed training for school site coordinators based on information learned from the CDE professional development trainings they attended, such as the California Assessment Conference. LEA-3-HS noted receiving professional development training from a local university with various topics including the CAASPP system. LEA-4 also provided annual CAASPP training to teachers; in this case the training focused primarily on integrating CAASPP tests and how to proctor the assessments. The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator provided training in hand scoring for all ELA teachers and noted all teachers received one day of district-led professional development. In addition to professional development, all schools indicated collaboration time between teachers that included topics such as scheduling IAs and reviewing IA or summative assessment results. Teachers from LEA-6 had attended onsite or offsite CAASPP trainings on topics such as IA hand scoring, administering IAs, and the DL resources.

3. What aspects of Smarter Balanced components are perceived as most beneficial for improving classroom instruction and student learning across schools/LEAs?

School administrators and educators who participated in our study generally found IAs to be the most beneficial aspect of CAASPP for improving classroom instruction and understanding student learning. The IA benefits teachers and school leaders mentioned included exposing students to rigorous content and item-types, identifying gaps in student knowledge and determining what content needed to be retaught, and preparing students for the summative assessments. Many complaints regarding the IAs were not with the tests themselves, but the wish for more IAs, such as multiple forms of an existing IAB. Though teachers in year two of the Case Study almost always indicated the IAs were the most beneficial component, a school leader at LEA-5-ES2 noted the summative assessment results were most beneficial because the scores helped generate a five-year plan to focus instruction on student needs.

4. What changes to the components and supporting resources do LEA and school staff believe would improve support for their use to improve classroom instruction and student learning?

Many teachers and school administrators across LEAs in our Case Study indicated the desire for additional IABs, including traditional IABs and FIABs. Teachers wanted to see more than one IAB for targeted skills and standards in a content area and grade that would allow for (a) multiple standardized administrations to monitor progress toward achieving proficiency or (b) use in a nonstandardized manner during instruction, followed by use in a standardized manner to measure student knowledge at the end of a unit. Additionally, teachers would prefer having access to administering IAs earlier in the academic year. Some noted IABs were not available in their LEA until September or October 2019. At the time of the study, rostering was a labor-intensive process for some LEAs and had to be completed prior to using IAs. Once rosters are in place, IAs are generally available throughout the year, with the exception of system downtimes.

Some indicated it would be useful to have summative assessment results provided earlier in the year. For example, the POC of LEA-5-ES2 indicated summative assessment results are highly important as they drive school-level goals, so having official results earlier would benefit their instructional planning. LEAs are permitted to use preliminary results as soon as they start coming in; however, not all school staff were aware of these data or had clear understanding how to use them.

Despite that all teachers in our study were familiar with IAs, some teachers were not aware of the Connections Playlist link through IA reports to DL resources. Similarly, there was little use of the DL across the study schools. School administrators and teachers indicated the DL was not user friendly, and sometimes lacked resources for grades or content areas. School leaders at LEA-1-HS suggested the DL focus resources specifically to students to allow them to independently improve – these resources could be based on IA performance and linked through IA student reports.

Study participants at two LEAs indicated it would be useful for the CDE or Smarter Balanced to maintain an updated summary of the latest resources and documentation. For example, a summary table on the CAASPP website that provides links to the most recent guidance and training, such as new videos or new versions of manuals. In a similar vein, several teachers noted dissatisfaction that updates to manuals or new assessment features were released after the school year had started or after the testing windows had opened.

LEAs and schools were generally satisfied with recent technology changes to the CAASPP system – for example, teachers at LEA-3-HS indicated they appreciated the updated single sign on for CAASPP, however, they felt that they could use additional training for CAASPP technology in general and for the DL specifically. In addition, technology improvements were recommended regarding the student rostering required before administering IAs. LEAs across our study conducted rostering at their central office for all schools – this process required many labor hours. LEA staff across the study would appreciate this process to be simplified. Other technology improvements recommended by study participants included: (a) LEA-5-ES2 requested the CDE shift system downtime to the weekends rather on school days so teachers have more options for scheduling IAs, (b) LEA-2-MS suggested the CDE make CAASPP technology more user-friendly so teachers are able to easily locate reports and different reporting features, (c) the LEA-3 POC suggested separating the test interface for the IAs and summative assessments to prevent teachers selecting the wrong link, and (d) the LEA-5 POC requested more timely assistance from the California Technical Assistance Center (CaTAC). Regarding requested improvement (c), the test administration system currently uses different colors for summative and interim assessments and includes warning notes to help prevent selection of an incorrect test.

5. How do educators/schools/LEAs use and integrate results from the summative, interim, and formative assessment resources for each content domain with each other and with other measures to enhance classroom instruction and student learning? What challenges are faced and how are they overcome?

LEAs, school administrators, and educators indicated making data-driven decisions based on student results on the summative and interim assessments, along with other classroom assessments. Summative assessments were often used at the school level or for initial guidance and goal setting for teachers, with IABs and other classroom assessment providing more day-to-day information.

Most teachers found the IABs, in conjunction with classroom unit assessments or other diagnostic assessments, helped them identify student strengths and weaknesses and use the data to guide future instruction. Teachers also described their exposure to IABs as motivation to increase the rigor of their day-to-day classroom instruction, such as the types of questions they build into their lessons. One school administrator from LEA-1 stated, “I would argue probably one of the most important aspects of implementing the interims is standardizing the rigor that exists in every classroom,” with higher expectations for students in traditionally disadvantaged groups “who had not always been pushed in the past.” A high school teacher noted that administering IAs throughout the academic year resulted in a big shift in teacher and student thinking.

Teachers expressed some challenge in using summative assessment results to inform classroom decisions because they received results for students who were no longer in their classrooms. In addition, teachers at LEA-4-HS found mandated IABs did not always align with their curriculum, and therefore were not valid measures of student learning. A consistent complaint among teachers at LEA-2 who found IAB results less useful was the lack of alignment between the instructional schedule and which IABs were scheduled and when by their LEA.

Few teachers in our study used DL resources, therefore, these rarely or never were incorporated with assessment results to enhance classroom instruction.

6. How do students from schools that use the full suite of Smarter Balanced components perceive classroom opportunities to learn about summative assessment item types and topics for each content domain (ELA/literacy and mathematics)?

HumRRO was unable to directly address this research question because students did not take the summative assessments in spring 2020. However, HumRRO invited school POCs to administer an online student questionnaire about IABs, which are widely used to help prepare students for the summative assessments. HumRRO collected data about student experiences with IABs during the 2019–2020 academic year from students at four schools (LEA-1 and LEA-3 high schools, an LEA-5 elementary school, and the middle and high school grades of charter LEA-6). The content of the survey is included in Appendix A.

Through these data we learned that most teachers communicated to their students that they used IABs to see how well students learned various skills. Table 2.5 provides a summary of select findings from the survey. Additional information about responses from students in participating LEAs, including student demographic information and data split by responses regarding ELA or math IABs, can be found in Appendix C. Approximately half the students recalled IAB results that led to their teacher reteaching certain skills. Some students offered information based on their IAB experiences regarding areas in which they needed to improve, including specific content areas (e.g., fractions, grammar) and test taking skills (e.g., slowing down, reading the questions more closely).

Table 2.5 Student Questionnaire Responses to Closed-Ended IAB Survey Questions

Student IAB Usage Variables	% Students LEA-1-HS (n=324)	% Students LEA-3-HS (n=114)	% Students LEA-5-ES (n=48)	% Students LEA-6 (n=7)
Standardized	80% (n=264)	93% (n = 106)	70% (n = 33)	71% (n = 5)
Standardized and Nonstandardized	8% (n=25)	1% (n=1)	9% (n = 4)	29% (n = 2)
Nonstandardized	12% (n=39)	6% (n=7)	21% (n = 10)	0%
Teacher’s Goal: Find out what skills I have been taught/what skills I need to learn	22% (n=62)	15% (n=16)	17% (n = 7)	20% (n = 1)
Teacher’s Goal: Practice certain skills	19% (n=55)	20% (n=22)	24% (n = 10)	20% (n = 1)
Teacher’s Goal: Practice taking an online test	17% (n=49)	7% (n=8)	10% (n = 4)	20% (n = 1)
Teacher’s Goal: See how well I learned certain skills	42% (n=122)	58% (n=64)	49% (n = 20)	40% (n = 2)
Data Used to Identify Gaps in Learning	38% (n=120)	39% (n=44)	37% (n = 18)	0%
Led to Teacher Reteaching Skills - Yes	46% (n=145)	44% (n=50)	54% (n = 26)	0%
Used special settings - Yes	23% (n=73)	36% (n=41)	11% (n = 5)	0%

Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments

One primary purpose of the Smarter Balanced summative assessments is to provide valid, reliable, and fair information about grades three to eight and high school students’ ELA/literacy and mathematics achievement, with respect to the CCSS. The following research question explored how LEAs and schools used the data from the 2019 summative assessment during the 2019–2020 school year.

7. How do educators/schools/LEAs use summative assessment data—including, but not limited to, information about student proficiency levels and progress towards college- and career-readiness—in ELA/literacy and mathematics to inform classroom instruction and make decisions?

Our study LEAs and schools indicated using summative assessment results to assist with monitoring district- and school-wide performance and to generate goals. The principal of an LEA-5 elementary school noted working with an outside group to generate a five-year plan driven by summative assessment data. LEA-5 determined a districtwide need to focus on students with disabilities and English learners based on 2018–2019 summative assessment data. LEA-1-HS noted an increase in scores in 2018–2019 that followed a decrease in 2017–2018. The school considered actions taken in 2018–2019 that may have led to these increases and sought to continue them in 2019–2020.

Interim Assessments

One of the Professional Learning resources in the DL is called “Understanding the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments.” This excerpt from the resource describes research supporting the value of interim assessments: “While a rigorous summative assessment is important, it is insufficient to drive all of the change in teaching and learning. As shown by experiences in England and Hong Kong, interim and formative assessments are the other necessary assessment ingredients to drive teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond and Pechone, 2010). Grounded in cognitive development theory about how learning progresses across grades and competence develops over time (NRC, 2001; Pellegrino, 2006), Smarter Balanced interim assessments: (a) work in concert with the summative assessment; (b) allow for more innovative and fine-grained measurement of student progress toward the Common Core State Standards (Shepard, et al., 2007); and (c) provide diagnostic information that can help tailor instruction and guide students in their own learning efforts.”

The following research questions explored several aspects of how LEAs and schools used the interim assessments during 2019–2020.

8. What interim assessments are used for ELA/literacy and mathematics for schools/LEAs that have implemented the full CAASPP System, and at what grade levels and frequency?

IABs were used by all schools included in the Case Study. Table 2.6 notes the number of schools that administered IABs in the state of California overall, and for each of our study LEAs. As shown, the average total number of IABs administered at schools that chose to use them across California was 1,095. Three of our studied LEAs administered more total IABs per school than the state average, and three administered fewer. For California overall and for five of our LEAs, more IABs were given in math on average compared to ELA. For the state and all LEAs, schools on average administered more standardized IABs than nonstandardized.

Table 2.6 Average Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Administered Per School, Statewide and by Case Study LEA, and by Subject Matter and Manner

	# Schools Giving IABs	Average # IABs Per School ELA and Math	Average # IABs Per School ELA	Average # IABs Per School Math	Average # Standardized IABs Per School (ELA and Math)	Average # Non-Standardized IABs Per School (ELA and Math)
All California	5,713	1,095	477	618	692	403
LEA-1	74	488	230	257	325	163
LEA-2	22	1,697	733	963	1,500	196
LEA-3	50	1,142	422	720	617	526
LEA-4	35	1,356	618	738	851	505
LEA-5	13	795	142	653	491	304
LEA-6	1	811	663	148	407	404

Explanation of table contents: Row 1 shows that across all of California 5,713 schools administered IABs during the 2019–2020 school year. For these 5,713 schools, the average number of total IAB administrations was 1,095. Schools administering IABs in California on average gave 477 ELA IABs and 618 math IABs. They administered 692 IABs in a standardized manner and 403 in a nonstandardized manner (across math and ELA).

Tables 2.7 through 2.9 summarize the total number of times ELA IABs were offered, by test name and grade, across all schools in our study. The table includes how many schools are included for each grade-level count. At the elementary school level, Read Informational Texts and Read Literary Texts were the most frequently offered ELA IABs. Most frequently offered at the middle school level was Read Informational Texts, and at the high school level, Listen/Interpret.

Table 2.7 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in English Language Arts, Across Elementary Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	Grade 3 (N Schools=7)	Grade 4 (N Schools=6)	Grade 5 (N Schools=7)	Totals
Brief Writes*	2	3	1	6
Editing**	3	3	4	10
Language and Vocabulary Use**	8	5	5	18
Listen/Interpret**	5	3	8	16
Performance Task*	3	1	1	5
Read Informational Texts*	6	6	9	21
Read Literary Texts*	7	8	6	21
Research	0	4	2	6
Research: Analyze Information**	0	1	1	2
Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	0	3	3	6
Revision	2	2	3	7
Write and Revise Narratives**	2	1	1	4
Totals	38	40	44	122

* Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

**Indicates Focused IAB.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 2 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Brief Writes at grade 3, 3 opportunities at grade 4, and 1 opportunity at grade 5. Overall, across all our study schools, there were 6 opportunities to take Brief Writes in the elementary grades 3 through 5.*

Table 2.8 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in English Language Arts, Across Middle Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	Grade 6 (N Schools=6)	Grade 7 (N Schools=5)	Grade 8 (N Schools=7)	Totals
Brief Writes*	0	1	1	2
Editing**	2	1	N/A	3
Edit/Revise	N/A	N/A	2	2
Language and Vocabulary Use**	4	1	N/A	5
Listen/Interpret**	2	2	5	9
Performance Task*	0	1	0	1
Read Informational Texts*	6	8	7	21
Read Literary Texts*	3	7	7	17
Research	1	2	3	6
Research: Analyze Information**	0	1	0	1
Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	1	2	1	4
Write and Revise Narratives**	0	1	0	1
Totals	19	27	26	52

* Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 0 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Brief Writes at grade 6, 1 opportunity at grade 7, and 1 opportunity at grade 8. Overall, across all our study schools, there were 2 opportunities to take Brief Writes in the middle school grades 6 through 8.*

Table 2.9 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in English Language Arts, Across High Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	High School (N Schools=5)
Brief Writes*	2
Editing**	5
Edit/Revise	0
Language and Vocabulary Use**	4
Listen/Interpret**	6
Performance Task*	1
Read Informational Texts*	5
Read Literary Texts*	4
Research	3
Research: Analyze Information**	2
Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	2
Revision	3
Write and Revise Narratives**	1
Totals	38

* Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

**Indicates Focused IAB.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 2 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Brief Writes in high school.*

Tables 2.10 through 2.12 summarize the number of times mathematics IABs were offered, by test name and grade. At the elementary school level, Number and Operations in Base Ten was the most frequently offered mathematics IAB. At the middle school level, it was Expressions and Equations, and at the high school level it was Algebra and Functions I and Algebra and Functions II.

Table 2.10 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in Mathematics, Across Elementary Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	Grade 3 (N Schools=6)	Grade 4 (N Schools=6)	Grade 5 (N Schools=8)	Totals
Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions**	N/A	N/A	5	5
Four Operations: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	N/A	4	N/A	4
Fraction Equivalence and Ordering**	N/A	1	N/A	1
Geometry**	1	2	2	5
Measurement and Data	3	1	1	5
Multiply and Divide within 100**	5	N/A	N/A	5
Multiplication and Division: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	1	N/A	N/A	1
Number and Operations - Fractions	0	2	9	11
Number and Operations – Fractions**	4	N/A	N/A	4
Number and Operations in Base Ten	0	10	12	22
Number and Operations in Base Ten**	9	N/A	N/A	9
Numerical Expressions**	N/A	N/A	2	2
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	10	4	6	20
Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals**	N/A	N/A	6	6
Performance Task*	1	0	1	2
Properties of Multiplication & Division**	4	N/A	N/A	4
Totals	38	24	44	106

* Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

**Indicates Focused IAB.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 0 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions at grade 3 and 4, as there are no IABs of this type available for those grades. There were 5 opportunities at grade 5. Overall, across all our study schools, there were 5 opportunities to take Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions in the elementary grades 3 through 5.*

Table 2.11 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in Mathematics, Across Middle Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	Grade 6 (N Schools=6)	Grade 7 (N Schools=6)	Grade 8 (N Schools=6)	Totals
Algebraic Expressions & Equations**	N/A	2	N/A	2
Dependent & Independent Variables**	1	N/A	N/A	1
Divide Fractions by Fractions**	3	N/A	N/A	3
Expressions and Equations	6	5	6	17
Expressions and Equations I	N/A	N/A	10	10
Expressions and Equations II**	N/A	N/A	2	2
Functions**	N/A	N/A	6	6
Geometric Figures**	N/A	1	N/A	1
Geometry	N/A	0	2	2
One-Variable Expressions & Equations**	2	N/A	N/A	2
Ratios and Proportional Relationships**	7	3	N/A	10
The Number System	4	0	0	4
The Number System**	N/A	6	3	9
Totals	23	17	29	69

* Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

**Indicates Focused IAB.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 0 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Algebraic Expressions & Equations at grade 6 and 8, as there are no IABs of this type available for those grades. There were 2 opportunities at grade 7. Overall, across all our study schools there were 2 opportunities to take Algebraic Expressions & Equations in the middle school grades 6 through 8.*

Table 2.12 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific IABs in Mathematics, Across High Schools in the Case Study

Test Name	High School (N Schools=5)
Algebra and Functions I	5
Algebra and Functions II	5
Equations and Reasoning**	3
Geometry and Right Triangle Trigonometry**	4
Geometry Congruence	2
Geometry Measurement and Modeling	4
Interpreting Functions**	2
Number and Quantity**	2
Seeing Structure in Expressions/Polynomial Expressions**	4
Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear and Exponential**	4
Solve Equations & Inequalities: Quadratic**	3
Statistics and Probability**	3
Total	41

* *Indicates IAB includes some open-ended responses that require hand scoring, if the test is administered in standardized manner.

**Indicates Focused IAB.

Explanation of table contents: *These opportunities may have been a full class session or a session for a select group of students. Row 1 shows that for the schools in our study only, there were 5 opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for Algebra and Functions I in high school.*

The statewide usage of ICAs (including only California schools administering at least one ICA) was far lower than that for IAB usage. Table 2.13 summarizes ICA use for all schools using ICAs across California, and for schools administering them within our studied LEAs. LEA-4 and LEA-6 did not administer ICAs, and LEA-3 included only two schools that administered, on average, 2 ICAs. Schools administering ICAs at LEA-1, LEA-2, and LEA-5 administered more than twice as many ICAs, on average, than schools that administered them across California overall.

Table 2.13 Average Number of Smarter Balanced ICAs Administered Per School, Statewide and by Case Study LEA

	# Schools Giving ICAs	Average # Total ICAs Per School ELA and Math	Average # ICAs Per School ELA	Average # ICAs Per School Math	Average # Standardized ICAs Per School (ELA and Math)	Average # Non-Standardized ICAs Per School (ELA and Math)
All California	860	55	26	29	41	14
LEA-1	5	132	60	72	127	6
LEA-2	4	201	60	141	189	13
LEA-3	2	2	0.5	1.5	1	1
LEA-4	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LEA-5	1	162	110	52	132	30
LEA-6	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Explanation of table contents: Row 1 shows that across all of California 860 schools gave ICAs during the 2019–2020 school year. For these 860 schools, the average number of total ICA administrations was 55. Schools giving ICAs in California on average gave 26 ELA ICAs and 29 math ICAs. They gave 41 ICAs in a standardized manner and 14 in nonstandardized manner (across math and ELA).

9. What decision-making processes are used by educators/schools/LEAs to determine what ELA/literacy and mathematics interim assessments to use, who should administer them, and how frequently they should be administered?

Case Study LEAs took different approaches in determining IAB administration. Three study LEAs mandated IA use to some degree, and three LEAs did not mandate IA use. High schools in our study generally did not assess twelfth grade students with IAs.

- LEA-2 mandated specific IAs for lower grade levels based on essential standards and summative assessment results, and mandated use at the high school level but permitted teachers to select whether they used the grade-level ICA or IABs.
- LEA-4 mandated IAB use and required two be administered for ELA and two for math, though they allowed teacher groups to decide which to administer and when.

- LEA-5 mandated selected IAs for each elementary grade, with input from teachers. A grade-level district action team looked at the standards and pacing guides and selected IAs for the district schedule. For the first time, the district mandated three mathematics IAs at each elementary grade during the 2019–2020 academic year. The district did not require IAs in the secondary schools.
- LEA-1, LEA-3, and LEA-6 did not mandate IA use at the LEA level; however, the schools across all LEAs and at all levels selected for participation were generally strong users. LEA-1-ES made the school-level decision to administer most IABs to students in grades three through eight. Each grade level used PLC time to develop a schedule for when each IAB would be administered. LEA-3 and LEA-6 similarly did not have a mandate; however, teacher groups and school administration chose to administer IAs.

At all schools, classroom teachers administered IAs to their students. Though there were differences in frequency and schedule, all schools intended to administer IAs prior to the summative assessment administration.³

10. To what extent have educators/schools/LEAs incorporated ELA/literacy and mathematics IABs into their classes? What, if any, classroom assessments have been replaced in the process? Why, and what are the implications?

As indicated above, educators, schools, and LEAs had different levels of incorporating IABs. With the exception of a small number of teachers from LEAs where IABs were mandated, teachers in our study felt the administration of IABs were a worthwhile use of classroom time. Teachers were able to find time to administer other classroom assessments, including those from their curriculum and other sources, in addition to the IABs. Many noted that the IABs were more rigorous than what was available through their curriculum and required students to use deeper levels of thinking to respond to a question. The IABs in turn impacted classroom instruction because teachers were able to use the questions to guide the level of rigor they presented to their students.

11. How do educators/schools/LEAs use information from ELA/literacy and mathematics interim assessments to track individual student progress and/or inform classroom instruction?

All Case Study schools indicated using IABs to monitor student progress and/or inform classroom instruction to various degrees. Teachers at LEA-2 and LEA-4 noted using IABs at the beginning of a unit to help determine where students had prior learning and plan for how to best use their time to cover concepts. One school in LEA-5 noted teachers adjusted practices based on assessment data as part of an ongoing cycle of instruction, IAs, and adjustments to teaching practices. Educators across all study LEAs described the practice of reviewing as a class IAB questions that were problematic to

³ Though this was the plan in 2019–2020, the summative assessment administration was cancelled due to COVID-19.

many students; teachers often presented the items to the class and walked through the steps required to respond. Some teachers incorporated IAB questions into class warmup activities. A teacher at LEA-2 noted most students were not providing sufficient textual evidence in their writing, so in response, the teachers allocated time three days a week to practice how to respond to a writing prompt. Similarly, teachers at LEA-3 noted using IAB rubrics for scoring written responses to demonstrate to students what was required for a quality writing response. Teachers across schools reported using IA results to identify areas of weakness in ELA and mathematics and adjusting instruction accordingly.

Though most schools in the study indicated IAB results were tracked at the student level primarily by teachers, LEA-1-ES tracked progress of all students at the school level. They had a goal to administer all IABs to third through fifth grade students. The principal pulled all student-level data into a shareable document that indicated how each student performed on each standard, based on the IAB results. Teachers used this information to identify student strengths and weaknesses and inform their instruction. At LEA-4-HS ELA teachers used IABs to identify incoming freshmen who needed reading remediation; the district reading specialists identified a grade eight IAB that worked well for this purpose.

12. How is information on student/school/LEA performance on ELA/literacy and mathematics interim assessments used at the school/LEA level to determine the effectiveness of practices and curricular materials for teaching the targeted standards (i.e., CCSS)?

Most schools in our study indicated they did not directly use IAs to determine the effectiveness of practices and curricular materials for teaching the CCSS. LEA-5 indicated reviewing data from district-mandated IABs and identifying teachers or teacher groups whose classes performed well. They sought out these teachers and identified effective teaching practices to share across the district. Though educators often indicated they did not use IAs to determine the effectiveness of their curricular material, educators across schools often described noting a difference in rigor and/or content between IAs and classroom curricula. Thus, teachers found that following their curriculum exactly was not necessarily sufficient, and they often supplemented with other resources for the skills required by the IAs or summative assessments, which reflected the CCSS. The principal of LEA-1-ES, for example, wanted additional classroom assessments similar to the rigor of the IAs and identified an online source to generate assessments that met this criterion.

Digital Library

- 13. How is the Smarter Balanced Digital Library of formative tools used to improve classroom instruction (e.g., share information with students to help them monitor their own performance; better align instruction, curricula, and assessments)?**

Although most educators in our case study indicated they did not use the DL resources because they did not find it easy to identify useful resources or they felt they already had sufficient or better resources through their curriculum or otherwise, some teachers at LEA-5 accessed answer keys for writing tasks from the DL, having learned about it during professional development. The teachers found these resources helpful to prepare students for the kind of writing expected on the summative assessments. Similarly, one teacher pulled answer keys for mathematics performance tasks from the DL.

Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

Pursuant to California *Education Code (EC)* Section 60649, the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) continued its independent evaluation of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System during the 2019–2020 academic year. This report covers the activities HumRRO conducted for year two of the Instruction and Student Learning Case Study.

This concluding chapter provides (a) an overview of the Case Study HumRRO completed during 2019–2020, (b) a summary of findings and conclusions reached, (c) recommendations for improvement to the studied CAASPP components, and (d) planned changes to the CAASPP System that are anticipated to respond to several of the recommendations.

Overview

According to the CAASPP System theory of action, the Smarter Balanced components provide information to educators to improve instruction and thus improve student achievement. The components, used in concert with each other, accurately assess student achievement relative to CDE grade-level curriculum standards. For ELA/Literacy and mathematics, the State Board of Education adopted the California Common Core State Standards (CA CCSS).

The primary goal of the two-year case study was to elicit concrete examples of how and why specific CAASPP components (i.e., Smarter Balanced components for ELA and mathematics) are used and the perceived benefits, strengths, and challenges of using the components. For each year of the case study, HumRRO collaborated with a small number of LEAs implementing Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) for ELA or mathematics (in addition to the mandated summative assessments) to explore how the theory of action may be driving efforts to improve student achievement.

For year one of the study (2018–2019), HumRRO defined a *case* as an LEA that had at least a modest threshold of use of the IABs in 2017–2018 and planned to continue using them. HumRRO collaborated with seven LEAs during 2018–2019, including one direct-funded charter, encompassing 19 schools. The evidence collected was related mostly to policies and practices for implementing optional CAASPP components. The small, specific group of participating LEAs, schools, and educators provided very few examples of using CAASPP components for the purpose of informing instruction or student learning. Though they cited use of IABs as important for helping students and educators prepare for the summative assessments, they relied on a mix of assessments that were locally designed, commercially purchased, or downloaded from free sources.

For year two, HumRRO defined a *case* as an LEA that had a robust threshold of using the IABs in 2018–2019 and whose schools included some teachers who used IABs to inform instructional decisions. We sought LEAs with at least one school that administered at least 500 ELA and 500 math IABs during the 2018–2019 school year. To relieve burden on the LEAs from the first year who were reluctant to commit to a

second year and broaden coverage of districts in the state, HumRRO recruited six new LEAs for 2019–2020. The LEAs who joined the study in year two included one direct-funded charter and encompassed 15 schools. A full description of the Case Study is presented in chapter 2, including the 13 research questions; descriptions of year two LEA sample selection, data collection activities, and data analysis methods; and overall year two findings across LEAs, by research question. Appendices present in-depth and summary findings, by LEA.

Information from the second year is meaningful for the CDE and for LEAs as they consider how CAASPP components can be used in combination with other resources and what aspects might need to be improved. With the widespread school closures due to COVID-19 and the new capability of educators to administer IABs remotely as part of a distance learning approach, findings from this study may be particularly useful to support use of IABs to inform instruction during 2020–2021.

Summary of Findings

This section provides a high-level summary of the year two findings (across the sample of LEAs and schools in the study) associated with the use of three well-established Smarter Balanced components: summative assessments; interim assessments (IAs), which include IABs and longer Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs); and the DL.

Summative Assessments

The degree to which summative assessment data were reviewed and used varied among LEAs and schools. Most school staff participating in the study reviewed data from the prior year (2018–2019) early in the first semester of the 2019–2020 school year, and many did so as a school-wide team or in professional learning communities (e.g., grade-level teams). Some delays in review of data were due to decisions made at the district level or confusion about the allowable uses of preliminary results. At a few LEAs, schools began reviewing preliminary data during spring 2019 to (a) inform site-level goals targeting improved outcomes for specified student subgroups and (b) use the data as one of several measures to help identify low-achieving students and develop intervention programs for them. This approach conforms to CDE’s encouragement of using early results to inform educational programs and support local planning around the improvement of teaching and learning.

Almost all school leaders and teachers at the elementary and middle schools reviewed grade-level results of the percentage of students who fell into each overall achievement level for ELA and mathematics and compared performance across similar districts and schools. Others also reviewed average “distance-from-three” results (i.e., the difference between the school’s average scale score and the cut score for proficiency) and claim-level data broken down by achievement level. Some teachers in our study had trouble recalling anything about the prior year’s summative assessment scores and thus did not describe how the results influenced instructional activities. In contrast, some schools described how summative assessment scores were a central piece of evidence for

identifying annual achievement goals, and in some cases the summative assessment scores influenced instructional foci and/or the selection of IABs administered during 2019–2020.

Interim Assessments

All schools in the study used IAs in both ELA and math, except for one elementary school that did not administer any IABs in ELA. Some LEAs mandated IA use, either by indicating the minimum number of IABs and/or ICAs to be administered per subject and grade level, or by mandating the specific IABs to administer. Other LEAs allowed schools and/or individual teachers or teacher groups to make these decisions. In LEAs with mandates, teachers could administer additional IAs. Some schools or individual teachers chose to administer all or most IABs.

Many teachers cited benefits of IAs for monitoring student progress and informing instructional decisions, beyond their usefulness for preparing students for the content, rigor, item types, and technology of the summative assessments. Many teachers and school administrators across LEAs indicated the desire for additional IABs, including traditional IABs and FIABs (FIABs, which measure a narrower scope of knowledge). For standardized administrations of IABs, teachers used data from the California Educator Reporting System (CERS) to determine what specific content to reteach or review. For example, teachers identified questions with a high frequency of incorrect responses and shared results with students individually or as a class, reviewing the skills needed to solve those questions and pointing out common errors. Teachers also gave IABs in a nonstandardized manner, such as for classroom warm-ups or review activities, to practice specific areas of known student weakness. For one LEA that mandated IABs, district-wide results were used to help identify effective teaching practices to share within and across schools. At one high school, teachers used IABs to help ensure teaching is consistent with the standards. Students at that school who participated in the questionnaire reported their teachers used IABs to see how well students learned certain skills and to find out what skills they still needed to learn. The most positive perceptions about IABs were from teachers who had input into decisions about when and which IABs to give, which they found allowed for better alignment of assessments with their curriculum.

Digital Library

The study schools reported extremely limited use of the resources in the DL. Most teachers were aware of the resources and had logged directly into the DL at least once; however, at one LEA, teachers had only heard of but did not have any experience with the DL. Two LEAs provided information and training on the DL. Teachers at one school noted they accessed several resources in the DL indirectly through CERS, teachers at another school used DL resources for remediation. Many teachers noted time constraints, difficulty finding useful resources, difficulty navigating through the system, and availability of sufficient materials through their curriculum or other familiar sources as reasons for not using the DL.

Summary of Best Practices

This section provides a high-level summary of a sample of the best practices evidenced among the collaborating year two LEAs and schools in response to the case study research questions. The research questions addressed use of the three Smarter Balanced components studied (i.e., summative assessments, interim assessments, and the digital library). For this report, HumRRO defined a “best practice” as an approach used by participating LEAs, schools, or teachers that (a) aligned well with the intended purpose of and guidance for implementing components within the CAASPP System and (b) resulted in educators having a positive experience using the CAASPP System to inform their teaching. We believe these practices may benefit other schools or LEAs, though we acknowledge there are multiple ways to achieve the goals of the CAASPP System. Additionally, schools and LEAs need to balance approaches to meet their available resources.

Across the studied LEAs and schools, HumRRO identified the following sample of best practices used by participating LEAs for successful implementation of the Smarter Balanced components:

- Use summative assessment data to monitor school-level performance and, in combination with other data, to identify school-wide goals.
- Use IAs as a teaching tool. For example, use IAs in a nonstandardized manner as a full class, small group, or partner exercise. Alternatively, review commonly missed items as a class.
- Use IA data to identify gaps in student understanding and determine content that should be retaught to the full class or select groups of students.
- Provide support and training at the school and LEA levels for using CAASPP resources. Teachers and staff who attended CAASPP professional development or reviewed resources available online increased their comfort level with the CAASPP components, including hand scoring of IABs and using and interpreting assessment results.
- Provide leadership guidance and encouragement for using CAASPP components while allowing grade-level or content-area professional learning communities (PLCs) flexibility regarding which IAs and DL resources to incorporate into their classrooms.
- Facilitate school-wide data discussions to ensure teachers know how to access and interpret summative assessment results, and how these data can inform instructional practices.
- Provide time and resources to support collaboration among grade-level and/or content-area PLCs to plan instruction and use interim and formative assessments effectively.

Recommendations and Planned CAASPP System Changes

HumRRO reviewed the full scope of study findings based on the perspective of the participants—a small number of teachers within a small number of schools in a small number of LEAs—to develop suggestions for the CDE to consider as part of its continuous improvement of the CAASPP System.

Based on the findings across the year two case study LEAs, we offer the following recommendations. Some recommendations are already being addressed by enhancements the CDE will implement during the 2020–2021 school year. Where applicable, recommendations are followed by brief descriptions of important CAASPP System changes that will respond to areas of need described by LEA and school staff or observed by HumRRO. Some of the planned changes include re-envisioned professional development opportunities for 2020–2021 to allow for online delivery given the COVID circumstances.

Recommendation 1: Continue providing training opportunities and updated online resources for LEA- and school-level staff. The trainings, CDE website resources, and CAASPP website resources are critical to helping educators throughout the state (a) accurately interpret Smarter Balanced summative and interim assessment results, (b) implement existing and new Smarter Balanced components, and (c) learn about enhancements to existing components.

Planned CAASPP System Changes:

- The CDE is modifying the previously held in-person Summer Institute to be a virtual Interim and Formative Assessment Training Series in October 2020. The training content will be organized into learning modules and will be structured as a “train-the-trainers” model. Local LEA staff, instructional coaches, and teachers on special assignment can in turn deliver materials to classroom teachers. Modules will include assessment literacy, interim assessment resources and systems, hand scoring practice on interim assessments, and formative assessment processes using Tools for Teachers. Three live webinars will cover these modules and provide additional guidance and support to local facilitators.
- The CDE will host a virtual statewide 2020 California Assessment Conference in October. The conference will be targeted to classroom educators with a theme of “Capitalizing on Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning.”
- The CDE will offer virtual math and ELA hand scoring workshops for teachers from December 2020 through April 2021. These workshops will be free of charge and include multiple school-day and after-school options.

Recommendation 2: Work with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to provide an expanded pool of ELA and mathematics IAs, particularly FIABs, and develop multiple versions of existing IAs. Teachers using the existing interim assessments find them of high quality and requested more options for tests for

classroom use. Teachers would like new FIABs that assess additional targets. In addition, teachers commonly expressed the desire to have more than one version of each IAB/FIAB to allow use in a pre-test/post-test format or to allow use in a nonstandardized manner as part of classroom instruction with one version, followed by standardized use of a second version for assessment.

Planned CAASPP System Changes:

- The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium plans to release approximately 90 more FIABs over the following two school years.

Recommendation 3: Use the CAASPP website to address the issues of version control and changing CAASPP component guidance to ensure educators are aware of new releases and use current resources. LEA and school staff indicated the CDE and Smarter Balanced provide guidance and a multitude of resources regarding CAASPP components; however, sometimes the periodic resource updates occur after the start of an academic year, making them less useful and creating some confusion about versions. Teachers would like to see CAASPP resources organized in a more structured manner with clear communication regarding how to identify and access the most current content.

Planned CAASPP System Changes:

- The CAASPP website will be housing online versions of manuals rather than static PDF versions. This will ensure that educators access the most current versions and can search for and more directly access different sections of each manual.

Recommendation 4: Consider adding reporting elements and resources directed toward students at the upper grade levels to inform their own learning. Teachers suggested high school students would benefit from targeted information regarding their strengths and weaknesses on the summative assessments and/or IAs (including ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade ICAs), along with links to resources to help them improve in designated areas of weakness. Though this recommendation was provided prior to COVID-19 school closures, HumRRO believes it may be even more relevant with distance learning so prevalent.

Recommendation 5: Continue efforts to increase usability of online platforms. LEA and school staff appreciated the move to a single sign-on process in 2019–2020, though many believe there could be additional improvements to the platform. CAASPP coordinators found the process for creating groups of students (rostering) cumbersome, and schools without available LEA technical support had challenges obtaining student-level results. In addition, some teachers would like more access than they are currently provided by their school or LEA. Some teachers had difficulty remembering passwords and the reset process, while some students had issues with their login IDs. Some teachers had trouble finding IA or summative assessment score reports.

Planned CAASPP System Changes:

- The Online Reporting System (ORS) will be phased out and all CAASPP summative and interim reporting will be available through CERS.
- The CDE’s planned integration of CAASPP data systems with LEA student information systems (SIS) from key vendors and several districts will provide for direct uploading of student data into CERS. This project will automate a mechanism that currently demands extensive manual effort and time to create rosters of students associated with specific teachers, and it will improve the process of obtaining score reports for a student cohort. LEAs or schools will be able to import intact groups into CERS from the LEA’s SIS for rostering rather than needing to create a separate file with the groups.

Recommendation 6: Seek ways to improve online access to high quality, free, CCSS-aligned formative assessment resources for school-level staff. The Smarter Balanced DL, which was disabled in May 2020 and replaced with the new Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers website, was almost unused by study participants. While it was accessible during 2019–2020, the DL offered some valuable tools such as Connections Playlists, which link interim assessment results to teacher resources that help optimize student learning.

Planned CAASPP System Changes:

- Tools for Teachers was available for preview in June 2020 and had an official grand opening on September 30, 2020. The website is more user-friendly than the DL, includes high-quality materials that were reviewed by the State Network of Educators,⁴ and includes the Interim Connections Playlists. The website will address many of the concerns with the DL: it is accessible (WCAG 2.1AA compliant), was purposefully developed to align with Smarter Balanced grade-level claims and targets, contains instructional resources embedded with formative assessment process strategies and accessibility strategies, and offers options and ideas for differentiation of and student access to content.
- The CDE is hosting a shared practices webinar, “**Using ‘Tools for Teachers’ to Support Learning,**” to orient educators to the new resource. The training webinar was conducted in September 2020 prior to the grand opening of the new website and available statewide to educators who register.

⁴ The State Network of Educators is composed of educators from Smarter Balanced member states trained to contribute and review instructional and professional learning resources.

Summary and Next Steps

HumRRO's two-year Case Study provided an in-depth look at how a modest number of diverse LEAs and schools are implementing Smarter Balanced components, especially the interim assessments. Overall findings indicate the IABs, which are high quality, CCSS-aligned online assessments, are still mainly used by some LEAs to prepare students for the rigor and format of the summative assessments. However, for the general education population of students, teachers are increasingly using IABs, along with other measures of student progress, to assist with instructional decisions, plans, and goals. Ongoing LEA and school support for training on the use of and access to the many resources is essential, and we fully support the CDE's continued efforts to implement solutions to areas identified for improvement, internally and by our independent evaluation.

This stand-alone report along with the Comprehensive Report for 2018–2020 are the two final deliverables for HumRRO's CAASPP independent evaluation. California *Education Code (EC)* Section 60649, which requires an independent evaluation of the CAASPP System, will become inoperative on July 1, 2021, unless an enacted statute extends this date. HumRRO has been honored to be the independent evaluator for CDE's assessment programs since 1999, contributing our objective and high-quality research efforts to support the continuous improvement of first the California High School Exit Examination and now the CAASPP System.

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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Gloss
CAA	California Alternate Assessment
CAASPP	California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
CA NGSS	NGSS for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve
CAST	California Science Test
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CDE	California Department of Education
CERS	California Education Reporting System
CSA	California Spanish Assessment
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
DL	Digital Library
EC	California Education Code
EL	English learner (student)
ELA	English language arts/literacy
ELPAC	English Language Proficiency Assessments for California
ETS	Educational Testing Service
FIAB	Focused Interim Assessment Block
GVC	Guaranteed Viable Curriculum
IAB	Interim Assessment Block
ICA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment
LEA	Local educational agency
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of support
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards

Acronym	Gloss
ORS	Online Reporting System
PBIS	Positive behavioral interventions and support
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PT	Performance task
RTI	Response to intervention
SBE	State Board of Education
SE	Socioeconomically
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based
SPSA	School plan for student achievement
SWD	Student with Disabilities
TAG	CAASPP Technical Advisory Group

Detailed Descriptions of Figures with Image

Figure 2.1 Screen shot of the home page of the CAASPP website (Page 2-11)

- Screen shot of CAASPP website home page. Navigation menu at top of page lists eight main topics: Home, About, Test Administration, Resources, Training, Get Involved, Calendar, and System Status.
- The Home page is activated, with eight buttons displayed:
 - Test Operations Management System (TOMS)
 - Test Administrator Interface for All Online Tests
 - Practice & Training Tests
 - Tools for Teachers
 - California Educator Reporting System (CERS)
 - Completion Status/Roster Management
 - Smarter Balanced Content Explorer
 - Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

Figure 2.2 Interim Assessment Administration Resources in the CAASPP website. (Page 2-14)

- Screen shot of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment resources available under the Resources topic in the CAASPP website.
- The text “These resources support the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments” is followed by eight buttons. A brief description describes the purpose of selecting each button.
 - Interim Assessment Viewing System: Select this button to access the interim assessments for professional development and/or training purposes.
 - Test Operations Management System (TOMS): Select this button to assign user roles for Tools for Teachers and the California Educator Reporting System, and to view student test settings, including accommodations, before interim testing begins. Note: To create/manage student groups, go to the California Educator Reporting System.
 - Test Administrator Interface for All Online Tests: Select this button to access the Test Administrator Interface that is used to access all CAASPP online assessments including the summative, interim, and alternate assessments.
 - Completion Status/Roster Management: Select this button to access the system that will allow you to see the completion status for students taking the interim assessments.

- Hand Scoring Training Guides and Exemplars: Select this button to access the interim assessment hand scoring training guides and exemplars. Upon selecting this button, select the [Resources] tab at the top.
- Interim Assessment Hand Scoring System: Select this button to access the system that will allow you to score student responses to interim assessment items that require hand scoring.
- California Educator Reporting System (CERS): Select this button to access interim assessment results or, for group administrators only, create/manage student groups.
- Reporting System Sandbox: Select this button to access the sandbox training tool. Username and password are not required, but users are prompted to select a role before entering the sandbox.

Appendix A: 2019 Case Study Eligibility Survey

The questions and response options below represent the content of an online survey HumRRO administered to a subset of local education agencies (LEAs) in California in August 2019.

1. Which of the following Smarter Balanced training resources, developed by the California Department of Education and its vendors, did staff from your LEA or schools attend/use/review during the 2018–19 school year? Mark all that apply.
 - “The Results are in...Now What?” (in-person attendance or use/review of online resources)
 - CAASPP Institutes (in-person attendance or use/review of online resources)
 - New CAASPP Coordinator Training Webinars
 - *CAASPP in Action* report series, featuring LEAs sharing their successes, challenges, and lessons learned (use/review of online resource)
 - Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Hand Scoring System Training (use of online resources)
 - None of the above

2. How do educators in your schools (e.g., administrators, teachers, CAASPP coordinators) typically access Smarter Balanced interim assessment results?
 - IA Reporting System only
 - Student information system (e.g., Aeries, Illuminate Education) or other local database only
 - Multiple ways (student information system, local database, and IA Reporting System)
 - Other, explain what system or method (e.g., district produces custom reports) and why you selected it

3. How do you provide access to Smarter Balanced summative assessment results to schools in your LEA?
 - Online Reporting System (ORS) only
 - Student information system (e.g., Aeries, Illuminate Education) or other local database only
 - Multiple ways (student information system, local database, and ORS)
 - Other, explain what system or method (e.g., district produces custom reports) and why you selected it

4. To what extent do teachers in your schools use the Smarter Balanced Digital Library (DL), either to access Instructional Resources (such as CCSS-aligned formative assessments or lessons) or Playlist Resources (such as Connections Playlists that link student performance on the IABs to specific resources in the DL)?
 - No teachers use the DL.
 - Few teachers use the DL.
 - Many teachers use the DL.
 - Most teachers use the DL.
 - At least some teachers use the DL, but I am not certain how widespread use is.
 - Do not know

5. To what extent are teachers in your schools using Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) to help inform instructional decisions, rather than solely to familiarize students with the summative assessment interface? We want to know if teachers are using IABs and their results, for example, to inform lesson planning or identify students who need to be retaught specific standards or skills.
 - No teachers are using IABs for this purpose.
 - Few teachers are using IABs for this purpose.
 - Many teachers are using IABs for this purpose.
 - Most teachers are using IABs for this purpose.
 - At least some teachers are using IABs for this purpose, but I am not certain how widespread use is.
 - Do not know

6. Beginning with the 2019–20 school year, a new type of IAB—called Focused IABs—will be available. Focused IABs will assess fewer assessment targets than traditional IABs. See additional details in this flyer <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/documents/focusediabs.pdf>. How likely do you think teachers in your schools will be to administer the new Focused IABs during 2019–20?
 - Likely that no teachers will give Focused IABs.
 - Likely that a few teachers will give Focused IABs.
 - Likely that many teachers will give Focused IABs.
 - At least some teachers are likely to give Focused IABs, but I am not certain how widespread use will be.
 - Do not know

7. Please choose the response that best describes the participation of schools within your LEA in professional learning communities (PLCs). *(If you are responding for a charter or district made up of only one school, please consider this one school as “all” schools)*
- All (or most) schools have established PLCs and release time for meetings.
 - Some schools have established PLCs and release time for meetings.
 - Few or no schools have established PLCs and release time for meetings.
 - I am not aware of the use of PLCs in schools across my LEA.
 - There are PLCs but no official release time for meetings.
 - Other and/or clarifying comments (please describe)
8. Which of the following phrases best describes the amount of teacher turnover expected in your schools from the 2018–19 school year to the 2019–20 school year?
- Little/no turnover (less than 10% of teachers leaving the district or changing schools within the district)
 - Moderate turnover (between 10% and 25% of teachers leaving the district or changing schools within the district)
 - Extensive turnover (more than 25% of teachers leaving the district or changing schools within the district)
9. Do you think a small number of educators from your LEA and three of its schools might be interested in collaborating with HumRRO during the 2019–20 study, by sharing experiences using CAASPP System components to improve instruction and student learning? An honorarium would be paid for participation in the study, which includes an in-person site visit with teachers and administrators, responses to several monthly polling questions throughout the year, an end-of-year Web-based meeting, and a student focus group.
- Yes, please consider our LEA.
 - No, please do not contact us.
 - I don’t know.

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Appendix B: Case Study 2019–2020 Data Collection Instruments

Teacher Focus Groups Protocol

Who: Use this protocol for teacher focus groups at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. At elementary schools ALL teachers will answer questions for math and ELA. In middle school and high school, there will most likely be a separate focus group for each content area.

Notes: Prior to each visit, please update the red text to include information appropriate to each focus group. Priority Questions are bolded. Depending on the pace after the first question, determine whether it makes sense to ask only bolded questions.

SCRIPT:

Good *[morning/afternoon]*. My name is *[HumRRO facilitator]* and this is *[HumRRO notetaker and POC for this LEA and its schools]*. We are with the Human Resources Research Organization, or HumRRO. Before we get started, I'd like to make sure you are all aware that we will be recording today's focus group. This is for HumRRO internal purposes only, so that we can verify our notes are correct, and capture information we may miss. The recordings will not be shared with anyone from your school, LEA, or with the California Department of Education. Do you have any objections?

As a reminder, the Impact Case Study is not an evaluation of your school; it is an exploration of how CAASPP resources are used. HumRRO will keep information about participating LEAs, schools, and staff confidential.

HumRRO has collaborated successfully with many LEA and school leaders and school educators as part of our assessment evaluation work for the CDE for nearly 20 years, including the CAHSEE and the CAASPP. Your ability to inform us about how the current assessments and resources are functioning in the field is invaluable. Today, we are interested in hearing about your experience with various Smarter Balanced components of the CAASPP system—the summative assessments, interim assessments, and Digital Library resources. We are most interested in your use of these components during the 2019–20 school year; however, if you only have examples for questions from the 2018–19 school year, we would be interested in learning about those. We are particularly interested in learning about the context of your school, and how you use these components to impact classroom instruction and student learning. As you think about each question, please consider strengths and weaknesses about the program – we are interested in understanding what is working well, as well as where there is room for improvement.

In addition to information you provide today, we would also like to collect any materials or documentation you can provide to illustrate how you use the Smarter Balanced components and resources supporting them. At the end of this interview, we will provide you with a list of examples of documentation we would be interested in reviewing. You will be asked to send these to your HumRRO POC *[name]*.

Before we jump into questions, can you please each share a bit about yourself – including your first name and initial of your last name, the grade and content you currently teach, how long you have been teaching at this school, and total teaching experience overall. Your names will not be shared with others outside this group.

We hope to get through several questions today and have limited time. As we go along, we understand that some answers to questions may be consistent across educators; therefore, if you have a similar response to a colleague a simple “agree” will do. We will try to start each question with a different teacher so that we can hear from each of you.

First, we are interested in learning more about your school context.

- Can you please describe collaboration across your school – for example, do you have time to coordinate lessons or assessments with other teachers or participate in professional learning communities?
- What kinds of professional development opportunities related to CAASPP Smarter Balanced components and resources have you received?
- What is your main math and ELA curriculum (print and online)?
- What other assessments besides CAASPP do you use? Including formative/benchmark, interim/diagnostic, all tests required by your school or LEA.

I want you to think about how you used the 2019 Smarter Balanced *[ELA/math/ELA and math]* summative assessment results.

1. Please describe for us how summative assessment results are shared and used in your school.

- a. When did you first receive results?
- b. What guidance does LEA/school leadership provide on using the results?
- c. What data do you review (scale scores, proficiency levels, claim scores, target reports) and at what level (school, class, student)?
- d. To what extent do the summative assessment results influence your classroom or grade level instructional decisions?

Next, let’s discuss your use of interim assessments in the classroom. We are primarily interested in your use of Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and Focused IABs, but if you also use results of Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) to inform instruction, think of them, also, as you address questions. Please specify whether your

responses refer to IABs, ICAs, or both. (How many of you have given any IAs so far this year? How many will be giving them for the first time this year?)

2. Please describe for us how interim assessments are selected and administered, and what role they play in your school and classroom.

- a. To what extent do you conduct hand scoring for IAB questions?
- b. How do you access IAB results? What data do you look at from the IAB results?
- c. Can you describe how IABs are used to track student progress? To inform classroom instructional decisions?
- d. Can you describe how student performance on IABs used to assess curriculum and/or teaching practices relative to targeted standards?
- e. What are some examples you can share to show how using IAs has had an impact on student learning?
- f. Do you find the IAs work well for special education students? English language learners? Explain.
- g. Can you describe any changes you have had to make, or plan to make, to incorporate IABs into your classroom?
- h. [For High School] To what extent do you use ICAs? Are you aware of ICAs for grades 9, 10, and 11 that allow for consistent measuring over years?
- i. Have you used the new Focused IABs?
 - i. If so, for what purpose?
 - ii. If not, do you plan to do so in the future? (why or why not?)

Next, let's talk about your use of the Digital Library. This includes the instructional resources, professional learning resources, and playlist resources.

3. Please describe the extent to which you are familiar with the Digital Library and use its resources.

- a. If used, what led you to use these resources and what are some examples to show how have they benefited your classroom instruction? If not used, why not?
- b. Can you describe specific resources you have used and to achieve what goal?
- c. Do you access DL directly? Do you access it by using the Instructional Resources button in CERS? Or through the IA reporting system?
- d. Are you aware of DL Connections playlists related to specific IABs and focused IABs?

For our final questions, please consider your use of the full CAASPP system of Smarter Balanced components together – the summative assessments, interim assessments, and Digital Library.

- 4. Please describe how results from the summative assessment, interim assessments, formative resources, and other non-CAASPP resources are integrated to enhance classroom instruction and student learning.**
- a. To what extent do the DL, IABs, and summative assessments work together for you like an integrated system as opposed to related but different pieces?
 - b. Has the single sign-on system, MyToms, affected the usability of CAASPP components?
 - c. Can you describe any additional training on Smarter Balanced resources you would like to have?
- 5. What aspects of CAASPP implementation (for ELA and math) have been most beneficial for improving classroom instruction and student learning in your classroom?**
- a. What challenges have been introduced by CAASPP?
 - b. Is there anything else you would like to share about the strengths or weaknesses of CAASPP components?

Thank you so much for your participation today. Your input is highly important for better understanding the CAASPP system. As indicated, I will now provide a list of examples of documentation we would be interested in obtaining to help us understand CAASPP use at your school. This document also provides an e-mail address where you can contact your HumRRO POC if you have any questions about our study. We may be reaching out to you for additional information in monthly polling activity.

Polling Questions

School-Level

December 2019:

1. Can you describe examples of discussions about Smarter Balanced resources you have had with administrators or teachers after their/your participation in interviews or focus groups?

January 2020:

1. If you are a teacher, please select all Focused IABs you have administered so far this school year. If you are not a teacher, please select all Focused IABs administered across your school (those with asterisks are those that are new to the 2019–20 school year).
2. If you are a teacher, please select all regular IABs you have administered so far this school year. If you are not a teacher, please select all regular IABs administered across your school.

Regular IABs (up to 8 targets)	Focused IABs (1–3 targets)
Read Literary Texts	Language & Vocabulary Use
Read Informational Texts	Listen/Interpret
Revision	Divide Fractions by Fractions*
Algebra & Functions I – Linear Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	Equations & Reasoning*
Expressions & Equations	Geometry & Right Triangle Trigonometry
Geometry Measurement & Modeling	Interpreting Functions
Numbers & Operations in Base Ten	Number & Quantity
The Number System (Elementary School)	The Number System (Middle School
Operations & Algebraic Thinking	Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals*
n/a	Ratios & Proportional Relationships
n/a	Seeing Structure in Expressions
n/a	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear & Exponential*
n/a	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Quadratic*
m/a	Statistics and Probability

3. Can you describe any obstacles you encountered in using IABs in the Fall?
4. What were your goals for administering the IAB?
5. Did you give students their results?
6. What instructional decisions or plans did you make based on IAB results? Please give specific examples.
7. Were all of your goals for the IABs you gave achieved? If not, what could have been improved?
8. If you administered an IAB in an unstandardized manner, please describe how you administered the IAB and why. If not, please enter N/A.
9. How did you decide when to administer the new Focused IAB(s)?
10. About how much time did it take to administer the new Focused IAB(s)?
11. How did you use the results from the new Focused IAB(s)? Please give specific examples.
12. Do you have recommendations for improvements to the new Focused IAB(s) you have used?

February 2020:

1. Were the learning activities and formative assessment plan for this unit discussed with your department or grade level team? If so, please describe.
2. Can you describe what evidence of student learning you collected and reviewed (may include Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment results, other assessments, student observations, etc.)?
3. What actions did you take, or do you plan to take, in the classroom based on these data? (Think about lesson planning, individualized or group-level student supports, etc.)
4. Can you describe any actions you took, or plan to take, to address particular needs of students with disabilities (with IEPs)?

March 2020:

1. Have you given an IAB in February or March?
2. Describe what you like best about the IABs.
3. Describe challenges you have encountered with IABs.

4. If you have reviewed and/or used DL resources this school year, how did you access the site?
5. If you used DL resources (including Connections Playlist) during the 2019–20 school year, please describe the resource(s) used and purpose for using them.
6. If you have not used DL resources this school year, please explain why you have not used them.

April 2020:

1. As of this week, approximately what percent of your students are now regularly and actively participating in the distance learning opportunities you are offering? (If a classroom teacher, respond for your classroom; if an administrator, think about what you've across your school.)
2. Are any of your student groups (e.g., special education, English learners, low SES) having a particularly difficult time with distance learning?
3. Please describe the difficulties student groups are having with distance learning.
4. How is your professional learning community or other collaborations with fellow teachers functioning remotely?
5. [Optional] Please describe your general experience towards distance learning so far.
6. Have you used, or do you plan to use, Smarter Balanced interim assessments as part of distance learning?
7. How do you intend to use them (standardized or non-standardized) and what is your purpose for doing so?
8. Why do you not plan to use the interim assessments during distance learning?
9. Have you browsed the Digital Library resources since your school's COVID-19 closure to find ideas for distance learning?
10. Did you ultimately identify resources you have used or intend to use? Explain.
11. What recommendations do you have for increasing the usability of CAASPP resources to support and monitor student grade level progress for a distance learning environment?

LEA-Level

December 2019:

1. Can you describe examples of discussions about Smarter Balanced resources you have had with other LEA staff, school administrators, and/or teachers after their participation in interviews or focus groups?

January 2020:

1. Can you describe how you or other staff at the LEA helped school sites prepare for the administration of the interim assessments? Please include in your response how your LEA addresses use of designated supports or accommodations.
2. Can you describe technical assistance that was requested of schools across your LEA regarding the use of CAASPP assessments during the Fall Semester? For example, requests related to rostering, accessing interim assessments and/or data, or accessing Smarter Balanced summative data and interpreting test results.
3. Were you able to address each of the technical assistance requests? If not, how were the issues ultimately resolved?

February 2020:

1. What types of support (i.e., instructional coaching activities, Interim Assessment administration and reporting) have you provided or are you planning to provide to schools? Please be as specific as possible.
2. What steps are you taking or are planning to take, if any, to ensure schools are prepared, technologically, to offer students appropriate designated supports and accommodations?

March 2020:

1. Based on 2019 Smarter Balanced summative results, did the LEA plan actions to target improvement on 2020 Smarter Balanced summative results in particular grades and/or subject areas? Explain.
2. What actions did you implement in particular grades and/or subject areas across the district to plan for improvement this year? Explain.

April 2020:

1. What guidance, if any, did you provide schools regarding use of CAASPP components (e.g., interim assessments (IAs), Digital Library resources) for distance learning during COVID-19 school closures?

2. Have you made any changes to guidance or mandates regarding IA administration or other district-wide assessments?
3. We understand many LEAs and schools use Smarter Balanced summative assessments to track school and LEA performance and set goals. Describe early discussions you have had within your LEA regarding adjustments you may need to make due to a lack of 2019–20 data.

Student Questionnaire

The questions and response options below represent the content of an online survey administered by school POCs from schools who volunteered to collect student data for HumRRO during April 2019.

The following questions ask you about experiences during your [math/English language arts] class this school year. We understand you took the [X] interim assessment this year. The picture below shows an interim assessment log in screen to help you remember taking the test.

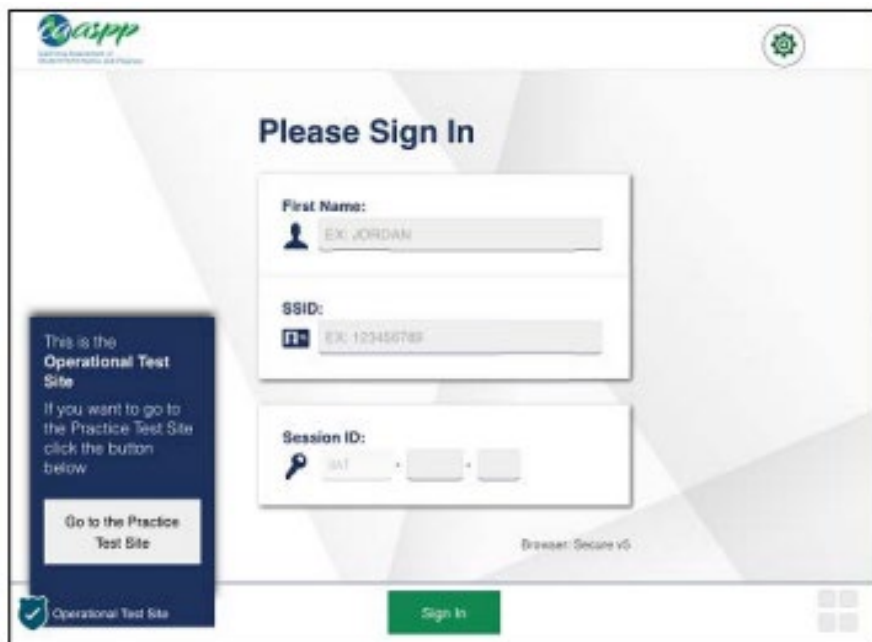


Figure B.2 Interim assessment log in screen.

1. How did you answer questions on the X interim assessment? (We understand you may have taken this assessment more than once, so please select all that apply.)
 - a. Independently (by myself without any assistance)
 - b. With a partner or a group of other students
 - c. With my whole class

2. What did your teacher say was the main reason for taking the interim assessment? Choose just one answer.
 - a. To practice certain math skills
 - b. To see how well I learned math skills I was taught
 - c. To find out what math skills I needed to learn
 - d. To practice taking an online test
 - e. Other (open comment)
3. After taking the X interim assessment, did you find out what skills you needed to work on to improve? In other words, did you learn there was something you didn't know how to do? [MC yes/no]
4. Can you give me an example of what you learned you needed to work on or improve? [open-ended, only if #3 is 'yes']
5. After taking X interim assessment, did your teacher work with you to help you learn math skills that were difficult for you or for your whole class? [MC yes/no]
6. Can you describe how your teacher worked with you or your class to help you learn [math/English language arts] skills that were difficult for you? [open-ended, only if #5 is a yes]
7. Did you use any special settings on the X interim test, like using a highlighter, strikethrough, or a glossary? [MC yes/no]
8. Can you give me an example of the setting (like a highlighter, strikethrough, or a glossary) and whether it helped you do your best on the test? [open-ended, only if #7 is a yes]
9. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make about the x interim assessments? [Open-ended]

Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with the interim assessments. This information will help the California Department of Education better meet the needs of students and schools.

Appendix C: Detailed LEA-Specific Findings from Case Study

Introduction

The following sections highlight findings for each LEA participating in the second year of the Case Study. Each section begins with a table outlining the data used to generate the results. This is followed by a description of the educators who provided data and a discussion of the characteristics of the LEA and its participating schools. Next are descriptions of the LEA's and the schools' use of Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, Interim Assessments (IAs), and the Digital Library (DL). We conclude each section with best practices in the use of CAASPP components. The description about each LEA depends on the information provided to HumRRO throughout the study period. The LEAs and schools in the Case Study varied in their degree of participation in data collection activities, and some unique attributes or uses of CAASPP components resulted in inconsistent information.

To keep LEAs and schools anonymous, LEA and school codes are used for identification purposes. Each LEA is numbered (LEA-1 through LEA-6). Each school within an LEA includes that LEA code and an additional code based on the school level. Elementary schools are denoted "ES," middle schools "MS," and high schools "HS." Among the LEAs studied, there were some variations in the grades at each school level. For the study, HumRRO classified findings from schools consisting of grades between elementary (ES) and high school (HS) as middle schools (MS) to match the most accurate depiction of the grades we included from each school in our study. For example, we classified one school with only grades seven and eight as a MS, and we also classified one school with only grades five and six as MS (which is consistent with the school's own classification). Similarly, because we studied only grades kindergarten through five at a school that also has grades six through eight, our report classifies the school as ES.

We caution that these findings are based on the perspective of a small number of teachers within a small number of schools in a small number of LEAs. In addition, some of the responses represent limited understandings or awareness about the capabilities of the CAASPP System. We also note that some of the concerns expressed by teachers are those the CDE has already begun to address (see the Planned CAASPP System Updates in the Executive Summary). In these findings, phrases such as "schools in the LEA" or "LEA-1 teachers" refer to the schools and teachers studied rather than all schools and teachers in the LEA, unless otherwise specified.

Each LEA-specific section in Appendix C is organized thematically by key topics of the research questions. The experiences described in this appendix may be useful to LEAs and schools across California interested in increasing their effective use of CAASPP components or identifying ways to improve their implementation. Though HumRRO implemented most planned Case Study activities, we note COVID-19 school closures resulted in a reduced amount of data collected in the final months of our study for some LEAs. For a summary of findings from each LEA, see Appendix D.

LEA-1 Findings

LEA-1 participation included one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Table C.1 summarizes the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. LEA-1 was one of the first LEA's to confirm participation, and they began providing data in December 2019. They continued to provide data throughout the project; however, the LEA and its schools found it challenging to participate fully in the final months as they dedicated time to supporting virtual learning efforts required due to the COVID-19 school closures.

Table C.1 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-1

Data Source	Participants/Description
Site Visit Educator Focus Group	ES – 3 teachers in one focus group: third grade (1), fourth grade (1), and fifth grade (1) MS – 9 teachers in one focus group: math (4), ELA (4), reading intervention (1), and math and ELA (1) HS – 8 teachers in two focus groups: ELA (4), math (4)
Site Visit Leader Interview	ES – School POC (principal) MS – School POC (principal) HS – School POCs (vice principal, TOSA*) LEA – LEA POCs (CAASPP coordinator, CAASPP administration project lead)
Monthly Polling	ES – December (POC); January (POC, 3 teachers); February (POC, 3 teachers); March (POC, 3 teachers); April (POC) MS – January (1 teacher); February (2 teachers); March (2 teachers); April (1 teacher) HS – December (POC); January (2 POCs, 1 teacher); February (POC, 14 teachers); March (POC) LEA – December (POC); January (POC); February (POC); March (POC)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Groups	N/A
Student Questionnaires	HS – 176 student responses for math; 148 student responses for ELA
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAASPP Nuts and Bolts Training PowerPoint for site coordinators • Leveraging the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments Training PowerPoint • Leveraging the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments Training PowerPoint • LEA-1-ES IAB administration schedule • LEA-1 spreadsheet of various online assessment tools, including CAASPP, available in the district

*TOSA: Teacher on Special Assignment

Due to changing LEA staff assignments, the original LEA POC for the study, who had been LEA-1's CAASPP coordinator for multiple years, was replaced early in the study by a new POC, the LEA's CAASPP administration project lead. Both the original and replacement POC were present at the in-person interview. The new LEA POC conducted all student rostering for the IAs for the district and provided technology assistance to schools. The principals of LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS acted as school POCs, and an interim vice principal and teacher on special assignment (TOSA) acted as co-POCs for LEA-1-HS. At each study school, differing numbers of teachers participated in focus groups and monthly polling:

- At LEA-1-ES, four individual teachers each provided data. Three teachers participated in the focus group; each teacher had 6–30 years of teaching experience. These teachers, plus one additional teacher, participated in monthly polling.
- At LEA-1-MS, 11 individual teachers each provided data: four math teachers, four ELA teachers, one teacher who taught math and ELA, and one reading intervention teacher. One of these teachers, plus an additional teacher, participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-1-HS, 19 individual teachers each provided data. Four math teachers, each with 10–21 years teaching experience, and four ELA teachers, with 5–27 years of experience, participated in the focus groups. All teachers across focus groups had taught at their current school for at least two years. Three of these teachers participated in monthly polling, along with an additional eleven teachers who did not participate in the focus groups.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-1 is a large district in southern California. The district includes 112 elementary schools, 24 middle schools, and 22 high schools. LEA-1 also includes various alternative schools and charter schools. Table C.2 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the LEA and its three participating case study schools. Data were obtained from the 2018–2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE's website (DataQuest).

As shown in Table C.2, the three participating schools varied in demographic characteristics. For example, 78 percent of students at the elementary school were socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to only 37 percent of students at the middle school. Also, the elementary school had a larger percentage of English learners compared to the middle and high school, and as compared to LEA-1 overall. Though the elementary school had a higher percentage of students in these traditionally disadvantaged groups, all three study schools had above district-average percentages of students who met or exceeded state standards for ELA and math.

LEA-1 is a diverse district that includes many ethnicities and a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The schools in our study were selected because of their enthusiasm for

incorporating CAASPP components to inform instruction. LEA-1-ES was a standard grade K–5 elementary school and LEA-1-HS was a standard grade 9–12 high school. LEA-1-MS included grades 5 and 6 and operated as a middle school.

Table C.2 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-1 and Its Participating Schools, 2018-2019

Variables	LEA-1	LEA-1-ES	LEA-1-MS	LEA-1-HS
Enrollment	122,916	207	758	2,400
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	59%	78%	37%	45%
% Students with Disabilities	14%	20%	15%	9%
% English Learners	21%	26%	8%	9%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	19%	6%	7%	36%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	55%	67%	65%	81%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	45%	58%	57%	53%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the next columns provide information for the LEA overall and for each of the LEA’s schools in the study. The second column (from top to bottom) shows in LEA-1 there was a total enrollment of 122,916 in 2018–2019. Of these students, 59% were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 14% were students with disabilities, 21% were English learners, and 19% were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–2019 summative assessments indicated 55% of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 45% of students met or exceeded math state standards.

LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS had leaders who believed all students deserved to be exposed to challenging instruction and had high expectations for their students. LEA-1-ES, with a high percentage of socially disadvantaged students, previously was underperforming on state assessments. The current LEA-1-ES principal, who joined the school four years ago, sought to change the staff’s mindset regarding their students’ academic abilities. This principal stated “we don’t need to be handicapped by a zip code. I want to prove there’s nothing wrong with our kids. Our kids can learn just like any kids can learn.” The LEA-1-MS principal had a similar sentiment, commenting that teachers of high socioeconomic status who come into the district and are assigned to teach a population of socioeconomically disadvantaged, academically struggling students often tend to make school easy for students, out of empathy. However, LEA-1-MS’s principal stated these students need a teacher who will challenge and provide them the same academic opportunities as other students. Both principals indicated CAASPP components have been instrumental in providing exposure to rigorous academic content and data for accomplishing their goals.

Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development

LEA-1's POC indicated time was clearly carved out in schedules for collaboration at the school level. The LEA-1 POC noted there is variation in the functioning of professional learning communities (PLCs) across schools in the large district, with some more effective than others. The LEA POC indicated PLC time was used to review student data and work and teacher collaboration. Staff from the three participating schools confirmed all teachers at their schools were provided dedicated PLC time. Teachers at LEA-1-ES indicated their PLC met once per month across grades to examine data and consider vertical articulation. Teachers examined student Interim Assessment (IA) data to identify achievement toward meeting the standards for their own students, as well as for past students and students in lower grades, whom they will teach in the future. Teachers also had time during these meetings to identify the best time to administer Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) within their lesson plans. LEA-1-MS staff indicated more frequent meetings, between two and four times per month, depending on the department and grade level. Middle school teachers indicated using this time to align lesson planning, prepare for the summative assessment, and ensure curricula align with the standards. LEA-1-HS is a large school compared to the others in this study. Their PLCs represented various groupings (e.g., by grade level, subject, course), so an individual teacher may have participated in more than one collaborative group throughout the year. LEA-1-HS had PLC time available every Monday. Teachers indicated various goals of these meetings, including modifying curriculum and building common assessments to align to standards and competency-based proficiency skills. One staff member indicated using PLC time to learn effective teaching strategies from others.

Staff at LEA-1 typically attended at least one CAASPP training offered by the CDE. The POC attended several CAASPP Summer Institutes, observing math sessions some years and ELA others. LEA-1 does not provide schools with district-level funding to attend CAASPP trainings, so most school staff were unable to participate; however, some schools chose to attend on their own. The POC indicated three or four schools sent staff to the 2019 CAASPP Summer Institute. The LEA-1 CAASPP coordinator provided optional training to CAASPP site coordinators and other school staff. Some schools sent only their CAASPP site coordinator to these optional trainings while others brought their entire team of teachers. LEA-1 provided HumRRO with presentation slides used for these trainings, which were available to all schools; this included IA training and accessibility resources training that LEA-level staff provided on site to schools upon their request. The three schools in our study indicated professional development and training for CAASPP was primarily provided by administrators. LEA-1-HS and LEA-1-MS indicated administrative staff attended district-level training and brought back information to the teachers. LEA-1-HS noted training provided guidance about how to incorporate assessment data into lesson planning. All schools indicated some level of professional development or training regarding use of interim assessments.

Curriculum and Assessments

At the elementary school level, LEA-1 adopted enVision® as its math curriculum. Because the district had not adopted a main ELA curriculum, teachers used their own

developed curriculum. The school purchased Accessing Complex Text (ACT) books annually because they found them to be highly consistent with the rigor and complexity of the summative assessments. LEA-1-MS used Big Ideas at sixth grade and enVision® at fifth grade. ELA teachers indicated using the standards to drive the curriculum and select instructional material from various books. LEA-1-HS staff noted the district offered a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum (GVC) developed in-house to specify a scope and sequence for ELA and math. The PLC groups at the high school reviewed the GVC to ensure their classes covered the right material. Aside from this guidance, the teachers were given flexibility in what instructional materials to use and activities to complete. An ELA teacher indicated using various resources, stating the district was pilot testing the GVC. Many teachers identified additional resources to fill curriculum gaps. One teacher noted using Marzano’s Critical Concepts as a resource to adjust curriculum to use a standards-based approach encouraged by CAASPP. One teacher noted use of the Springboard by College Board curriculum for EL students.

Teachers from LEA-1 schools used a variety of assessments, in addition to CAASPP IAs and summative assessments, to measure their students’ knowledge and academic growth. LEA-1 schools can build assessments using Illuminate along with other platforms and sources. The LEA funds Illuminate and Hoonuit, two education platforms that provide online classroom assessments, for all schools. HumRRO reviewed a summary table the LEA generated that clearly and concisely described the purposes and capabilities of these platforms. LEA-1-ES used IABs but also downloaded free assessments from Lumos Learning, a source that provides realistic test practice, that mirrored the rigor of the IABs. The principal noted, since there is only one form of each IAB, these assessments enabled teachers to test a topic multiple times without students seeing the same items. LEA-1-ES teachers generated assessments through Illuminate to match instruction. Assessments through Illuminate were used in lower grades year-round, but were used at grades 3–5 only for the first few months until they switched to IABs in January. Another teacher used Quick Checks, online formative assessments available through the enVision® math curriculum, as well as teacher-generated formative assessments. Teachers indicated using ACT and DIBELS for additional testing. LEA-1-MS teachers used Illuminate and assessments from enVision®. Two ELA teachers used a reading survey as a formative assessment to identify student reading levels. The LEA-HS-1 POC did not use common assessments outside the IAB; however, teachers identified or generated their own assessments based on their students’ needs. One ELA teacher reported forming teacher teams to generate assessments and create items similar to summative performance tasks. Some teachers used Google Classroom as a platform to generate tests. Teachers also used assessments created as part of the LEA-developed GVC.

Technology

LEA-1 study schools had adequate access to technology. The district had a one-to-one ratio of student-to-computer, and technology was refreshed every five years. Teachers and school leaders did not indicate access to technology was a barrier to successful implementation of CAASPP components. During 2019–2020, most students used Chromebooks, though some used Lenovos laptops. One of the two LEA-1 POCs

provided technical support to all schools along with an eight-person IT department that works for a district help desk. The district provides training to all school CAASPP site coordinators approximately one month before summative testing to ensure they understand various types of technical problems and how to solve them.

Though technology was not a major barrier for most teachers, the schools experienced occasional technological disruptions. For example, teachers at LEA-1-ES experienced Chromebook inaccessibility errors at times when software was not updated, which required several restarts, including while students attempted to take IABs. Other teachers experienced incompatibility issues with CAASPP when software was not updated. Some teachers had to rely on IT staff for help and resolving problems, which occasionally took some time.

Use of CAASPP Components

LEA-1 did not mandate the use of IAs for 2019–2020; however, its administrators expressed belief in the great value of IAs. The POC thought more schools had chosen to use them over time because they saw improvements to summative assessment scores among schools that used IAs. The three schools in our study had been using IAs for multiple school years, though each was at a different stage of implementation. For example, LEA-1-ES made a school-level decision to administer all IABs at grades 3–5 and share student-level data via a Google document to track students and plan instruction. LEA-1-MS and LEA-1-HS ensured all students experienced IAs prior to the summative assessments, and teachers indicated the IAs were instrumental in motivating them to increase the rigor of their lessons. Though LEA-1 study schools were enthusiastic users of IAs, participants in the study rarely incorporated Digital Library (DL) resources. The LEA and its schools indicated using summative assessment scores to some degree for student achievement tracking and instructional planning purposes. This section further describes use of CAASPP summative assessments, IAs, and the DL by LEA-1 and its schools.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

LEA-1 does not complete summative testing until July, so they typically begin reviewing summative assessment results at the district-level in early August, when data become available for the entire district. However, the LEA-1 POC noted that many schools begin reviewing preliminary results as soon as they are available online, in accordance with CDE guidance. LEA-1 reviewed its summative assessment data in comparison to other large urban school districts in California. The POC noted staff examined reports indicating the 2019 average scale scores and performance level percentages, as well as a multi-year report with longitudinal data. Overall data were examined as well as data disaggregated by various groups and subgroups. This information is presented annually to the school board. The LEA-1 POC also indicated examining claim-level data to understand where the district performed well and where they need improvement. These data, in combination with other data, support decisions on how to allocate funding and

resources. LEA-1 noted each school must generate a data-driven school plan for student achievement (SPSA), with summative assessment data as one source for identifying these goals, and the plans are presented to the board for approval.

LEA-1-ES noted they typically did not administer summative tests until May or June. The school principal monitored scores as they became available in ORS and pulled the information to share at the last staff meeting of the year. The principal noted that everyone wants to know results as soon as possible. The LEA-1-ES principal shared the percentage of students who met or exceeded the math and ELA standards. At the school level, they identified math as an area that required additional attention compared to ELA. Individual teachers indicated performing an in-depth review of the results and examining student performance at the claim level. Teachers in the focus group examined these results to identify potential gaps in their instructional practices. One teacher expressed surprise that students were stronger in writing than reading last year. Another teacher noted the math assessment included a performance task on perimeter for their fifth grade students; however, their students had not covered perimeter since fourth grade. This influenced teachers to spend time reviewing fourth grade standards as a warm-up activity. The LEA-1-ES principal said he believes the summative assessment content encouraged teachers to expose students to rigorous content throughout the year.

The LEA-1-MS POC indicated using summative assessment data at the school in three ways:

1. Measuring student performance at the school as a whole and comparing it to other similar schools in the district. The LEA-1-MS POC and teachers indicated using Illuminate to generate reports.
2. Analyzing individual teachers and student achievement growth in their classrooms.
3. Measuring individual students and informing instructional decisions

For the first two purposes, LEA-1-MS examined the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards overall. The school examined student cohorts over two- to three-year periods to identify changes over time. They described using summative assessment scores to paint “broad strokes,” and using formative assessments to dig deeper. The POC indicated using summative assessment data to identify teachers whose students’ average performance (i.e., percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards) was lower than those of other teachers; the POC then assisted teachers with identifying possible reasons and potential courses of action. When examining individual student performance, claim-level information was analyzed and shared with parents. The POC and teachers noted student-level, summative assessment scores are one set of data points they used to determine student placement (e.g., to identify when a student is ready to begin algebra). Another teacher used scores to decide about partners and groups in the classroom. One teacher examined each student’s achievement level and worked to raise them to the next level.

One teacher expressed awareness they could be digging into the data further, by examining performance at the target level, but they had not gotten to that yet. The LEA-1-MS principal noted that because all students are held to high expectations on the summative assessments, teachers are encouraged to ensure all students are exposed to high levels of rigor throughout the year.

At LEA-1-HS, the POCs held a welcome-back meeting in the fall that included reviewing summative assessment results. School administrators highlighted school-level performance and provided disaggregated results by demographic characteristics. The school primarily focused on proficiency levels when examining results. Based on 2019 results, there was an overall increase in students' ELA and math achievement. They disaggregated the data by demographic groups and found the increase held for minority students and students with disabilities. This increase followed a decrease the year prior, so the school focused on what changed and how to move forward to continue seeing gains.

In recent years, LEA-1-HS learned that lack of student familiarity with some testing features and accommodations (for students with disabilities) might impact students' scores. They had teachers review how various accessibility features worked, by talking with students about what accommodations and universal design features worked for them. For example, teachers found students needed exposure to the built-in calculator in the math assessment.

LEA-1-HS teachers who participated in the focus group had different levels of experience with summative assessment data and indicated that, other than the information provided at the welcome meeting, they were not given guidance about how to access and use results. One teacher had never accessed student results and was not aware they could access them. Others noted checking color-coded results in Illuminate (e.g., red for below expectations), with attention to results in red. One teacher indicated few surprises when examining results, which often mirrored classroom achievement. One teacher expressed a desire for the school to provide customized data to each teacher highlighting their students' performance. One LEA-1-HS ELA teacher noted the summative assessments impacted classroom instruction because they require use of evidence and reasoning. This required the teacher to adjust instruction throughout the year to ensure students developed these skills and were prepared for the assessment. The teacher noted previous statewide multiple-choice tests did not hold students to such high expectations. Similarly, another LEA-1-HS ELA teacher felt that the school shifted to include many non-fiction texts for reading, including historical or science-based texts, and that this was directly related to the content of summative assessments. This shift resulted in greater unity across the school, as now history and science teachers focus on reading comprehension as a result of expectations on the summative assessments. Two teachers from LEA-1-HS noted a concern about requiring EL students to be assessed in math their first year at the school, when they were not required to be tested in ELA. These teachers considered the CAASPP math assessments "language heavy" and believed it better to put off math testing for ELs for a year as well, because many could not read well enough to comprehend the text of the math questions.

Impacts of Cancelled 2020 Summative Testing

Due to demands of virtual learning and unexpected end-of-year activities, LEA-1 POCs were unable to participate in the end-of-year focus groups to gather information on potential impacts of the cancelled summative assessments. However, we understand from our conversations throughout the year that schools and the LEA used this information to assist with planning and establishing goals. Therefore, we expect the lack of data will have impact on these activities during the 2020–2021 school year.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

LEA-1 did not mandate use of IAs, and not all schools within the district chose to use them. However, the LEA monitored school progress and required each principal to create a comprehensive assessment plan by collaborating with their teachers. An LEA-1 POC indicated many schools that chose to use the IABs saw gains on the summative assessments, which led to other schools adopting the IABs over time. The three LEA-1 participating schools were chosen because they embraced the IABs.

LEA-1-ES chose to administer all IABs at each grade level for ELA and math. The teachers worked within their PLCs to map out an IAB schedule that aligned with planned instruction. The POC provided HumRRO with the school's IAB schedule for the 2019–2020 school year, which presented the planned timing of administration of each IAB by grade. The schedule listed each IAB along with the date range during which administration should occur.

At LEA-1-MS teachers were expected to administer two IABs throughout the year, choosing assessments based on what fit with their instructional plans. Teachers began IAB administration at various times in the year.

LEA-1-HS school leadership provided teachers information about their options for IABs and tasked PLCs with using that information to decide which IABs to administer. In addition, to give students practice on tests of similar format to the summative assessments they would take in eleventh grade, LEA-1-HS suggested teachers administer the eighth grade Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) to ninth graders, and the ninth grade ICA to tenth graders. LEA-1-HS did not require twelfth grade students to take IAs.

Table C.3 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in the three LEA-1 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year, and the number of IAB tests taken by students in all LEA-1 schools. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table also indicates how many enrolled students within the LEA and at each school were eligible to take the CAASPP summative assessments. Additionally, the table indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or mathematics) and how many were administered in a standardized versus non-

standardized manner. In addition to the IABs, five schools at LEA-1 administered an average of 132 ICAs each, with an average of 60 administered in ELA and 72 for math.

Table C.3 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-1 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # ELA and Math IABs	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized ELA and Math IABs	# Non-Standardized ELA and Math IABs
LEA-1	49,734	36,076	17,050	19,026	24,022	12,054
LEA-1-ES	73	794	524	270	636	158
LEA-1-MS	730	1,779	474	1,305	1,589	190
LEA-1-HS	516	2,356	1,680	676	1,832	524

Explanation of table contents: *The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s participating schools. Row 1 shows LEA-1 had 49,734 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. CAASPP eligible students are those in grades 3–8 and 11 who do not have a disability that prevents them from taking the assessments. LEA-1 administered 36,076 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 17,050 tests were for ELA and 19,026 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 24,022 were given in a standardized manner and 12,054 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).*

LEA-1 study schools had flexibility in how they administered IABs, and the LEA-1 POC did not track whether schools used IABs in a standardized or non-standardized manner. The teachers involved in focus groups at all three schools administered the IABs in a standardized manner; not all teachers were familiar with the non-standardized option. In fact, HumRRO researchers had to explain what non-standardized administration might look like to teachers at LEA-1-MS and LEA-1-HS. Upon learning about the possibility of non-standardized administrations, two teachers at LEA-1-MS noted this would not be useful to them because they would not be able to use the data to understand what students know. Because LEA-1-ES used IAB scores to track school-wide student performance across all IABs, they used IABs in a standardized manner.

HumRRO asked about the use of Focused IABs (FIABs). One of the LEA-1 POCs expressed excitement about them, noting they would provide more granular information. Similarly, one of the LEA-1-HS POCs was excited to present the FIABs to their teachers. Teachers at LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS had not yet used the FIABs at the time of the focus groups, nor had ELA teachers at LEA-1-MS. Some math teachers at LEA-1-MS had used FIABs, and the LEA-1-MS POC expressed a desire for more math IABs to extend to other standards.

Table C.4 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) there were for specific ELA and mathematics IABs, by grade level, across the three LEA-1 study schools during the 2019–20 school year. Frequency of administration of an IAB for some grades includes more than one school. As shown, ELA and math IABs were given

at every grade, with grade five seeing the most opportunities. The most frequently administered ELA IAs were Language and Vocabulary Use, Read Informational Texts, and Read Informational Text. The LEA-1 schools in our study did not include students at eighth grade; however, we note some eighth grade IAB use – these were used by the high school. The most frequently administered math IABs were Operations and Algebraic Thinking and Number Operations in Base 10.

Table C.4 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-1, by Domain and Grade, 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Brief Writes*	0	1	0	0	0	1
ELA	Editing**	1	1	1	0	N/A	3
ELA	Edit/Revise	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0
ELA	Language and Vocabulary Use**	2	2	2	2	N/A	2
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	1	0	3	0	2	3
ELA	Performance Task*	0	0	0	0	0	1
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	1	1	3	2	0	1
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	1	2	2	1	0	1
ELA	Research	0	2	1	0	1	1
ELA	Research: Analyze Information**	0	0	0	0	0	2
ELA	Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	0	1	1	0	0	1
ELA	Revision	0	0	1	0	N/A	1
ELA	Write and Revise Narratives***	2	0	1	0	0	1
ELA		8	10	15	5	4	16
Math	Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions**	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Algebra and Functions I – Linear Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Algebra and Functions II – Quadratic Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Divide Fractions by Fractions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Expressions and Equations	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1	0
Math	Expressions & Equations I**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Expressions & Equations II**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A

Table C.4 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 8	HS
Math	Four Operations: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry**	0	0	1	0	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Geometry Measurement and Modeling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry & Right Triangle Trigonometry**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Multiply and Divide within 100**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations – Fractions	N/A	0	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten	N/A	2	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	2	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals**	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear and Exponential**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	The Number System	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math		4	4	16	3	4	5
BOTH		12	12	31	8	8	21

Note: 5th grade IABs were administered in LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS. 8th grade IABs were administered in LEA-1-HS.

**IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

NA indicates the IAB was not available at that grade level.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across the LEA-1 schools in the study. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows that in LEA-1 there were no testing opportunities for Brief Write IABs for grades 3, 5, 6 and 8, and one opportunity for grades 4 and high school.

At LEA-1-ES, which planned to administer all IABs, all teachers conducted hand scoring. One teacher indicated receiving hand scoring training years ago at the district-level, others indicated not having received formal training. The teachers felt hand scoring was a straightforward process once they got used to it. The LEA-1-ES principal provided teachers with exemplars for hand scoring available through the CAASPP system and was aware some teachers also showed these to students. Those teachers had students assign scores to the exemplars to help students understand what was expected in a good response.

The LEA-1-MS ELA teachers conducted hand scoring together in a PLC. They said they had sufficient time and training to accomplish the task. The LEA-1-MS math teachers only administered the IAs; they did not hand score students' responses.

The LEA-1-HS POCs had not yet trained teachers in hand scoring and teachers echoed this, noting they had not had training and did not have the time to administer IAs that would require hand scoring.

HumRRO also learned about use of the IAs with students with disabilities and EL students, including designated supports and accommodations. All LEA-1 study schools indicated using IABs with students with disabilities and EL students, and all agreed it was beneficial to provide exposure to the platform and accessibility features in preparation for the summative assessments. The LEA-1-ES principal noted including the teacher of the school's mild-to-moderately disabled students in planning for IA administration to ensure students had proper settings for accommodations and modifications. LEA-1-ES also arranged for students included in the Individual Education Program (IEP), to take the IABs in a separate room to mirror the process of summative assessment administrations. A teacher from LEA-1-MS noted that all assessments were difficult for students with disabilities and EL students, so they supported the students by providing them experience with the digital tools. One teacher indicated the students had difficulty with the assessment content; however, the teacher also noted the assessments provided a valid indication of the students' abilities. Similarly, teachers from LEA-1-HS felt it was beneficial for students with disabilities to experience the IAs. One teacher noted that administering the IAs was "giving them [students with disabilities] an opportunity to familiarize themselves with tools so they can focus on the content when it comes time for the [summative] test".

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

LEA-1 school administrators and classroom teachers used IAs to track student progress and inform classroom instruction in various ways. At the school level, LEA-1-ES developed a spreadsheet in Google docs, accessible to all teachers, to track student performance based on the IABs. The school principal translated IAB scores to the summative assessment proficiency scale (i.e., did not meet, nearly met, met, or exceeded the standard) for each student on each standard. Teachers were expected to view the spreadsheet to identify what their students had already mastered, and where they needed more help. The LEA-1-ES principal presented the spreadsheet, which was

color-coded by student performance on the standards, to HumRRO staff during the site visit. The user-friendly format enabled the teachers to easily identify the strengths and weaknesses of any student at their school.

Teachers at all LEA-1 study schools indicated using IAB data to inform instruction. For example, a teacher at LEA-1-MS used IAB data to identify what content students struggled with and adjusted instruction to provide more exposure to those topics and skills. Teachers from LEA-1-ES reported similar uses. Multiple teachers used data to inform decisions about what content to reteach or spend more time reviewing. Many teachers indicated reviewing as a class the questions students missed most frequently. For example, two teachers at LEA-1-MS incorporated frequently missed items into class warmup activities, presenting the questions on the board and reviewing them together. An LEA-1-MS ELA teacher discussed presenting examples of high and low performance on hand scored items to help students understand what was required to achieve full credit. LEA-1-HS teachers noted going through the IAB results together with their class and noting where students performed well or poorly, using the information to identify where additional focus was required.

Teachers also discussed the impact of IABs as an important CAASPP component to help increase the cognitive demand of classroom instruction in ELA and math. The LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS administrators viewed the IABs as an effective way to provide exposure to a strong level of rigor throughout the school year to prepare students for rigorous summative assessments at the end of the year. The LEA-1-ES principal assisted his teachers with identifying rigorous types of questions to incorporate into lessons, in addition to giving the IAs, to expose students to even more rigorous questions to help them prepare for the summative assessments. Principals from LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS felt the increased rigor of IAs as classroom assessments was beneficial to students, particularly those in traditionally disadvantaged groups who had not always been pushed in the past. One stated: "I would argue probably one of the most important aspects of implementing the interims is standardizing the rigor that exists in every classroom." LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS teachers agreed that using IAs throughout the year exposed students to higher expectations than what they encountered previously in their classrooms. One LEA-1-HS teacher said that administering IAs throughout the year resulted in a big shift in teacher and student thinking.

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

Teachers and school leaders at all three LEA-1 study schools believed IAs were beneficial for preparing students for the summative assessment. This included the technological aspects, accommodations and tools, and content and rigor. The LEA CAASPP coordinator provided an analogy: a student who practices driving using a Volvo (assessment unlike the summative) will not want to take their driving test using a Ferrari (summative) because they will not know how to drive it (will not have knowledge and experience of content, rigor, online features). The LEA-1-ES principal noted that by the time students were in front of computers for the summative assessments, they did not need their login cards and because they knew how to manipulate the screens,

highlight, and interact with the entirety of the online assessment. Teachers from their school echoed this viewpoint and noted their students were fully prepared for the process when it came time to test. Others discussed the importance of familiarizing students with the summative assessment tools and accommodations. Teachers from LEA-1-MS noted that experience with the IAs helped reduce test anxiety because students had an opportunity to deal with the same digital tools they had available on the summative assessment. One LEA-1-HS teacher believed it was important to familiarize students with the embedded calculator tool on the math assessment because many students struggled when they were required to use it instead of their classroom calculator. However, other teachers at the high school level noted mixed success to exposing students to the tools prior to the summative assessment. Teachers observed students occasionally had difficulty with online features they had been exposed to on past IAs. For example, students asked where to find the questions on the screen because they failed to scroll down to find the question, when they should have been familiar with the technology. An LEA-1-HS administrator indicated the importance of administering IAs to help students as well as teachers feel more comfortable using the system.

As noted in the previous section, many school leaders and teachers felt the IAs were useful to prepare students for the level of rigor they experienced on the summative assessments. The POCs and teachers who spoke to the rigor of the IAs felt they were effective in preparing for the summative assessments, with one exception. One teacher expressed concern that the IAs were too rigorous in comparison to the summative assessments.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

For the 2019–2020 school year, student rostering was completed centrally at the district office by the LEA CAASPP coordinator. Teachers needed to wait until this rostering was complete to administer the IAs. Generally, the school leaders and teachers used the California Educator Reporting System (CERS) to obtain results and did not have trouble accessing them. However, some teachers who used the system infrequently reported issues with logging in and remembering their password. Teachers at LEA-1-MS and LEA-1-HS accessed interim assessment results themselves; those at LEA-1-MS had a dedicated technology person to assist when needed. The principal at LEA-1-ES accessed student results for all classes and provided results in a Google doc.

Student Experiences with Interim Assessments

LEA-1-HS participated in the optional student questionnaire data collection activity that examined students' perspectives about their experiences with the IAs. Table C.5 summarizes, by grade level, the characteristics of responding students. Note that LEA-1-HS administered surveys for ELA and math IAs, and some students may have responded to both. LEA-1-HS had 324 responses to the IA surveys. Students were not required to respond to each survey question.

Table C.5 Summary of LEA-1-HS Student Questionnaire Respondents

Student Demographic Variables	Percent Distribution (n count)
Grade	
Nine	56% (n = 183)
Ten	23% (n = 76)
Eleven	12% (n = 38)
Twelve	8% (n = 27)
Gender	
Female	46% (n = 148)
Male	53% (n = 172)
Non-Binary	>1% (n = 1)
Prefer Not to Say	1% (n = 3)
Racial Identity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1% (n = 3)
Asian	41% (n = 120)
Black or African American	3% (n = 8)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3% (n = 10)
White	24% (n = 72)
2 or More Races	28% (n = 83)
Ethnic Identity	
Hispanic	21% (n = 66)
Non-Hispanic	79% (n = 247)
IEP	
No	84% (n = 255)
Yes	16% (n = 49)

Table C.6 summarizes student experiences with the IABs according to responses to multiple-choice and multiple select items. As shown, most students reported experience taking IABs in a standardized manner only, with 90% of respondents responding about ELA IABs and 77% responding about math IABs. For both content areas, the most common reason students reported teachers had used IABs in their classroom was to see how well they learned certain skills. In math, the second most common reason students said teachers used IABs was to practice taking an online assessment. For ELA IABs, the second most common reason reported was to identify what skills they needed to learn. Regarding math IABs, more students indicated their teacher wanted them to practice taking an online test; this was consistent with HumRRO’s discussions with teachers who noted students needed practice using the calculator tool in math to be

successful. Thirty-five percent of students responding about the ELA IAB and 40 percent of students responding about math indicated they used IAB data to identify gaps in their learning. Slightly less than half the responding teachers used IAB data to identify which skills to reteach.

Table C.6 LEA-1-HS Student Questionnaire Responses to Multiple-Choice and Multiple Select Survey Questions for ELA and Math IABs

Student IAB Usage Variables	ELA IAB Usage	Math IAB Usage
IAB Administration Manner		
Standardized	90% (<i>n</i> = 132)	77% (<i>n</i> = 132)
Standardized and Non-Standardized	6% (<i>n</i> = 9)	9% (<i>n</i> = 16)
Non-Standardized	4% (<i>n</i> = 6)	19% (<i>n</i> = 33)
Teacher's Stated Goals for Administering IAB		
Find out what skills I need to learn	27% (<i>n</i> = 40)	13% (<i>n</i> = 22)
Practice certain skills	16% (<i>n</i> = 23)	19% (<i>n</i> = 32)
Practice taking an online test	7% (<i>n</i> = 11)	22% (<i>n</i> = 38)
See how well I learned certain skills	41% (<i>n</i> = 61)	35% (<i>n</i> = 61)
No response		
IAB Data Used to Identify Gaps in Learning		
Do Not Remember	0%	0%
No	65% (<i>n</i> = 95)	60% (<i>n</i> = 102)
Yes	35% (<i>n</i> = 51)	40% (<i>n</i> = 69)
IAB Led to Teacher Reteaching Skills		
Do Not Remember	0%	0%
No	54% (<i>n</i> = 77)	53% (<i>n</i> = 90)
Yes	46% (<i>n</i> = 66)	47% (<i>n</i> = 79)
Student Used IAB Tools		
No	67% (<i>n</i> = 96)	86% (<i>n</i> = 146)
Yes	33% (<i>n</i> = 50)	14% (<i>n</i> = 23)

Students who used IAB information to learn what skills they needed to work on were asked to provide an example. Those who responded to a math IAB generally noted a specific math skill (e.g., fractions, geometry, or trigonometry), though approximately half the students who responded affirmatively did not provide an answer or indicated they did not remember. For ELA, students commonly reported learning they needed to work on their writing skills. One student noted “I learned that I had to improve on my evidence

and reasoning for most of my paragraphs.” Other students mentioned grammar, spelling, and formatting as skills they needed to improve. Fewer students in ELA forgot which skills they needed to improve. Students provided examples of teachers acting on IAB results. For example, one student indicated “She [ELA teacher] took groups of students that were having the same problems and worked on that specific problem, she switched off every day with new students and opened the opportunity to be able to come to her for help before and after school and during lunch.” One student who responded about a math teacher stated, “She would always help us with a problem we did not know how do to in groups or individually”.

Students also provided information about assessment tools. As indicated in Table C.6, more than half the responding students did not use tools. Of those who did, students mentioned the highlighter and strikethrough as tools they found useful. Only four students chose to provide a response to a question asking if they had anything more to say. One student was concerned they were tested on content they were not yet taught, and another noted the IA was hard. One suggested it was useful to understand what they did not know, and one student offered, “I'd wish there was more of a study guide we could go over in class all together. Sometimes when other people ask questions it helps me think about the various possibilities that may appear on the test. There's a lot of stress in taking any test so at least feeling slightly prepared could help.”

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

Teachers tended not to use IAs during distance learning. One LEA-1-ES teacher noted the focus was on keeping students from regressing in their knowledge. A teacher from LEA-1-MS r did not want to throw another technology tool at students when they were “climbing the learning curve of distance learning itself.”

Digital Library

Though most educators who participated in the study were familiar with the DL, there was little use of this resource across LEA-1. LEA-1 POCs noted they provided training and information about the DL. Specifically, those who participated in district training were shown how to access the Connections Playlist from the IA results in CERS to find instructional resources targeted to students’ IAB performance. LEA-1-ES teachers and principal felt the DL was cumbersome and not user-friendly. One teacher could never find what they wanted when they had tried to use it. Multiple teachers indicated having never accessed the DL. One LEA-1-MS teacher noted a group of teachers tried out a lesson they discovered in the DL during a PLC meeting. However, these teachers felt they already had access to better resources, so that was the only time they used the DL. Other LEA-1-MS teachers indicated not having the time to use the DL. An LEA-1-HS administrator suggested using the DL to special education teachers, but they did not take them up on the offer. Similarly, nearly all teachers HumRRO spoke with indicated only a slight familiarity with the DL and that they had not used it.

Best Practices

HumRRO identified the following best practices performed across LEA-1 participating schools:

- Track IAB performance data in a shareable file viewable by all teachers. LEA-1-ES provided IAB data in a user-friendly Google spreadsheet accessible to all LEA-1 teachers and administrators. This shareable file allowed teachers to quickly identify the strengths and weaknesses, by CCSS, of their current, past, and future students.
- Provide students the opportunity to practice with the technology, tools, and accessibility features required to help them do their best on the summative assessment.
- Work with special education teachers to ensure students with disabilities are provided the necessary learning opportunities and exposure to technology, including accommodations, for the best chance at success.
- Use CAASPP summative and interim assessments to encourage increased rigor in the classroom. For all students, generate lessons, assignments, and classroom assessments that meet a high level of rigor.
- Use hand scoring writing exemplars to help students understand what is expected in a full credit constructed response.
- Administer IABs in a non-standardized manner as classroom warm-ups and review activities, to identify areas of student weaknesses, and to familiarize students with the online test and different item types.

LEA-2 Findings

LEA-2 participation included 1 elementary school (ES), 1 middle school (MS), and 1 high school (HS). Table C.7 summarizes the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. As shown, LEA-2 participated in all aspects of the study excepting the student questionnaires. Twenty-two teachers participated in site visit focus groups across the three schools. The site visit leader interviews included an assistant principal and principal from each school, a learning director from LEA-2-MS, and the LEA POC. Participants responded to most monthly polling invitations, and the end-of-year virtual focus groups included representatives from each study school and the LEA. The schools and LEA POCs provided a variety of documents illustrating training resources and testing schedules used by the LEA and schools.

Table C.7 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-2

Data Source	Participants/Description
Site Visit Educator Focus Group	ES – 8 teachers in two focus groups: grade three (3), four (3), and six (2) MS – 6 teachers in two focus groups: grade seven ELA (2); grade seven math (2), and grade eight math (2) HS – 7 teachers in two focus groups: grade eleven ELA (4); math 2 (1), math 3 (2)
Site Visit Leader Interview	ES – School POC (assistant principal) and principal MS – School POC (principal), assistant principal, and learning director HS – School POC (assistant principal) and principal LEA – POC (coordinator of Assessment and Accountability), and Curriculum and Instruction Program specialist
Monthly Polling	ES – January (POC, 6 teachers), January (16 teachers), February (POC, 5 teachers), March (POC, 5 teachers), April (POC, 3 teachers) MS – December (POC, 2 teachers), January (POC, 7 teachers), February (POC, 6 teachers), March (POC, 5 teachers), April (POC) HS – January (POC, 5 teachers); February (3 teachers) LEA – December (POC), January (POC), February (POC, program specialist), March (POC), April (program specialist)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Group	ES – POC MS – assistant principal HS – POC LEA – POC and program specialist
Student Questionnaires	N/A
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019–2020 SBAC coordinator initial training • 2019 School Plan for Student Achievement • 2019–2020 LEA-2 assessment schedule • 2019–2020 Calendar • Assessment Best Practices – May 2019 • Assessments August 2019 • CAASPP data meetings 2019 • CAASPP training 2018–19 • Constructed Response Grading • Copy of 2019–2020 Meeting Schedule LEA-2-MS Master • Copy of Test Prep Reimagined Nov. Study Sessions • School Framework for Learning • Data presentation Fall 2018 elementary • District Assessment & Best Practices • District roadmap 2019

Table C.7 (cont.)

Data Source	Participants/Description
Documentation (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA ICA PT Training • ELA Interims Decision 2019-20 • Final 2019-2020 Student Calendar 7.19.19 • Focus on Achievement Presentations 2019-2020 • Interim • Kami Export – 7th Grade 18-19 HMH Scope and Sequence • Math ICA PT Training • Math Interims Decision 19-20 • Mission and Vision • SBAC Interim Assessment Quick Guides • SBAC resources for beg. year 19-20 • SBACGoalSettingForm2019 • Student SBAC Goal Setting PowerPoint • Test Prep Reimagined Nov. Study Session • Testing Schedule 19-20 • VP 2019-2020 Assessment Calendars

At the LEA level, the coordinator of Assessment and Accountability acted as the main POC, with a specialist from Curriculum and Instruction acting as a partner throughout. The school principal acted as the POC for LEA-2-MS and the assistant principals acted as POCs for LEA-2-ES and LEA-2-HS. Additional school administration staff participated in each site visit for each school, as specified in Table 2.1 above. At each study school, differing numbers of teachers participated in focus groups and monthly polling:

- At LEA-2-ES, ten teachers provided data. Eight teachers participated in the focus group; they had between 5 and 27 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers plus two additional teachers participated in monthly polling.
- At LEA-2-MS, eight teachers provided data. Six teachers participated in the focus group; these included four ELA teachers and two mathematics teachers. They had between 4 and 30 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers plus two additional teachers participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-2-HS, seven teachers provided data. Seven teachers participated in the focus group; these included four ELA teachers and three mathematics teachers. They had between 3 and 35 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-2 is a medium-sized district in central California. The district includes 13 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 high schools. Table C.2 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the LEA and its 3 participating Case Study schools. Data were obtained from the 2018-2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE’s website (DataQuest).

As shown in Table C.8, the three schools selected to participate had similar percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities and were similar to LEA-2 overall. The schools differed in percent of English learner (EL) students. In LEA-2-HS, approximately one-third of the student population identified as EL compared to the LEA-wide average of 31 percent. Most LEA-2 students did not meet ELA or math standards in 2018–2019. Only LEA-2-HS had more than half of the students meet or exceed the ELA state standards. The percentages of students meeting the math standards were low across the study schools.

Table C.8 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-2 and Its Participating School, 2018–2019

Variables	LEA-2	LEA-2-ES	LEA-2-MS	LEA-2-HS
Enrollment	13,870	686	729	2,079
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	84%	80%	90%	84%
% Students with Disabilities	9%	9%	11%	7%
% English Learners	31%	36%	27%	12%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	3%	2%	1%	2%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	38%	45%	29%	58%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	25%	32%	17%	20%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the next columns provide information for the LEA overall and for each of the LEA’s study schools. The second column (from top to bottom) shows in LEA-2 there was a total enrollment of 13,870 in 2018–2019. Of these students, 84% were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 9% were students with disabilities, 31% were English learners, and 3% were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–2019 summative assessments indicated 38% of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 25% of students met or exceeded math state standards.

The district recently implemented a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) model to identify and support students in need of academic and/or behavioral needs. This intervention targeted reduced

suspensions and other behavioral challenges. LEA-2 administrators reported implementation consumed the teachers' focus, in terms of tracking the MTSS/PBIS intervention at the expense of more focus on instruction and student academic achievement. Additionally, LEA-2 recently (two years ago) went through the process of identifying from the ELA and mathematics Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of essential standards for each grade and/or course. Teachers from across the district gathered into common grade-level or course-specific teams to identify eight to ten essential standards for the district. The district's essential standards inform how teachers think about the curriculum and assessment results. Teachers were expected to achieve 100 percent student proficiency on each essential standard.

Professional Learning Communities

LEA-2 emphasized the importance of professional learning communities (PLCs) throughout its schools. The LEA-2 POC stated that each site had two scheduled times for PLCs to meet each month: elementary schools had two early student dismissal days (one early release, one minimal day), and secondary schools had two late start days. Additionally, an external organization, Solution Tree, was brought in by the LEA each of the past two summers to provide training to teachers and administrators on how to effectively use PLC time. The district also scheduled time for principals to gather and conduct their own cross-site PLC. The district recommended teachers use PLC time to examine assessment data and collectively make plans to address their findings.

LEA-2-ES administrators and teachers described a concerted effort to collaborate within grade-level teams. Administrators and teachers indicated there was one scheduled early release day each month for PLC meetings. Additionally, LEA-2 school administrators provided another monthly grade-level 45-minute period for PLC meetings when students attended assemblies while the teachers met. Teachers reported these formal PLC meetings often required an end product to be submitted to administrators. Teachers also took advantage of lunch times, informal times before and after school, and texts and calls during weekends to collaborate. Collaboration included preparing lesson plans and developing common formative and summative assessments, as well as analyzing assessment data to determine next steps in the teaching process.

LEA-2-MS also had a strong practice of PLCs. Three out of four monthly scheduled for late start Wednesdays were used for PLC collaboration. Additionally, during the week when PLC collaboration was not scheduled, teachers still met, but on Monday. The school also scheduled classes such that grade-level subject teams had common prep periods during which teachers could meet. PLCs planned lessons, coordinated pacing through instructional units, developed formative and summative assessments, and discussed results from the assessments. PLCs were often used to plan how the school's daily intervention period would be used to meet students' academic needs.

LEA-2-HS also offered multiple opportunities each week for PLCs to collaborate. Teachers in grade-level subject teams described meeting two to four times a week, either on late start days, during Monday afternoon meetings, or during other noninstructional times (e.g., common prep periods among two or more teachers). LEA-

2-HS collaboration times centered around the unit organizer, a resource used by the PLC to discuss goals for student learning, resources to be used to achieve the goals, and tools to determine whether the goals had been reached. Teachers also described receiving trainings on various CAASPP resources (e.g., IABs) from fellow teachers during these meetings. Additionally, teachers used this time to review IAB questions in advance of administering an IAB to students. LEA-2-HS teachers also mentioned the existence of vertical PLCs, in which teachers from courses spanning multiple grades met to determine how their courses collectively facilitated student growth and development across students' time in high school.

Professional Development

LEA-2 administrators typically participated throughout the school year in CDE professional development training sessions (e.g., California Assessment Conference) and webcasts. LEA-2 administrators drew upon the CDE professional development to determine the training they subsequently provided to CAASPP site coordinators. This year, the LEA provided site-level leaders training on the Smarter Content Explorer, an online resource used to search for item specifications that link claims and assessment targets to the content standards. The training was intended to help teachers move toward assessing students using bundled standards similar to the targets used in the CAASPP assessments. The LEA also established a team of instructional coaches and education technology specialists to provide on-site training, including how to access and analyze IAB data. The LEA CAASPP coordinator maintained a shared drive for all teachers to access the LEA's CAASPP trainings. LEA-2-ES and LEA-2-MS teachers confirmed they received training from the LEA staff and were aware of the resources available to them. However, teachers noted having inadequate time to continue to explore what they learned in professional development and the constant demands on their thoughts and attention stemming from their typical day-to-day work. Therefore, they often forgot the information before they were able to use it.

Curriculum and Assessments

For mathematics curricula, LEA-2 used Harcourt Mifflin Houghton's *Go Math!*[®] for kindergarten through eighth grades and Integrated Mathematics for ninth through twelfth grades. For ELA curricula, LEA-2 used Benchmark Advance[®] for kindergarten through sixth grades and the College Board's SpringBoard for seventh through twelfth grades. These curricula include online resources that were generally used, except in high school math courses. In discussions about the curriculum, high school math teachers determined their coursework based on their PLC analysis of the state standards, with the Integrated Math curriculum used more as a supplemental resource. LEA-2 district officials provided a scope and sequencing document for coursework in kindergarten through sixth grade that teachers followed.

LEA-2 required its schools to administer a number of different assessments. Every grade between third and eleventh grade was required to administer two ELA and two math IABs identified by the district based on essential standards. The district set a deadline by which these IABs should be administered and graded. Specific

assessments from the district-wide curriculum were also expected to be administered; for example, LEA-2-MS ELA teachers were expected to administer five assessments from the SpringBoard curriculum. A variety of Benchmark Advance® assessments were required for kindergarten through second grade students, and Smarter Balanced-like performance task assessments were administered to second grade students through the Benchmark Advance® platform. Oral Running Records were administered to students in kindergarten through sixth grade. LEA-2 POC described that each assessment has a particular purpose (e.g., judging summer slide, determining reading groups). Teachers across all levels described creating formative and summative assessments in their PLCs (both written and through online programs, including Socrative or Google Forms), with common formative assessments administered either weekly or every other week in the study schools. Some elementary school teachers administered PLC-created pre-tests for every unit. Some teachers and administrators complained about the amount of testing required and not having adequate time or capacity to digest the data coming from the various sources.

Technology

LEA-2 had adequate technology to administer CAASPP. School sites had access to specialists in educational technology who provided onsite support and training.

Use of CAASPP Components

Site-level administrators noted that a strength of the CAASPP ELA and math summative assessments relative to previous state summative assessments is that they require higher level thinking across the breadth of the standards. The same higher level of rigor is found in the IABs. These higher expectations stimulated teachers to raise the level of rigor in their instruction and classroom assessments. At the same time, LEA-2-MS and LEA-2-ES teachers expressed concern that the CAASPP assessments included a high level of reading and the question prompts are too complex for their students. LEA-2 administrators praised the Smarter Content Explorer resource as a tool that provided details about the relation between items and standards as well as information on how standards are bundled together to form an assessment. Administrators also noted that while Smarter Balanced and CDE provide great information and resources on their websites, it can be difficult to monitor. One administrator described it in this way, “There’s so many different sites with different information related to CAASPP”, and “I’ll go looking for something and find ten other gems that I didn’t know were there.” More guidance in addition to the weekly *Assessment Spotlight* emails from the CDE, and a searchable index for CAASPP information would be beneficial. Additionally, teachers found the Test Operations Management System (TOMS) website to be complex to navigate effectively.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

According to the POC, LEA-2 received its 2019 summative assessment data before the 2018–2019 academic year concluded and shared results with school administrators before the summer break. LEA-2 staff imported summative data into software (Tableau) that enabled the district to generate visualizations for each school at the scale score, proficiency score, distance from met, claim score, and target score levels. They also uploaded data into Illuminate to increase the accessibility of results to school staff. LEA-2 generated data to compare its district to others in the state, and to make school-level comparisons within the district. The LEA-2 coordinator of assessment and accountability described meeting with each individual school administrator to discuss a specified set of questions about the initial summative assessment results. The questions were designed to help site-level administrators form ideas and identify key comparisons of student achievement level and claim scores over time, comparisons across county and state, and growth in achievement level performance. The Tableau reports were made available to the grade-level teams. In discussions with school administrators, the LEA-2 coordinator of assessment and accountability focused on item specifications and claims and targets to better understand how standards are assessed jointly. This led to an emphasis in PLCs to teach and assess standards in combination with each other rather than as individual standards to be mastered.

LEA-2-ES teachers indicated they typically attended a staff meeting where the principal presented the results by grade level for ELA and math outcomes; however, some teachers could not recall whether this occurred for 2019 results. The principal indicated this staff meeting examined scale scores by cohort year to year. Some teachers sought their students' results during the summer from their district's data upload through Illuminate, primarily for the purpose of helping them reflect on their teaching. Other teachers had not individually pursued information from the previous year's summative assessments because their students advanced to another grade, so teachers thought those data would not be useful. Teachers expressed an interest in obtaining data for their incoming students to determine interventions, but they had not yet received or acquired that information. Each grade level was expected to set an ELA and Math SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based) goal based on the district's essential standards. LEA-2-ES teachers and administrators stated that the summative assessment instructions were too verbose and complex for their students, and that the assessment appearance is visually overwhelming and difficult for the students.

The LEA-2-MS principal described a multi-step process using summative assessment results. The principal initially shared with department chairs comparisons to the district and other middle schools during a meeting at the beginning of the school year. The department chairs then shared the data with their team. To create an atmosphere of respect, the principal communicated a general "need to improve" message with the whole staff rather than focusing on more targeted (e.g., classroom, student) results and

singling out individual teachers. The principal shared scale score and claim score results with team leaders and later met with each team.

In response to the 2019 summative assessment results, the LEA-2-MS principal offered professional development opportunities, release days, and performance contracts to help teachers improve students' future performance. LEA-2-MS teachers described receiving assessment results in a spreadsheet during a meeting with their principal, with proficiency levels and claim scores reported by grade and over time. This led to a discussion of what the school could do to help students improve their critical thinking skills. The teaching staff resolved to use more group-focused teaching and building into the weekly schedule ELA and math intervention time. Teachers suggested the summative results did not link to specific standards, making it difficult to target changes to the curriculum, so they instead emphasized more general changes in approach. Additionally, teachers questioned the validity of the summative assessment data because they feared students may not have been motivated to perform to the best of their ability. Administrators described engaging in more classroom observations and discussions with departmental teams about how to shift instructional practices from ingrained approaches to more efficient approaches to achieve better results. The school's learning director conducted goal setting with students, typically in the month leading up to the test, by reviewing the past year's results and setting goals for the coming year's tests.

LEA-2-HS teachers described accessing individual student summative assessment scores in June 2019 and then again at an initial staff meeting in August 2019 where administrators reported the percentage of students who did and did not achieve proficiency in each content area. During the staff meeting, LEA-2-HS administrators focused on strengths and select areas for growth. LEA-2-HS administrators described the difficulty of helping all staff members understand their role in the CAASPP summative results when only students in eleventh grade take the ELA and math assessments. Relatedly, eleventh grade teachers reported difficulty effectively helping their incoming students when the most recent summative assessment results available were from eighth grade. Administrators presented results in more detail to math and ELA PLCs; however, teachers did not believe these data were sufficient to provide guidance on how to adjust their instruction. Though further detail on student results was available through Illuminate, some teachers indicated they did not know where to access those results. Additionally, teachers expressed insufficient understanding of how the results should be interpreted. During the focus group, these teachers requested that CDE provide more practical examples showing how actual teachers use summative results to inform classroom practices. Teachers also questioned the extent to which last year's students' summative results should be generalized to the incoming students. Math teachers observed that one claim score (concepts and procedures) was much higher than two other claim scores across most students who were proficient. As a result, they made sure to emphasize the other two claims in their coursework this year.

Impacts of Suspended 2020 Summative Testing

LEA-2 administrators anticipated the lack of complete 2019–2020 summative testing will create challenges for their district. They expected to use Oral Reading Record, IABs, or PLC-created formative assessments from the second trimester to inform instructional planning and goal setting. They intended to avoid any traditional assessments at the start of the 2020–2021 school year and instead focus on addressing the students' socioemotional learning needs. Additionally, the LEA planned to conduct vertical articulation across grade levels to learn what was missed at the end of the 2019–2020 school year that should be covered in the 2020–2021 curriculum.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

The 2019–2020 school year was the third year in which LEA-2 emphasized the use of IABs. Starting last year, schools were required to administer a certain number of IABs. Specifically, LEA-2 mandated that each academic year schools administer two ELA IABs in grades three through eight and eleven, two math IABs in grades three through six, and four or five math IABs in grades seven through eleven. The LEA specified the two ELA IABs to administer: Read Literary Texts and Read Informational Texts. Math IABs in lower grades were assigned by the district based on the scope and sequence for the given grade. All decisions regarding mandated IABs were based on the essential standards identified by the district. During the 2019–2020 school year, the LEA provided a deadline by which these IABs had to be administered and scored, typically the end of a given trimester. Previously, the IABs had to be administered within a specified two-week window. Math IABs in secondary schools were selected by a council of same-course teachers representing schools across the district; however, teachers of accelerated courses had the flexibility to choose which IABs they administered. LEA-2 also required administration of an ICA or IABs in grades that did not administer ELA and math summative assessments to provide teachers and site administrators with data for instructional planning. In 2019–2020, tenth grade ELA teachers administered the ICA, and ninth grade ELA and math teachers and tenth grade math teachers selected FIABs.

Table C.9 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in the three LEA-2 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year, along with the number of IAB tests taken by students in all LEA-2 schools. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table indicates how many enrolled students in LEA-2 and each study school were eligible to take the CAASPP summative assessments. The table also indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or mathematics) and how many were administered in a standardized versus non-standardized manner. In addition to the IABs, four schools at LEA-2 administered an average of 132 ICAs each, with an average of 60 ICAs administered in ELA and 141 ICAs in math.

LEA-2 required district mandated IABs to be initially administered as a standardized assessment for year to year monitoring. One teacher described it this way: “We are not

allowed to show [students] the IAB until we have them take it for the district.” This permitted validation of scores to examine student achievement. Few teachers were aware that IABs could be viewed or used in a non-standardized way; however, upon hearing of this potential, many teachers expressed interest in the possibility of helping students better understand the platform and content by using IABs, not required for the LEA monitoring purposes, in this way. LEA-2 recommended reviewing items with which students struggled on the mandated IABs as a learning activity for the entire class. High school teachers were more aware of FIABs, although teachers at all levels reported via the monthly polls having administered the FIABs to their students.

Table C.9 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-2 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # IABs ELA and Math	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized IABs ELA and Math	# Non-Standardized IABs ELA and Math
LEA-2	7,622	37,324	16,133	21,191	33,003	4,321
LEA-2-ES	372	1,515	757	758	1,422	93
LEA-2-MS	696	2,610	1,351	1,259	2,397	213
LEA-2-HS	471	5,216	1,497	3,719	4,807	409

Explanation of table contents: *The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s study schools. Row 1 shows LEA-2 had 7,622 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. LEA-2 gave 37,324 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 16,133 tests were for ELA and 21,191 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 33,003 were given in a standardized manner and 4,321 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).*

Table C.10 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) for specific ELA and math IABs, by grade level, across the three LEA-2 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year. Frequency of administration of an IAB for some grades includes more than one school. The highest counts of assessment opportunities were administered at the HS level (17) and at the third grade level (13.) The most frequently administered math IABs were Numbers and Operations in Base Ten among elementary grades, Expressions and Equations was most frequently given among middle school grades, and Seeing Structure in Expressions/Polynomial Expressions in high school. The most frequently administered ELA IABs across all grade levels were Read Literary Texts and Read Informational Texts.

The two required ELA IABs and the tenth grade ELA ICA included items that required hand scoring. For the two IABs, only one or two items needed to be rated, and teachers were expected to conduct the hand scoring during collaboration time or prep periods. Teachers reviewed the CAASPP-provided rubrics and used the examples of what “0”, “1”, and “2” submissions looked like to train themselves. Teachers described the hand

scoring process for the IABs to be straightforward. Some PLCs rated the responses as a group while others determined the ratings individually. The ICAs administered in the previous school year included numerous hand scoring items. Teachers calibrated and hand scored these items together, which required more time than expected.

Table C.10 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-2, by Domain and Grade, 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Brief Writes*	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
ELA	Language and Vocabulary Use**	2	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
ELA	Performance Task*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	2	1	1	1	3	2	2
ELA	Research	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
ELA	Revision	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
ELA		7	2	3	3	6	6	5
Math	Algebra and Functions I – Linear Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Algebra and Functions II – Quadratic Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Equations and Reasoning**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Expressions and Equations	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	2	0
Math	Expressions & Equations I**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
Math	Functions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
Math	Geometric Figures**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry**	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry Measurement and Modeling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry & Right Triangle Trigonometry**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Interpreting Functions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Number and Operations – Fractions	N/A	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table C.10 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten	N/A	1	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten**	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Quantity**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	2	0	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Performance Task*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Seeing Structure in Expressions/Polynomial Expressions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear and Exponential**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Quadratic**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Statistics and Probability**	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	1
Math	The Number System**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	N/A
Math		6	2	4	3	5	7	12
BOTH		13	4	7	6	11	13	17

*IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

NA indicates the IAB was not available at that grade level.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across the LEA-2 schools in the study. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows that in LEA-2 there were two testing opportunities for Read Literary Texts at third grade; one at fourth, fifth, and sixth grades; three at seventh grade, and two at eighth grade and high school.

Administrators indicated, during 2019–2020, that accommodations specified in Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) were reflected in TOMS soon after they were entered into the system, simplifying the process compared to 2018–2019. However, the system required IEPs be updated in advance of administering the IAB. Teachers felt that IABs can serve as a useful opportunity for students to gain experience using Smarter Balanced accommodations and supports. However, teachers and administrators described some

difficulty in specifying all the accommodations in a student's IEP (particularly read aloud and speech-to-text) to be embedded within the Smarter Balanced platform. Some teachers expressed concern about administering the IABs to EL students, because the language on the assessments was beyond their students' capacity. This was particularly a concern with the math assessments when EL students may have possessed the math knowledge but not the language skills necessary to respond correctly.

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

While some teachers used the IAB results data to guide instructional decision-making, others did not find value in them. Among teachers in the former group, the most common approach to using IAB data to inform instruction was to (a) identify items on which most students performed poorly, (b) examine the standards and/or targets associated with the items, and (c) focus additional instruction on those particular standards/targets. Teachers reported using IABs at the beginning of a unit to help determine where students had prior learning and identify how they might more judiciously use their time in covering the unit concepts. Similarly, some high school teachers used a Focused IAB in advance of the unit test (which would influence student grades) to determine where final review should be focused before giving the summative unit test. One teacher reported sharing all IAB scores with the students in advance of the summative assessment, indicating what score they needed to be proficient on the CAASPP, and what topics to review in order to achieve proficiency. Because LEA-2 monitored districtwide IAB results over time, trends were identified that suggested a teacher or teacher group found a particularly effective practice for teaching the skills assessed by the IAB, so that practice could be replicated across sites. Additionally, IAB results served as another year-over-year measure of student achievement because all sites administered the same IABs each year. IABs helped teachers align their instructional practices more closely with how students were assessed. For example, an elementary school teacher noticed how the vocabulary used to assess a standard was completely different from the vocabulary used in the math curriculum, so they adjusted their teaching to incorporate the new vocabulary. Because time was provided to the LEA-2 middle and high schools, PLCs used the IAB results to determine which students should receive math intervention and on what content to focus during the intervention. Some teachers across the study schools described how they would review problematic IAB items as a class or small group discussion. Additionally, some teachers found the hand scoring process itself to be insightful as to how students approached the tasks. For example, one teacher identified through hand scoring that students did not provide sufficient textual evidence, so the teacher allocated three days a week to practice responding effectively to a writing prompt.

A consistent complaint among teachers who found IAB results less useful was the lack of alignment between the timing of instructional content and when and what IABs were scheduled. As noted above, the district required certain IABs be taken by a certain deadline. In some cases, there was good alignment between IABs, district-determined deadlines, and course instruction; in other instances, teachers administered IABs despite lack of instruction in the targeted content. In the latter case, teachers expressed

frustration because the resulting data had no connection to their students' classroom learning, "Right now, [taking IABs] is just, yep, we did it, turned it in, great. I need to move on to my regular everyday work." Teachers also suggested the lack of alignment resulted in students feeling great anxiety and discouragement because they were tested on material they had not yet been taught. Other teachers described how IABs did not add value relative to other class assignments because students put less effort into the IABs. One teacher captured these feelings well, "We are committed to a curriculum that we're utilizing on a day-to-day basis, and we're more prone to look at that data than we are something that's different than what we're doing and more rigorous than what we're doing...it's just that I feel like I have to give another test."

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

The most common purpose teachers cited for administering the IABs was to help students gain experience with the platform on which they would take the ELA and math summative assessments. During the 2018–2019 school year, teachers found increased exposure to the Smarter Balanced platform provided students with a greater sense of confidence when they took the summative assessments. Teachers believed the IABs helped students endure the lengthy summative assessments better (particularly in lower grades) and be better prepared for their level of rigor. Teachers described how taking the IAB allowed students to become comfortable with the different tools (e.g., the embedded math calculator, answer masking tool) and accommodations. Teachers indicated administering and reviewing the IABs helped them realize differences between classroom processes and the Smarter Balanced platform's expectations. For example, in one math class, students were taught to write their answer as an equation ("x = [#]"), whereas the IAB required only the value ("#"), a distinction the teacher explained to students. Teachers who noticed such differences recommended adjusting the Smarter Balanced platform to be more flexible in accepting equivalent responses. Additionally, some middle and high school teachers suggested they determined what to review in advance of the summative assessments based on how students scored on the IABs earlier in the year. Some teachers also used results to determine different student groupings for these pre-summative assessment reviews. Site-level administrators and teachers expressed to LEA-2 administrators their confusion over IAB results having three achievement levels compared to the four reported in summative assessments, with some sites trying to estimate the four levels independently. HumRRO understands that though school staff may want to be able to use this information to draw comparisons, the test lengths and purposes of the IABs are different from the summative assessments and this may not be something that can or should be modified.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

LEA-2 administrators completed rostering for all schools within the LEA. The administrator in charge noted it was time consuming to individually assign students to their current teacher. In addition, some teacher groups requested additional groupings. For example, some PLCs wanted a single group for all students in their grade and one teacher requested separate groupings within a class for honors versus regular students. The administrator expressed a desire for the rostering system to be integrated with the

student information system to allow use of existing groupings. Some teachers in the district reported having difficulty accessing IAB results despite the training they received on CERS. Math teachers were generally more aware of the reporting system and how to find the results than ELA teachers. During the 2019–2020 school year, the LEA began importing IAB results into IO Assessment (part of Illuminate) to increase usability. LEA-2 staff also uploaded data into Tableau to generate graphics and shared results with principals.

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

LEA-2 administrators informed teachers of the availability of IABs during the COVID-19 distance learning experience, though the district cancelled the requirement for administering third trimester IABs. Individual school administrators and teachers indicated they did not administer IABs after the physical closure of schools to avoid overwhelming students and their families during an already stressful time.

Digital Library

Across the site visit focus groups, teachers received training on what the Digital Library (DL) is and how it can be used. However, none of the teachers involved in the focus groups reported having used the resource. When HumRRO staff described during focus groups how Connections Playlists link IABs to DL materials, teachers expressed interest. A training before distance learning began at LEA-2-HS resulted in similar interest in the potential for using Connections Playlists. In monthly polling after the focus groups, teachers who had visited the DL during the 2018–2019 school year described the site as difficult to use, “[I] did not use as it was not worth slogging through the circuitous navigation requirements to find anything of value.”

Best Practices

The following bullets identify best practices observed in LEA-2 for developing a system that successfully uses the CAASPP resources:

- LEA-2 provided teachers with consistent time for PLCs to meet. These opportunities provided critical time for collaboration. With the LEA requirements to administer IAs, the PLC time allowed groups to consider IA results together and coordinate instructional plans.
- LEA-2 had a strong system for providing professional development to site-level teams. The LEA CAASPP coordinators actively engaged with resources provided by CDE and developed trainings to transmit these resources to site teams through site-level leaders and education technology specialists. All training resources were readily accessible to teachers. For the concepts and actions of the training to be adopted by teachers, site-level leaders need to allocate time for teachers to consistently act on what has been taught, with follow-ups to monitor questions or concerns about implementation.

- The district’s mandating of IABs resulted in teachers administering IABs more frequently than they believed they would otherwise. Teachers who had more input on which IABs to administer found the IAB administration and results to be a positive experience. Teachers whose instruction aligned with the IAB administration found the results to be more useful than teachers who did not have alignment. Teachers found a variety of ways by which the IAB results could inform their instruction.

LEA-3 Findings

LEA-3 participation included one elementary school (ES), one middle school (MS), and one high school (HS). The elementary school serves students in kindergarten through grade eight; however, HumRRO collected information about school policies and procedures applying only to kindergarten through grade five and only teachers of grade three through grade five participated in the study. The MS included grades 6–8 and HS grades 9–12. Table C.11 summarizes the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. Although CAASPP includes science assessments, this study focused on CAASPP resources for ELA and mathematics. As shown, LEA-3 fully participated in the study.

Table C.11 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-3, 2019–2020

Data Source	Participants/Description
Site Visit Educator Focus Group	ES – 10 teachers in one focus group: grades three (5), four (2), five (1), and combination classes (2) MS – 5 teachers in one focus group: grade seven ELA (2), grade eight ELA (1), grade seven mathematics (1), and grade eight mathematics (1) HS – 25 teachers in one focus group: ELA and mathematics
Site Visit Leader Interview	ES – School POC (program specialist) MS – School POC (program facilitator) and assistant principal, one interview HS – School POC (principal) LEA – POC (assistant director) and program specialist, one interview
Monthly Polling	MS – January (1 teacher); February (3 teachers); March (3 teachers) HS – January (1 school POC) LEA – December (CAASPP coordinator), January (CAASPP coordinator), April (POC)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Groups	MS – POC HS – program facilitator LEA – program specialist
Student Questionnaires	HS – 28 student responses for math; 86 student responses for ELA

Table C.11 (cont.)

Data Source	Participants/Description
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 ES Change Over Time Results, CAASPP Reporting • 2019 ES Smarter Balanced Detailed Test Results, CAASPP Reporting • 2019 MS Change Over Time Results, CAASPP Reporting • 2019 MS Smarter Balanced Detailed Test Results, CAASPP Reporting • 2019 HS Smarter Balanced Detailed Test Results, CAASPP Reporting • Dashboard: ES • Dashboard: MS • Dashboard: HS • Dashboard: LEA • IAB participation rates

The LEA point of contact (POC) served as co-CAASPP coordinator with another staff member at the LEA office, and both participated in data collection activities for the study. The LEA POC and the LEA co-coordinator conducted CAASPP training sessions for school sites and handled student rostering for school sites. Two staff members, the program specialist and a vice principal, served as co-POCs at LEA-3-ES. The program facilitator of LEA-3-MS and the program specialist of LEA-3-HS were the POCs for their respective schools. At each study school, differing numbers of teachers participated in focus groups and monthly polling:

- At LEA-3-ES, 10 teachers provided data. Ten teachers participated in the focus group; they had between 3 and 33 years of teaching experience. Teachers from this school did not participate in monthly polling.
- At LEA-3-MS, five teachers provided data. Five teachers participated in the focus group; these included three ELA teachers and two mathematics teachers. They had between 1 and 22 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-3-HS, 25 teachers provided data. These same 25 teachers, representing a range of teaching experience in both ELA and mathematics, participated in the focus group. Only one of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

HumRRO conducted three educator focus groups (one with each participating school) with 40 teachers across the three schools. The points of contact at LEA-3 and each of its schools as well as two other school and district leaders provided an overview of how CAASPP assessments and resources were used. HumRRO conducted virtual end-of-year focus groups with representatives from the middle and high schools as well as the LEA. Some of the teachers and staff who participated in the focus groups at the middle and high schools also participated in monthly polling, as did the district POC. More than 100 students responded to the student questionnaires. HumRRO collected test results,

participation rates, and dashboard information artifacts. The findings incorporate information collected from the site visits; interviews; focus groups; monthly polling; and data, documents and artifacts from the schools and the district.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-3 is a large district in southern California. The district includes 50 elementary schools (ES), 11 middle schools (MS), and 10 high schools (HS). LEA-3 has a mobile student and teacher population. Table C.12 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the LEA and its three participating Case Study schools. Data were obtained from the 2018–2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE’s website (DataQuest).

Table C.12 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-3 and Its Participating Schools, 2018–2019

Variables	LEA-3	LEA-3-ES	LEA-3-MS	LEA-3-HS
Enrollment	48,936	885	925	1,210
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	90%	46%	97%	93%
% Students with Disabilities	12%	7%	16%	20%
% English Learners	24%	7%	26%	17%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	12%	6%	36%	1%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	40%	52%	35%	39%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	27%	41%	19%	10%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the next columns provide information for the LEA overall and for each of the LEA’s study schools. The second column (from top to bottom) shows in LEA-3 there was a total enrollment of 48,936 in 2018–19. Of these students, 90% were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 12% were students with disabilities, 24% were English learners, and 12% were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–19 summative assessments indicated 40% of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 27% of students met or exceeded math state standards.

The student population of LEA-3 was predominantly socioeconomically disadvantaged (90 percent). The middle and high schools included in the study represented the district on this characteristic; however, fewer than half of the students were classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged in the participating elementary school. In LEA-3, 12 percent of students have documented disabilities. The percentage of students with disabilities ranged from 7 to 20 percent in the participating schools. Across the LEA, about one quarter of the students were English learners (ELs); the percentage ranged

from 7 to 26 percent in the study schools. About two of five students met or exceeded ELA state standards in LEA-3. Slightly more than half of the students in LEA-3-ES met or exceeded the ELA standards, while 35 percent of students in LEA-3-MS and 39 percent in LEA-3-HS met or exceeded the ELA standards. The district and participating middle and high schools exhibited low levels of math achievement. Across the district, 27 percent of students met or exceeded math state standards. While more than 40 percent of the students in LEA-3-ES met or exceeded the math standards, less than one in five LEA-3-MS students and only one in ten LEA-3-HS students met or exceeded the math standards.

LEA-3-ES was a relatively new school, in its fifth year of operation. The school's student population was growing and there were uneven distributions of students across grades. They had added two teachers since the beginning of the 2019–2020 school year and expected needing three new fifth grade teachers next year. The growth rate, uneven distribution of students across grades, and combination of teachers who taught one subject or many subjects made the master schedule challenging.

Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development

All schools in LEA-3 reserved a 90-minute meeting block on Mondays for collaboration and professional development. LEA-3 offered some professional development focused on CAASPP for school leaders and test coordinators.

Typically, one of LEA-3-ES's monthly Monday staff meetings focused on CAASPP training and data. Teachers met by grade, content area, or grade groups. LEA-3-MS used professional development and collaboration time to discuss instructional plans, learning activities, and formative assessment. In monthly polling, middle school teachers reported discussing data from interim assessments (IAs), unit tests, and Standards Aligned Assessments in grade-level department meetings. During department meetings, staff reviewed scores to identify students' knowledge gaps and selected the IAs to use.

Teachers at LEA-3-HS received training from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Education Center during the last two or three years. Professional development included various topics such as the CAASPP System, learning extensions, lesson planning, and unit planning. The LEA-3-HS principal offered teachers extra duty pay to collaborate outside the school day. In addition to the Monday collaboration time, grade nine math teachers participated in a monthly pull-out day to design better common assessments for integrated math 1 because the teachers did not think the IAs were sufficient for the integrated math 1 and integrated math 2 courses. High school teachers met three or four times a month for professional development. Members from the district secondary education department in ELA and mathematics came to the school in 2018–2019 to show teachers how to use and administer the IAs. The trainers returned a week after the assessments were given and showed teachers where to access and interpret the assessment results. In 2019–2020, professional development training showed teachers and staff how to customize the IAs and reports.

Curriculum and Assessments

LEA-3-ES used Pearson education programs for its mathematics curriculum and Wonders by McGraw-Hill for ELA. The Pearson curriculum did not use the same types of question stems as those used on the summative assessments, so teachers supplemented the curriculum with other material on their district learning platform. These additional materials fit well with the grade-level scope and sequences. Beginning in first grade, teachers used *Typing Club* and *Spelling City* to teach students how to type.

LEA-3-MS used Digits and Math Resources by Pearson for mathematics instruction. ELA teachers used Harcourt Mifflin Houghton's (HMH) Collections and McGraw-Hill Corrective Reading, along with district-created units.

The high school mathematics textbooks were adopted right after Common Core was created and teachers remarked they were not the best textbooks, so teachers supplemented the textbook curriculum with additional resources generated by the district's secondary education department. They also used Math XL by Pearson and teacher-created materials. For English, teachers used the HMH Collections curriculum.

LEA-3 could not mandate IAs because of the teachers' union, so IA use was a site-based decision. LEA-3-ES teachers approved use of interim assessments. They also administered benchmark assessments and STAR assessments by Renaissance in reading and math. At LEA-3-MS, some teachers used IAs, including FIABs. LEA-3-HS teachers used IABs, created CAASPP-like classroom assessments with question types that matched the rigor of the CAASPP, and gave Standard Aligned Assessments as benchmarks twice a year.

Technology

Educators mentioned a few concerns regarding technology at LEA-3. First, the LEA-3-MS principal reported that all computers were down in the school, but not at home, for two to six weeks, which prevented access to the online assessments. The assessment system was also said to slow down at the end of the summative assessment testing window in 2018–2019. It is unclear if these issues were resolved for 2019–2020 because state testing was cancelled due to COVID-19. Additionally, because the CAASPP interim and summative assessments were available on the CAASPP.org website, some teachers had students start a summative assessment instead of the IA and vice versa by mistake.

Another issue the schools experienced with the online assessment system involved students with hyphenated last names. According to the LEA-3-MS testing coordinator, "One day it will work, then the very next day it won't work. I think it has something to do with the way it pulls from our student information system and pulls into [the] CAASPP system and pushes it back out".

Use of CAASPP Components

LEA-3 study schools made use of the CAASPP components, from IAs to the Digital Library (DL) to summative assessment data. LEA-3-ES and LEA-3-MS teachers have used IAs to monitor student progress and inform instruction for at least five years. LEA-3-HS was newer to IAs; the 2019–2020 school year was its second year administering IAs. LEA-3-MS teachers fully embraced the CAASPP components. They integrated IAs into lessons and shared data with students to encourage rigor in their work. The LEA-3-MS testing coordinator stated, “our teachers really love the interims and being able to use the viewing system to train students on analyzing questions and how they are worded and what they need to be looking for.” LEA-3-HS used interim data as one measure to place students in courses, because there were no summative exams for all grades and courses.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

District staff uploaded summative assessment data to Illuminate for school administrators and staff to access scores. Staff at each participating school was typically provided with summative assessment data at the beginning of the school year, which was the case for 2019–2020. Teachers looked at how their students did and used that information to adjust their teaching. They also looked at data for their incoming students to get a picture of where students were and to set goals for them to be successful on the summative assessment. LEA-3-ES teachers reviewed data in grade-level while LEA-3-MS and LEA-3-HS teachers worked individually and in department groups. Teachers at the middle school and high school shared data with their students.

LEA-3-ES school administrators disseminated summative assessment results to teachers at a staff meeting in August of 2019. In grade level teams, teachers discussed summative data for the previous year’s students, talking about how each class did and collaborating on how to improve. They also looked at scores for their current students to identify strengths and weaknesses. Several teachers reported using the summative assessment data to plan student groups. Teachers looked at standards and claims that gave students trouble in the past and planned to focus on those in classroom centers.

LEA-3-MS teachers who participated in interviews examined overall and claim scores, and three of the five teachers also examined target scores. Teachers examined overall school proficiency as well as individual student proficiency levels, which they shared with students. Teachers followed similar strategies of using students’ scores from the previous year to set goals for the 2019–2020 school year and for monitoring student progress with individual goal-setting charts to track interim scores throughout the year. To inform their instructional practices for the current year, some teachers also examined scores of their former students to see how well their students had performed on the summative assessments.

The LEA-3-HS principal shared the embargoed summative data upon receipt with staff and, after the results were released, teachers shared the scores with students and the school distributed score reports to other stakeholders. The school held a recognition ceremony and presented awards to students who met or exceeded the state standards. Staff and teachers looked at data schoolwide and by subgroups, with an LEA-3 focus on Latino-American, white, and African American students; socioeconomically disadvantaged students; English learners; and students with disabilities. The teachers did a “deep dive” into the results by department. They looked to see if the areas where they focused instruction in the classroom resulted in improvement in scores on the summative assessments. Also, they used the data to compare across teachers to try to replicate practices that were successful by fine-tuning unit instruction.

Impacts of Cancelled 2020 Testing

For students in kindergarten through grade two, LEA-3 had discussions about formative assessment tools that teachers could use in the distance learning format. LEA-3 informed staff that the Test of English Language Learning (TELL) could be used as a measure for EL students who were unable to take the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) during the 2019–2020 school year. After HumRRO’s interview with LEA-3 staff discussing the impact of cancelled 2020 testing, the California State Legislature passed legislation including an extension of the Summative ELPAC administration window to fall 2020.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

As mentioned earlier, LEA-3 cannot mandate IAs because of the teachers’ union, so use of IAs varied by school and teacher. Teachers in the study schools used IAs to varying degrees. The ten LEA-3-ES teachers administered IAs during the 2019–20 school year, and nine of the teachers hand scored items in some assessments. LEA-3-ES teachers agreed by grade-level on which IAs to administer. At the time of the focus group, third grade teachers had given a Read Literary Texts IAB and planned to give the Read Informational Texts IAB. In math, they had given the Number and Operations in Base Ten IAB and planned to give the Operations and Algebraic Thinking IAB. Teachers examined each IA item and “saw what [they] needed to work on” with their students.

At LEA-3-MS, the school identified the IAs that teachers would administer. In 2018–2019, the school selected the Listen/Interpret IAB and in 2019–2020, seventh and eighth grade English teachers gave the Read Informational Texts IAB and planned to administer the Read Literary Texts IAB. Teachers decided by grade-level and subject area on whether to administer the IAs in a standardized or non-standardized form. Seventh grade teachers decided to give the first six questions as a class activity. The students responded to the remaining questions on their own. Teachers used the results of the items the students worked on individually to understand student knowledge and inform instruction. One teacher reported this process influenced instruction by: “low scores resulted in reteaching and higher scores resulted in moving on.”

LEA-3-MS mathematics teachers used IAs (e.g., Geometry IAB) and FIABs throughout the year. The principal stated “we get to see growth” from results. Teachers commented that IAs provided students with opportunities to become familiar with the testing platform and the tools, such as the calculator. However, the IAs were not useful if the class had not been exposed to all of the topics on the test, so the math teachers used the FIABs to “[fill] in gaps”.

Teachers at LEA-3-HS began using IAs during the 2018–19 school year. Hence the 2019-2020 school year was the second year they used IABs to monitor proficiency levels and identify which students were above and below standards. English and mathematics teachers also used the FIABs. The principal noted teachers “change instruction and give feedback to students” based on interim assessment results. Teachers reported that the interim assessments helped students learn test-taking skills and familiarized them with the types of questions on the summative assessment.

LEA-3 teachers generally did not give Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs). Elementary teachers commented that, because the ICAs assess whole year content, they “frustrate kids because they haven’t seen the content.” Most high school teachers did not give an ICA due to timing issues; by the time teachers discussed those assessments it was close to the summative assessments and the teachers worried about “test burnout.” None of the high school teachers who participated in the focus group gave an ICA, but the principal reported a few teachers used the ICA before the CAASPP summative exam.

Table C.13 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in the three LEA-3 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year, and the number of IAB tests taken by students in all LEA-3 schools. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table also indicates how many enrolled students in the LEA and each study school were eligible to take the CAASPP Summative Assessments. The table also indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or mathematics) and how many were given in a standardized manner versus a non-standardized manner. In addition to the IABs, only two schools at LEA-3 administered an average of 2 ICAs each, with one school administering one in ELA and one in math; the other school administered 2 ICAs in math.

LEA-3-ES ELA teachers administered IABs in a standardized and non-standardized manner, choosing the non-standardized manner as a warm-up for students working with a partner or as part of a teacher-led discussion. Several teachers were unaware there was only one form of each IAB, meaning standardized and non-standardized administrations included the same items. Some teachers saw potential benefit in different test forms so students would have multiple opportunities to take an interim assessment that addressed the same content as they learned and mastered the topic.

The middle school English teachers used a non-standardized administration in their classrooms. Some teachers worked on the first few questions with their students, and then had the students answer the remaining questions on their own. Other teachers used the assessment as a lesson, demonstrating and modeling how to approach and

respond to each item as well as familiarizing the students with the types of questions on the summative assessments. They informally hand scored responses with their class to familiarize students with the rubric that would assist them with understanding how to formulate a response.

Table C.13 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-3 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # IABs ELA and Math	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized IABs ELA and Math	# Non-Standardized IABs ELA and Math
LEA-3	25,986	57,111	21,080	36,031	30,823	26,288
LEA-3-ES	569	2,015	1,054	961	468	1,258
LEA-3-MS	909	3,435	1,704	1,731	2,124	1,192
LEA-3-HS	231	2,963	1,675	1,288	2,508	142

Explanation of table contents: The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s study schools. Row 1 shows LEA-3 had 25,986 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. LEA-3 gave 57,111 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 21,080 tests were for ELA and 36,031 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 30,823 were given in a standardized manner and 26,288 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).

Table C.14 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) there were for specific ELA and mathematics IABs, by grade level, across the three LEA-3 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year. The most frequently administered mathematics IABs were Numbers and Operations in Base Ten for elementary grades, and Expressions and Equations and The Number System in secondary grades. The most frequently used ELA IAB was Read Informational Texts.

Table C.14 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-3, by Domain and Grade, 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Brief Writes*	2	1	1	0	1	0	1
ELA	Editing**	1	0	0	0	1	N/A	1
ELA	Edit/Revise	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0
ELA	Language and Vocabulary Use**	3	1	1	1	1	N/A	2
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	0	2	2	0	1	0	2
ELA	Performance Task*	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	3	1	3	0	3	1	2
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	2	1	1	0	2	2	1
ELA	Research	0	0	0	0	1	2	1

Table C.14 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
ELA	Revision	1	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
ELA	Write and Revise Narratives*,**	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
ELA	SUBTOTAL, all ELA IABs	14	7	8	1	11	7	12
Math	Algebra and Functions I – Linear Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Math	Algebra and Functions II – Quadratic Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Math	Algebraic Expressions & Equations**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Equations and Reasoning**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Math	Expressions and Equations	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	2	2	0
Math	Expressions & Equations I**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A
Math	Four Operations: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Fraction Equivalence and Ordering**	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Functions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A
Math	Geometry Congruence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry Measurement and Modeling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry & Right Triangle Trigonometry**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Interpreting Functions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Measurement and Data	3	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Multiplication and Division: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Multiply and Divide within 100**	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations – Fractions	N/A	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten	N/A	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten**	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Performance Task	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Math	Number and Quantity**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1

Table C.14 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
Math	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	2	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Properties of Multiplication & Division**	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Seeing Structure in Expressions/Polynomial Expressions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear and Exponential**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Quadratic**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Statistics and Probability**	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	2
Math	The Number System	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	The Number System**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	1	0
Math		14	5	4	1	7	9	17
BOTH		28	12	12	2	18	16	29

Note: Grades 3, 5, 7, and 8 ELA – Read Informational Texts, Grade 5 Math – Performance Task, Grade 5 and 7 ELA – Brief Writes, and Grade 8 Math – Functions include opportunities from LEA-3-HS.

*IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

NA indicates the IAB was not available at that grade level.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across the LEA-3 study schools. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows that in LEA-3 there were 2 testing opportunities for Brief Writes at grade 3, 1 at grades 4, 5, 7, and HS, and none at grades 6 and HS.

Teachers in the participating LEA-3 schools reported hand scoring IABs in non-standardized and standardized ways. At the elementary and middle schools, teachers used hand scoring to teach students how to craft responses to meet the scoring rubric requirements. At LEA-3-HS, teachers in the English department used hand scored IAs. Mathematics teachers had not yet conducted hand scored assessments, but they intended to administer a hand scored performance assessment following the focus group. Some high school math teachers participated in a hand scoring training

workshop provide by the CDE while the district provided training to high school English teachers on hand scoring. LEA-3-HS teachers reported that, although hand scoring was not time consuming, they found it difficult to find the time to conduct the scoring.

LEA-3 provided district-level training for site testing coordinators on supports and accommodations available for the assessments. The district also presented information on student accommodations for staff and teachers working with English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities. Site testing coordinators were expected to assist staff in entering test settings to provide required student supports, with district assistance as necessary. LEA-3-ES had few students who required supports and accommodations. At LEA-3-MS, ELs had access to text-to-speech supports and accommodations, where applicable. However, some students did not speak English so they could not understand and thus guessed on the test items. In class, ELs were given written instructions, tests were available in English and Spanish, and a translator was available one day of the week to assist with IAs and other activities. Echoing EL teachers at LEA-3-MS, teachers at LEA-3-HS stated the content of the IAs were out of reach for some of their EL students and students with disabilities. They acknowledged the interim assessments were at a similar level to the benchmarks and the Standard Aligned Assessments. LEA-3-HS teachers reported they were not able to access accommodations for some students, so they read aloud to them.

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

Teachers in LEA-3 used interim assessments to monitor student growth and progress toward goals and plan classroom instruction, including reteaching and remediation when necessary. Teachers integrated interim assessments into their instructional plans in several ways:

- Based on students' performance on the interim assessment items, they identified topics on which their students needed to work.
- Teachers identified students who were struggling and pinpointed what the teachers needed to reteach.
- Teachers demonstrated rubrics for scoring written responses, so students learned to "write more than one word."
- Teachers showed students how to provide evidence and make inferences using interim assessments as class exercises.

LEA-3-MS teachers planned lessons, specifically what needed to be retaught, based on IA scores. Teachers used the IAs to teach students how to formulate answers to the question types.

LEA-3-HS teachers only recently started using interim assessments. In 2019–2020 high school teachers administered interim assessments at every grade level in math. The

teachers used the data for course placement, to drive lesson planning, to modify instruction so teaching was consistent with standards and question types, and to provide student feedback. Eleventh grade teachers used results from interim assessments to track student growth and identify topics that needed to be retaught. The FIABs allowed teachers to closely monitor specific topics to inform their instruction.

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

Teachers used the interim assessment to prepare students for the summative assessments. At all levels, the interim assessments were useful for familiarizing students with the testing protocol and the phrasing of different question types. Elementary students were not used to the assessment format, so interim assessments helped them become familiar with the testing platform and how to navigate through the system and the types of items. For several years, one seventh grade ELA teacher used interim assessment items with minor “tweaks” as the daily opening class exercise. This daily, consistent exposure to the interim assessment-type questions which reflected the question types used on the summative exam helped this teacher’s students earn high scores on the ELA summative assessments. Other teachers used interim assessments to teach test taking skills such as eliminating options, rephrasing questions to clarify what was asked, and selecting more than one response option for “select all” items.

Students reported receiving assignments on skills associated with interim assessment items they answered incorrectly. They stated teachers provided additional instruction to individual students or the class. Students identified specific topics that needed reteaching such as probability, rational functions, understanding diagrams and data, geometric shapes, statistics, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, using context clues, vocabulary, citing quotes, identifying the main idea in text, adding structure and examples to written responses, and argumentative writing. The interim assessments introduced students to tools such as highlighter, strikethrough, glossary, and note pad.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

District and school staff found the reporting system took some time to learn to use. Everyone agreed that rostering was not user friendly. Most of the challenges involved creating student groups and entering test settings to provide accommodations and supports. LEA-3 had a mobile student and teacher population, which required frequent roster changes that testing coordinators completed manually. Because rostering was time consuming, LEA-3-HS discovered a work-around using the filter feature. By uploading all students, teachers could filter by test session number to find the students in their class. At LEA-3-ES, they created a subgroup for new students to avoid overwriting class subgroups, which was shared so all teachers had access to the new group. LEA-3-MS reported uploading data to an external database.

District staff provided support and training to the schools. They went step-by-step with testing coordinators to isolate and resolve rostering errors. LEA-3 created quick reference guides and provided training for testing coordinators, including a screencast—

a live, interactive video—to demonstrate how their learning management system, It’s Learning, worked with the interim assessment reporting system.

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

LEA-3 shared information with their testing coordinators about the availability of interim assessments for students while engaged in distance learning; however, LEA-3 recommended teachers use them only with students who had previous experience accessing interim assessments. District leadership emphasized the assessments were for formative use only, and not to be used as summative measures. However, neither the participating middle nor high school used any of the interim assessments through distance learning. HumRRO was unable to learn if LEA-3-ES used any interim assessments after schools closed due to the pandemic.

Student Experiences with Interim Assessments

LEA-3-HS participated in the optional student questionnaire data collection activity to gather students’ perspectives about their experiences with the IABs. Table C.15 summarizes the grade levels and characteristics of responding students. It is important to note that LEA-3-HS administered surveys for ELA and math IABs, and some students may have responded to both. LEA-3-HS collected 114 responses to the IAB surveys. Students were not required to respond to each survey question.

Table C.15 Summary of LEA-3-HS Student Questionnaire Respondents

Student Demographic Variables	Distribution (%)
Grade	
Ten	51% (n = 58)
Eleven	45% (n = 51)
Twelve	4% (n = 5)
Gender	
Female	62% (n = 71)
Male	32% (n = 36)
Non-Binary	0%
Prefer Not to Say	6% (n = 6)
Racial Identity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	15% (n = 11)
Asian	4% (n = 3)
Black or African American	25% (n = 18)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3% (n = 2)
White	46% (n = 33)
2 or More Races	7% (n = 5)

Table C.15 (cont.)

Student Demographic Variables	Distribution (%)
Ethnic Identity	
Hispanic	83% (n = 90)
Non-Hispanic	17% (n = 19)
IEP	
No	81% (n = 91)
Yes	19% (n = 21)

Table C.16 summarizes students' experiences with the IABs based on their responses to multiple-choice and multiple select questionnaire items. As shown, most students reported taking IABs in a standardized manner only; 93 percent of students taking the ELA and math IABs experienced only standardized administration. For both content areas, the most common reason students reported teachers had used IABs in their classroom was to see how well students learned certain skills. The second most common reason was to find out what skills the students needed to learn. Fewer than 10 percent of students stated the purpose of the IAB was for practice taking an online test. Most students did not believe the data were used to identify gaps in learning; however, more than half the students responding about an ELA IAB indicated the data resulted in their teacher reteaching a skill. Most students did not use a special setting (e.g., highlighter, strikethrough); though more students taking the math assessment (41 percent) reported doing so than those responding about an ELA IAB (21 percent).

Table C.16 LEA-3-HS Student Responses to Multiple-Choice and Multiple Select Questionnaire Items for ELA and Math IABs

Student IAB Usage Variables	ELA IAB Usage	Math IAB Usage
IAB Administration Manner		
Standardized	93% (n = 80)	93% (n = 26)
Standardized and Non-Standardized	1% (n = 1)	0%
Non-Standardized	6% (n = 5)	7% (n = 2)
Teacher's Stated Goals for Administering IAB		
Find out what skills I have been taught/what skills I need to learn	17% (n = 15)	4% (n = 1)
Practice certain skills	20% (n = 17)	18% (n = 5)
Practice taking an online test	8% (n = 7)	4% (n = 1)
See how well I learned certain skills	51% (n = 44)	71% (n = 20)

Table C.16 (cont.)

Student IAB Usage Variables	ELA IAB Usage	Math IAB Usage
IAB Data Used to Identify Gaps in Learning		
Do Not Remember	0%	
No	64% (n = 55)	54% (n = 15)
Yes	36% (n = 31)	46% (n = 13)
IAB Led to Teacher Reteaching Skills		
Do Not Remember	0%	
No	63% (n = 54)	36% (n = 10)
Yes	37% (n = 32)	64% (n = 18)
Student Used IAB Special Settings		
No	59% (n = 50)	79% (n = 22)
Yes	41% (n = 35)	21% (n = 6)

Some students chose to provide open-ended responses when prompted. Those who indicated they used IABs to identify gaps in their ELA learning mostly reported identifying gaps related to their writing skills. For example, one student noted, “I need to improve adding in detail and giving my paragraph or essays more structure.” Some students also indicated needing to work on reading, vocabulary, or grammar. Those who identified math skills they needed more help with indicated a variety of areas needing improvement, including specific content and reading questions more carefully. One student noted, “I needed to work on understanding the word problems and the different formulas.”

Digital Library

Though most teachers did not use the Digital Library (DL), some teachers used DL resources, including the Connections Playlist. The district provided some information on the DL and instructional playlists but reported it was “struggling to get traction” with these resources. The LEA-3-ES principal noted needing to know more about what the DL offered and how the resources could be integrated into the classroom for the DL to be more widely used. The principal had not heard about the Connections Playlist and most of the LEA-3-ES teachers did not use it.

Some LEA-3-MS seventh grade teachers used the DL or the Connections Playlist. One ELA teacher used DL lessons as remediation (e.g., Read Literature interventions) for students who performed below standards. For students who had met the standards, this teacher used resources as enrichment activities. This teacher noted these resources were not rigorous enough to raise a student’s level on the IABs, but they were effective for reteaching. A mathematics teacher used these resources, including practice tests,

“quite a bit.” The teacher commented that it takes a while to figure out where in the DL relevant resources are because there is so much information.

The LEA-3-HS principal supported use of the DL and Connections Playlist but noted some drawbacks to the resources. Some instructional materials did not include enough detail for teachers to implement lessons successfully. Many were old, from 2014, and outdated; they were created before educators improved their understanding of the Common Core State Standards. The principal stated the resources were not as tightly connected to the interim assessments as they could be. Seven of the 25 teachers participating in the study focus group reported using the DL; three English teachers and four mathematics teachers used these resources. Math 1 and Math 2 teachers used the resources (e.g., recommended resources for final reviews, lessons for students below standard), but teachers of other mathematics courses did not use DL resources because of insufficient time in their schedule. One teacher commented mathematics resources were available elsewhere as a reason for not using the DL. Math teachers agreed they could use more training on using the DL resources.

Best Practices

HumRRO identified the following best practices at LEA-3:

- Use non-standardized interim assessments to promote student learning, such as using a question from one of the interim assessments as the daily class opening activity and using IABs to demonstrate and teach how to interpret what a question is asking and how to meet the requirements of the scoring rubric.
- Customize interim assessment result reports for high school by starting with a roster of all students and then filtering by test session number to identify student scores by class. Customized reports would enable teachers to monitor student progress toward learning goals and to inform next steps in instruction.

LEA-4 Findings

LEA-4 participation included one elementary school (ES), one middle school (MS), and one high school (HS). Table C.17 summarizes the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. As shown, LEA-4 participated in all aspects of the data gathering activities, except for the optional student questionnaires. There was a decrease, likely due to school closures, in monthly polling participation for the final months for the LEA, LEA-4-ES, and LEA-4-MS. Each school site visit included one teacher focus group with two to eight teachers participating. Each school participated in some of the monthly polling with the LEA-4 point of contact (POC) participating in two, LEA-4-ES in two, LEA-4-MS in four, and LEA-4-HS in five polls. The middle school, high school, and LEA joined their respective end-of-year focus groups.

Table C.17 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-4, 2019–2020

Data Source	Participants/Description
Site Visit Educator Focus Group	ES – 2 teachers in one focus group: third (1) and fourth (1) grade MS – 8 teachers in one focus group: sixth grade math (2), eighth grade math (2), sixth grade ELA (1), seventh grade ELA (1), intervention (1), special day class (1) HS – 5 teachers and one administrator in one focus group: math (3), ELA (2), assistant principal (1)
Site Visit Leader Interview	ES – School POC (principal) MS – School POC (assistant principal) HS – School POC (assistant principal), principal, and assistant principal LEA – POC (assistant director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation) and analyst
Monthly Polling	ES – December (POC, 2 teachers); February (POC, 2 teachers) MS – December (POC, 6 teachers); January (POC, 3 teachers); February (POC, 6 teachers); March (POC, 3 teachers) HS – December (POC, 1 administrator, 3 teachers), January (POC); February (POC, 1 administrator, 3 teachers); March (POC); April (POC) LEA – February (POC); March (POC)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Groups	MS – POC HS – POC, 2 administrators, 1 teacher LEA – POC
Student Questionnaires	N/A
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018-19 CAASPP Elementary Levels ELA – Revised with final CAASPP scores • 2019-20 Testing Calendar • BoE Meeting 11-2019 • CAASPP Coordinators Meeting October 2019 • CAASPP Coordinator Training January 2020 • LEA-4-MS 2019-2020 CAASPP SCHEDULE • LEA-4 ES Documents • Interim Assessments 19-20_Set Up and Administer • LINKS for LEA Documentation Request • LEA-4-HS 2019-20 A Plan for our Year • LEA-4-HS CAASPP Parent Letter • LEA-4-HS Meeting Schedules for 2019 – 2020 • LEA-4-HS Norms, Vision 2019-2020 • LEA-4-HS Smart goals for 2019-20 • Principal Meeting December 6,2019 • LEA-4 School Calendar

The LEA POC and a technical analyst at the LEA office provided CAASPP training and technical assistance to CAASPP coordinators and teachers within LEA-4. The LEA-4-ES principal served as the school POC, while an assistant principal at LEA-4-MS and a college and career advisor at LEA-4-HS served as POCs for their respective schools. The POC for the elementary school was a principal in the school for over five years, with additional experience as a principal in another elementary school. The middle school POC was an assistant principal for a year, previously serving as a middle school math teacher. The high school POC and fellow participating administrators had been in their positions from one to approximately 20 years. At each study school, differing numbers of teachers participated in focus groups and monthly polling:

- At LEA-4-ES, two teachers provided data. Two teachers participated in one focus group; teachers in this group had up to 23 years of teaching experience. Both teachers from this school who participated in the focus group submitted responses to the monthly polling.
- At LEA-4-MS, eight teachers provided data. Eight teachers participated in one focus group; these included two ELA teachers, four mathematics teachers, one intervention specialist, and one teacher of a special day class. Teachers in this group had as many as 19 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-4-HS, five teachers provided data. Five teachers and one administrator participated in the focus group; these included two ELA teachers, three mathematics teachers, and one assistant principal, who in the prior year had been a mathematics teacher at another district. Teachers in this group had 10 to 23 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-4 is a medium-sized district in northern California. The district includes 22 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 4 high schools. Table C.2 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the LEA and its three participating Case Study schools. Data were obtained from the 2018–2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE’s website (DataQuest).

As Table C.18 indicates, LEA-4 is a high-achieving district with a relatively low proportion of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The percentage of students that met or exceeded ELA state standards among the three study schools ranged from 76 percent in LEA-4-MS to 87 percent in LEA-4-ES, and 68 percent in LEA-4-HS to 85 percent in LEA-4-ES for math state standards. The percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students was well below 10 percent for all study schools. LEA-4-MS had slightly more students with disabilities (13 percent) than the LEA-4 average (9 percent), while the other two schools had slightly less (7 percent). LEA-4-ES had a higher percentage of English learners (13 percent) compared to the LEA-4 average (5 percent), while LEA-4-MS and LEA-4-HS had very few (1 percent). The percentage of

reclassified fluent English proficient students was much higher than the LEA-4 average (8 percent) in LEA-4-MS (50 percent) and LEA-4-HS (26 percent).

Table C.18 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-4 and Its Participating Schools, 2018–2019

Variables	LEA-4	LEA-4-ES	LEA-4-MS	LEA-4-HS
Enrollment	32,138	708	978	2,448
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	6%	7%	6%	5%
% Students with Disabilities	9%	7%	13%	7%
% English Learners	5%	13%	1%	1%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	8%	1%	50%	26%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	81%	87%	76%	86%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	78%	85%	69%	68%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the next columns provide information for the LEA overall and for each of the LEA’s study schools. The second column (from top to bottom) shows in LEA-4 there was a total enrollment of 32,138 in 2018–2019. Of these students, 6 percent were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 9 percent were students with disabilities, 5 percent were English learners, and 8 percent were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–2019 summative assessments indicated 81 percent of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 78 percent of students met or exceeded math state standards.

Professional Learning Communities

LEA-4 emphasized the importance of professional learning communities (PLCs). LEA-4 administrators described PLCs as an important piece of the district’s multi-tiered system of support. Additionally, LEA-4 administrators described PLCs as a central part of identifying the essential standards of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to act as the LEA’s guaranteed viable curriculum (GVC).

LEA-4-ES had dedicated grade-level PLC time and an all-staff meeting each week. One of the monthly all-staff meetings was dedicated to planning interventions for students. The monthly all-staff intervention meetings considered specific students with an open brainstorming approach where everyone was invited to share their ideas. Teachers described the weekly PLC time as an opportunity to discuss pacing guides and the standards that would be taught that week, while also sharing lesson plans and reviewing student assessment scores.

LEA-4-MS provided dedicated collaboration time each week, as well as common prep times for subject-grade level teams. Two weeks in a month the collaboration time was an all-staff meeting, and the other two weeks' collaboration times were dedicated to subject-grade level teams. Special education teachers sought to touch base with the subject-grade level teams on a regular basis. Teachers and administrators used subject-grade level collaboration time to develop formative and unit summative assessments as a team or adapt district-developed summative assessments for use in their courses. Additionally, teachers described developing the lesson plans and learning activities for each unit as a PLC partnership or team.

LEA-4-HS asset aside dedicated collaboration time one morning each week. During the month, the collaboration time rotated between two subject-grade level team meetings, one department team meeting, and one all-staff meeting. Subject-grade level team meetings were supplemented by informal communication throughout the week. The subject-grade level teams, particularly in math, collaborated on lesson plans and assessments. Because ELA did not use textbooks and teachers selected their own readings to teach different standards, they tended to focus collaboration on common unit summative assessments (e.g., developing writing assignments and rubrics). Goals of department meetings included articulating the vertical alignment and essential standards among courses.

Professional Development

LEA-4 administrators reported participating in the CDE CAASPP and ELPAC trainings. They described the Educational Testing Service (ETS) webinars and CDE pretest workshops as important trainings to understand the nuts and bolts of the state summative assessments. LEA-4 administrators reported feeling overwhelmed at times due to the amount of resources that are produced by the CDE without effective cataloguing of the materials. The LEA-4 administrators provided training sessions on how to access score reports and TOMS resources to school principals and CAASPP coordinators. Additionally, the LEA-4 CAASPP coordinator provided training on integrating CAASPP tests with instruction as professional development to teachers one day each year. Teachers expressed the opinion that this training would be primarily relevant for new teachers. Teachers added that the CAASPP professional development they received was primarily focused on how to proctor the interim or summative assessments. One teacher described the challenge of understanding CAASPP resources, scores, and interpretations: "It's on each site; it's on each individual teacher to figure it out, which is not an effective way to do it."

Curriculum and Assessments

LEA-4 used the Eureka curriculum for elementary math and Lucy Calkin's Readers and Writers Workshop for ELA. LEA-4-ES supplemented the math curriculum with DreamBox and other resources found on the internet. LEA-4 adopted the Springboard course for middle school math courses and Big Ideas for Algebra, and Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for ELA. LEA-4-MS teachers reported identifying sources online (e.g., Kuta, Edulastic, Pinterest, Teachers Pay Teachers) to aid their

lesson planning. LEA-4 adopted Big Ideas curriculum for high school math. However, LEA-4-HS math and ELA teachers reported primarily developing their own curriculum based on the CCSS and focused on the essential standards. The transition to CCSS and the increased usage of historical and science texts in ELA summative assessments increased collaboration on writing instruction across subject areas for LEA-4-HS.

LEA-4-ES primarily relied upon assessments provided through their curriculum. Additionally, the district developed focused assessments for elementary grades because teachers found the curriculum units contained too many lessons to cover in one test. LEA-4-ES also used the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems to assess and track student reading proficiency, as well as exit tickets for quick checks of understanding. LEA-4-MS and LEA-4-HS teachers predominantly developed their own assessments. LEA-4-MS teachers also reported using running records, San Diego Quick Assessment, Newsela, Flocabulary, and NoRedInk as assessment resources that provide indicators of student development.

Technology

Teachers and administrators described some technology issues associated with CAASPP components. Neither LEA-4-ES nor LEA-4-MS had one-to-one technology across the campus. This created some challenges in scheduling when different classes could take interim and summative assessments. LEA-4-ES possessed sufficient iPads for fifth grade to be one-to-one; however, while the interim assessments worked on the iPad, the summative assessment did not in the 2018–2019 school year (after the assessment had been compatible in previous years). This change in compatibility created difficulties for the school, as it had to rely upon Chromebooks donated by a local store. Also, LEA-4-MS teachers described going to take an IAB in fall and finding that the Chromebook browsers had not been updated, which prevented IAB administration.

Use of CAASPP Components

Study schools in LEA-4 used the summative assessment and interim assessments but not the Digital Library (DL). Schools described using the 2018–2019 summative assessment to determine SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals for their school to achieve in the 2019–2020 school year. The past couple years, the district required schools to administer a certain number of IABs. Teachers described using IABs successfully in a non-standardized manner in math discussions and in introducing the Smarter Balanced testing platform. Across the schools, teachers and administrators had little experience with the DL, having either not heard of it or having tried it once and found it a confusing resource.

LEA-4 administrators and teachers described the CAASPP assessments as important at their school. LEA-4-ES staff described the CAASPP as one test, among a variety of important indicators, that provides evidence for one portion of the work they do. LEA-4-HS described the focus in its community on preparing students for university. So, various college admission assessments were of equal significance to the CAASPP

testing as teachers and administrators considered student learning and development. Teachers and administrators across the schools suggested that the district needed a more comprehensive assessment strategy for how to link curriculum, the DL, and interim and summative assessments to make these more purposeful.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

LEA-4 met with site-level administrators at the beginning of the school year to examine a report indicating the percentage of students achieving proficient or higher results by grade and by sub-group across schools and compared to the state and county. These data were used to set site-level SMART goals related to improving outcomes in math and ELA, typically targeting the results for a specific subgroup. All schools in our study met with LEA administrators in July to review the SMART goals. LEA-4 also examined the percentage of students achieving proficient or higher on the ELA and math summative assessments, relative to the amount invested (e.g., teachers on special assignment) to evaluate whether the investment resulted in commensurate achievement gains. LEA-4 administrators expressed a desire for more fine-grained results to better inform instructional decisions. The target reports did not provide sufficient information about the students' knowledge, making it difficult to make instructional decisions without this information. Also when discussing the summative assessment, the LEA-4 CAASPP coordinator described how districts were required to identify a speech-to-text program because CDE was not permitted to show favor to one program over another; the district preferred more guidance from the California Technical Assistance Center (CaTAC) on what worked best. Teachers across the LEA expressed concern that the summative assessment occurs well before the end of the school year when not all curriculum has been covered.

During their July 2019 meeting with LEA administrators, LEA-4-ES established goals to improve achievement outcomes for socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Also, the LEA-4-ES principal set an agenda to use the summative results to determine gaps in performance that could be targeted by teachers. The principal met with each teacher individually to review the ELA and math summative assessment results for the teacher's previous year's and incoming students, including percent of students meeting achievement standard, claim performances, and multi-year cohort comparison. Teachers then discussed the results within their PLCs and shared ideas of lessons and outcomes that could be used to target specific claims and improve student learning and achievement. The principal expected teachers to adjust teaching based on the data and PLC feedback. LEA-4-ES teachers and administrators expressed concern about the impact the requirement to type has on students' writing for extended response items. They observed their students produced higher quality and more quantity of writing on handwritten tasks in comparison to computer tasks.

LEA-4-MS administrators also met with LEA-4 administrators in July 2019 to review summative results and establish SMART goals for the coming year. The goals led to plans for the school including increased focus on IABs and identifying methods to

increase student motivation to perform on CAASPP. The LEA-4-MS administrators communicated the goals to the teachers and reviewed the school results (percent proficient) over the past five years, as well as their performance in relation to other schools in the district. LEA-4-MS administrators noted the rigor of the summative assessments is greater than what students typically see in their classrooms, which makes it difficult for students to meet the standards. Teachers received their individual class results broken down by the percent of students at each achievement level and claim score level. Teachers also received results for incoming students they were soon to teach and used that information to determine specific interventions (e.g., who should go to math lab or who should receive one-on-one versus whole class reading records) for math and ELA. Additionally, ELA teachers reported using incoming student results to balance the student achievement levels within student reading groups. Teachers reported reviewing individual CAASPP scores for struggling students to help determine what supports would be beneficial. LEA-4-MS also used CAASPP summative math results as part of the decision-making process for placing students in accelerated math courses. Teachers in this school expressed concerns about the validity of the data either because students a) received extensive tutoring to perform well on this assessment, b) had no motivation to perform well, or c) had disabilities that made the assessment seem overwhelming and impossible.

LEA-4-HS met with LEA-4 administrators in July 2019 to review summative results and establish SMART goals for the coming year. The LEA-4-HS set goals related to improving ELA outcomes for students with disabilities and students who identify as two or more races. The administrative team examined the summative results to identify weaknesses in ELA or math and shared the findings with department chairs. For example, administrators identified poor results on the math target addressing functions. They worked with the department chair and discovered that the district provided a pacing guideline that had placed functions after the summative assessment was administered. In response, they adjusted the pacing guideline to cover the functions unit earlier in the year. Additionally, administrators conducted an all-staff meeting to present summary data of the percentage of students who had and had not met proficiency in math and ELA. Teachers expressed a desire for more fine-grained evidence from the summative assessment, similar to results they used to receive from the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Teachers also requested more guidance on how they might use CAASPP summative results to target improvement among student subgroups. The LEA-4-HS principal recommended providing more guidance on how students could use summative assessment reports to take greater ownership of their learning and academic achievement. The LEA-4-HS administrators had some concern about the disconnect between having the eleventh grade students studying the Algebra I curriculum sitting for a test focused on Algebra II. They also noted it is burdensome for some students to deal with the amount of scrolling required when taking the summative assessments on a small screen.

Impacts of Cancelled 2020 Summative Testing

LEA-4 site level administrators expressed concern regarding the absence of summative results as the 2020–2021 school year begins. Students did not receive typical grades and were “[held] harmless to finish out the year” regardless of mastery of essential

standards. Data will be necessary to understand the impact of this on student progression and what remediation plans will be necessary. The LEA-4-MS administrator expressed concern about how they will place students in different math course tracks without the CAASPP data. They anticipate the need to observe students closely to understand their abilities. Finally, the LEA-4 administrator expressed concern at the possibility of missing a summative assessment for 2020–2021, as districts and schools will need some measure to understand the impact of COVID-19 on students' learning progression. They felt the 2020–2021 scores would be more important than the missing 2019–2020 scores because assessment scores following this disruption in learning will provide a key indicator of potential learning loss resulting from distance learning.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

LEA-4 required schools to administer two ELA and two math IABs to students before they administer the summative assessment. LEA-4-MS had its teachers to administer three ELA and three math IABs. Teacher groups had the liberty to decide which IABs to administer and when. LEA-4 administrators provided guidance on how to select IABs including reviewing previous year summative data, examining the IAB blueprints, and considering hand scoring requirements. Teachers described selecting an IAB by identifying areas of weakness or an IAB that most closely related to the unit being studied. Because of the number of standards they must teach each year, teachers reported it was difficult to find time to administer an IAB without it impacting their ability to cover all lessons.

Table C.19 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in the three LEA-4 study schools during the 2019–20 school year, and the number of IAB tests taken by students in all LEA-4 schools. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table also indicates how many enrolled students in the LEA and each study school were eligible to take the CAASPP Summative Assessments. The table also indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or math) and how many were given in a standardized manner versus a non-standardized manner. LEA-4 did not administer any ICAs in 2019–2020.

LEA-4 allowed schools and teachers to decide whether to administer IAs in a standardized or non-standardized manner and which IABs to administer. The LEA-4 administrator expressed enthusiasm for the learning benefits of non-standardized usage, which permits a teacher to lead a discussion about working through an IAB item. LEA-4-MS math teachers found success using IAB items in that way. LEA-4-MS teachers and administrators indicated a preference for the FIABs because the traditional IABs took too much time to administer. Teachers from LEA-4-ES and LEA-4-HS were not aware of the FIABs. Teachers at LEA-4-ES indicated they tended to select IABs that did not require hand scoring, as they preferred IABs that produced immediate data.

Table C.19 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-4 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # IABs ELA and Math	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized IABs ELA and Math	# Non-Standardized IABs ELA and Math
LEA-4	17,191	47,464	21,631	25,833	29,794	17,670
LEA-4-ES	419	1,333	713	620	980	353
LEA-4-MS	932	3,025	1,089	1,936	2,503	522
LEA-4-HS	586	1,409	639	770	609	800

Explanation of table contents: *The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s study schools. Row 1 shows LEA-4 had 17,191 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. LEA-4 gave 47,464 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 21,631 tests were for ELA and 25,833 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 29,794 were given in a standardized manner and 17,670 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).*

Table C.20 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) there were for specific ELA and math IABs, by grade level, across the three LEA-4 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year. Fourth and fifth grade administered more IABs than any other grade (18 and 19, respectively). The most frequently administered ELA IABs were Read Literary Texts and Listen/Interpret in LEA-4-ES, Read Literary Texts for LEA-4-MS, and Research for LEA-4-HS. LEA-4-HS also administered the grade eight version of Read Literary Texts. The most frequently administered math IAB at LEA-4-ES was Operations and Algebraic Thinking. At the middle school, the two most commonly administered Math IABs were The Number System and Expressions and Equations. The LEA-4 high school administered five different IABs, each only one time.

The LEA-4-ES teachers noted their students with disabilities took the assessment without accommodations because of the difficulties of scheduling time to administer the IABs separately for this group. The special day class instructor from LEA-4-MS found the accommodations system for the interim assessments too difficult to use for students with disabilities. From their experience, the system required inputting accommodations one by one for each student to ensure the platform had the necessary accommodations. Because of this obstacle, students with disabilities at their school did not have the same settings on the interim assessments that they were provided for the CAASPP summative assessment. However, administrators in both schools found the interim assessment a valuable resource for this population.

Table C.20 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-4, by Domain and Grade, 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Editing**	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
ELA	Language and Vocabulary Use**	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	2	1	2	1	0	1	0
ELA	Performance Task*	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	0	2	0	1	1	2	0
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	2	2	1	1	1	2	0
ELA	Research	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
ELA	Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
ELA	Research: Analyze Information**	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
ELA	Revision	0	1	1	0	0	N/A	0
ELA	Write and Revise Narratives*,**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ELA	SUBTOTAL, all ELA IABs	4	9	11	5	4	5	1
Math	Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Algebra and Functions I – Linear Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Algebraic Expressions & Equations**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Divide Fractions by Fractions**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Expressions and Equations	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	0
Math	Expressions & Equations I**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Expressions & Equations II**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Geometry**	0	2	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1	0
Math	Geometry Congruence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry Measurement and Modeling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Geometry & Right Triangle Trigonometry**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Measurement and Data	0	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table C.20 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
Math	Multiply and Divide within 100**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations – Fractions	N/A	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten	N/A	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Numerical Expressions**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	One-Variable Expressions & Equations**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	1	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0	N/A	N/A
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Linear and Exponential**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	The Number System	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	The Number System**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0	N/A
Math		2	8	7	6	3	4	5
BOTH		6	17	18	11	7	8	6

*IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

NA indicates the IAB was not available at that grade level.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across the LEA-4 schools in the study. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows that in LEA-4 there were no testing opportunities for Editing in third, seventh, and eighth grade; one at fourth and sixth grades, and two at fifth grade.

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

Teachers from the study schools identified ways they used the IABs to support classroom instruction. Some LEA-4-MS math teachers believed their non-standardized use of having the class review IAB questions before administering the unit summative assessment resulted in students performing better on the unit assessment because of

the rigor of the IAB items. In contrast, the LEA-4-MS special day class teacher indicated the same activity was not successful with their students. Some math teachers across the study schools described identifying items from recently administered IABs on which students performed poorly and using them the following day for whole group discussions. One LEA-4-MS math teacher described using IABs at the beginning of a unit to determine students' prior learning on the topic and adjusted lesson plans to account for areas of mastery or deficit. LEA-4-HS ELA teachers used an IAB for the purpose of identifying incoming freshmen who needed reading remediation. The district reading specialists examined a variety of possible assessments and found a grade eight IAB would best fulfill the purpose.

LEA-4-MS ELA and LEA-4-HS math teachers critiqued the alignment of the IABs to their courses. LEA-4-MS ELA teachers indicated the items used in the IABs (and summative assessment) differed meaningfully from the approaches taken in their coursework, making the assessments an invalid measure of their students' learning. Teachers felt the CAASPP ELA items focused on specific quotes from a story rather than the more holistic emphasis on understanding a reading passage taught in their classroom. Additionally, they felt the CAASPP writing tasks were more abstract than those used in classroom instruction. LEA-4-HS math teachers indicated that the IABs draw on elements from across the year's curriculum, including material that had not yet been fully covered at the time the IAB was administered. For example, the teachers described how a functions IAB may include both radical and rational functions that, in their curriculum, are taught at very different times of the year. The teachers also shared the example of looking at a claim (e.g., problem solving), but then struggling to determine which IAB would help address lower performance on that claim since multiple IABs include focus on problem solving.

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

LEA-4 administrators had run some analyses to examine the relation between administering IABs and subsequent summative assessment scores. They found sites that administered an interim assessment scored better on the subsequent summative assessment than those that did not. They also found that sites that conducted "math talks" using IAB items had a higher number of Algebra II students that met proficiency standards, with an increase from 50 percent to 67 percent.

Teachers across the LEA-4 focus groups indicated the IABs were indispensable in preparing students to engage in the online testing environment used for the summative assessment. Teachers found IABs useful for orienting students to the CAASPP testing format. Those who administered individual items for practice or review indicated that process provided students with confidence they could succeed on the CAASPP despite the different, more verbose appearance of those items. Having students experience the platform also provided teachers an opportunity to orient students to the universally accessible tools on the platform.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

LEA-4 administrators conducted the rostering process for all school sites. The LEA-4 teachers expressed confidence in their ability to use CERS to access data. Teachers knew how to examine individual student scores as well as across-class item results to determine which items were answered incorrectly by the most students. Some teachers seemed unaware that they could access student-level item data. Teachers expressed a desire for more information from the IA results. The “at or near grade level” category seemed vague and insufficient to guide interventions for individual students as teachers desired to know which students were “at” and which were “near”. Teachers also expressed an interest in knowing how the IAB results related to student mastery relative to claims and targets.

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

LEA-4 reported, at the end of the 2019–2020 school year, no use of any IABs during the distance learning period. LEA-4 administrators indicated the district took a “less is more” approach to instructional guidance during distance learning.

Digital Library

Teachers in LEA-4 had little awareness of the Digital Library (DL). Some LEA-4-MS teachers mistakenly thought of it as an item bank from which assessment or review items could be accessed. Others knew it was a repository of lesson plans. Teachers across the study schools reported not accessing the DL because it was difficult to locate useful materials or because they had insufficient time. Only one teacher, who taught ELA at the study middle school, reported using the Connections Playlist from the interim assessment’s “Instructional Resources” link after administering the Edit/Revise IAB in a previous school year. Other teachers expressed interest in using the Connections Playlist in the future.

Best Practices

The following list documents some LEA-4 best practices in the use of CAASPP resources:

- LEA-4 used the CAASPP summative assessment results to set site-level goals targeting improved outcomes for specified subgroups. Each goal requires a plan for how it will be achieved, the intended outcome, and how progress toward the goal will be monitored and evaluated.
- Teachers and administrators reported they achieved positive learning benefits for students, as measured by classroom and CAASPP summative assessments, by using items from IABs as practice and review items.

LEA-5 Findings

LEA-5 participation included two elementary schools. Table C.21 summarizes HumRRO’s analysis of the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. As shown, nine teachers participated in two focus groups. Five teachers from LEA-5-ES1 and four teachers from LEA-5-ES2 provided feedback on CAASPP. We interviewed the school point of contact (POC) from each participating school as well as the district POC. At the end of the year, we conducted virtual focus groups with the school POCs and the LEA POC. The POC for LEA-5-ES1 completed three monthly polls; the LEA-5 POC completed one monthly poll. Forty-eight students from LEA-5-ES1 responded to the student questionnaire. In terms of documentation, LEA-5 provided various assessment and collaboration schedules and calendars. They also provided materials from CAASPP workshops.

Table C.21 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-5

Data Source	Participants/Description
Site Visit Educator Focus Group	ES1 – 5 teachers in one focus group: grade four (1), grade five (1), and grade six (3) ES2 – 4 teachers in one focus group: grade three (2), grade five (1), and grade six (1)
Site Visit Leader Interview	ES1 – School POC (grade six mathematics teacher) ES2 – School POC (principal) LEA – POC (executive director/CAASPP coordinator)
Monthly Polling	ES1 – December (POC), January (POC); April (POC) LEA – April (POC)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Groups	ES1 – School POC ES2 – School POC LEA – POC
Student Questionnaires	ES1 – 48 students
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-wide Assessments 2019–20 • Four Rs Process Template • Elementary Grade Level Assessments 2019–20 • Trimester 2 Grade Level Assessment Schedule • Trimester 3 Grade Level Assessment Schedule • May 2020 Assessment Calendar • CAASPP Leadership Academy August 9, 2019 Presentation • Spring Post-Test Suggested Guiding Questions • Wednesday Meeting Calendar 2019–2020

The LEA POC served as CAASPP coordinator for the district. This individual trained test administrators and provided materials to train teachers on using interim assessments and hand scoring. The LEA-5-ES1 POC was a sixth-grade teacher of all subjects, and

the LEA-5-ES2 POC was the school principal. At each study school, differing numbers of teachers participated in focus groups and monthly polling:

- At LEA-5-ES1, five teachers provided data. Five teachers participated in the focus group; they had 8 to 24 years of teaching experience. Only the school POC participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-5-ES2, four teachers provided data. Four teachers participated in the focus group; they had 9 to 19 years of teaching experience. Teachers from this school did not participate in monthly polling.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-5 is a small district in northern California. The district includes 12 elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. Table C.22 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the LEA and its two participating Case Study schools. Data were obtained from the 2018–2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE’s website (DataQuest).

Table C.22 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-5 and Its Participating Schools, 2018–2019

Variables	LEA-5	LEA-5-ES1	LEA-5-ES2
Enrollment	9,782	796	444
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	64%	64%	39%
% Students with Disabilities	13%	11%	20%
% English Learners	24%	28%	9%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	16%	22%	16%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	43%	41%	67%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	28%	28%	64%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the next columns provide information for the LEA overall and for each of the LEA’s study schools. The second column (from top to bottom) shows in LEA-5 there was a total enrollment of 9,782 in 2018–2019. Of these students, 64% were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 13% were students with disabilities, 24% were English learners, and 16% were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–2019 summative assessments indicated 43% of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 28% of students met or exceeded math state standards.

Nearly two-thirds of the LEA-5 student population were socioeconomically disadvantaged (64 percent). LEA-5-ES1 matched the district profile while LEA-5-ES2 had fewer students who were socioeconomically disadvantaged (39 percent). In LEA-5, 13 percent of students had documented disabilities. Approximately 11 percent of LEA-5-ES1 students and nearly 20 percent of LEA-5-ES2 students were classified as having disabilities. Across the LEA, about one quarter of students were English learners (ELs); the percentage ranged from 9 percent at LEA-5-ES2 to 28 percent at LEA-5-ES1. Forty-three percent of students in the district met or exceeded ELA standards. Forty-one percent of LEA-5-ES1 students met or exceeded ELA standards while more than two-thirds of LEA-5-ES2 students met or exceeded ELA standards. Students of LEA-5-ES1 matched the district's low levels of math achievement; (28 percent met or exceeded standards. LEA-5-ES2 students were higher achieving in mathematics; nearly two-thirds of LEA-5-ES2 students met or exceeded math standards (64 percent).

Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development

LEA staff attended regional assessment network meetings once a month, including pre- and post-test workshops. Other opportunities for collaboration and professional development included the California Assessment conference and the Digital Library network of educators.

The district fully supported collaboration and professional development. They dedicated time for educators to engage with each other and learn. Schools had early release of students on Wednesdays for collaboration and professional development as well as parent/guardian conferences. The schedule for Wednesday staff time topics was developed at the beginning of the school year. For example, LEA-5-ES1's October 2019 Wednesday afternoon schedule included district collaboration, staff meeting, grade-level collaboration, and district-led professional development. During the 2019–2020 school year collaboration and professional development focused on instruction. School leadership planned to focus these meetings on assessment during the 2020–2021 academic year. Some grade-level groups at LEA-5-ES1 met every Monday after school. Others met regularly, but not weekly. Grade-level and vertical collaboration allowed teachers to review interim assessment results and to plan instruction for success on the summative assessments because the "interims are so tightly aligned with the summative" assessments. In addition to the weekly Wednesday learning time, staff held academic conferences each semester at which they used data-driven evidence to identify students' benchmark progress and to plan strategies to address students' needs. LEA-5-ES2's principal held a half-day pre-service session prior to the start of school to plan for the next school year.

Curriculum and Assessments

In the elementary grades, LEA-5 used the enVision® curriculum by Savvas Learning Company for mathematics and Learning and Wonders by McGraw-Hill for ELA. LEA-5 schools gave a universal diagnostic assessment in ELA and mathematics at the beginning of each school year to use for planning before they received summative results. Elementary school teachers were required to give benchmark and interim

assessments throughout the academic year based on a district pacing guide. They also were required to give i-Ready Diagnostic assessments three times a year. They administered the Wonders curriculum tests as another measure.

Technology

LEA-5 provided each student with a Google Chromebook for use in the classroom. They planned to allow students to take them home for the summer in 2020 for additional learning. Following COVID-19 school closures, the district provided hot spots for students who did not have internet access.

Use of CAASPP Components

LEA-5 used the CDE post-test analysis tool, Research-Recall-Reflect-Respond (Four Rs) protocol, to use assessment data for informing decisions at the district and school levels, as illustrated in the Four Rs Process Template document shared by the district. LEA-5 required schools to use common metrics, including CAASPP components, in their school plans. In addition, schools were required to regularly report student performance, including on interim assessments, to stakeholders. According to the LEA-5 POC, the district started conducting root cause analyses two years ago, to “really think about what’s behind all of [the numbers]”. Additionally, LEA-5 used summative assessment data to develop professional development content.

LEA-5-ES2 had been using data from summative assessments to inform instruction for at least four years. LEA-5-ES1 used summative data for grouping students and began using summative assessments data to monitor achievement trends at the start of the 2019–2020 school year. The district mandated selected interim and benchmark assessments for each elementary grade and provided a pacing guide to schools and teachers. The district did not require interim assessments in the secondary schools, although there were individual teachers in the upper grades, primarily in English departments, who used interim assessments.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

The district shared summative data with each principal for their school and the district. Using Illuminate, district and school leaders created reports by grade-level and subgroups. District leaders used average scale scores to monitor student subgroup performance. During the 2019–2020 school year, the district focused on students with disabilities and English learners after reviewing data and finding these groups had the largest achievement gaps. LEA-5 used the summative data to inform professional development.

The principal at LEA-5-ES2 stated that from an administrator’s perspective, classroom instruction and student learning have benefitted the most from the summative assessments. LEA-5-ES2 had worked with the University of California-Davis Math

Project for four years to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement by student subgroup. Using summative data, the school-University team developed a five-year plan to focus instruction on student needs by grade, subject, and student groups. Teachers used summative data reports to identify students near cut-points of proficiency standards and created plans for what teachers could do to facilitate getting those students to the next level. Summative scores have improved, suggesting this process has been effective.

LEA-5-ES1 used summative data to group students and create intervention groups. The LEA-5-ES1 principal initiated greater use of data at the beginning of the 2019–2020 academic year to monitor trends. The principal presented to staff a four-year longitudinal graph that showed performance of student subgroups over time.

Impacts of Cancelled 2020 Summative Testing

LEA-5 expected to see progress and was looking forward to seeing their results from the 2020 summative assessments. They planned to use the universal diagnostic assessment in ELA and mathematics that schools would administer at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year to make decisions that would have been based on summative assessments. The district asked principals to use 2018–2019 data instead to set 2020–2021 school goals.

LEA-5-ES2 prepared paper-based Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium preparation booklets for students to use during summer 2020. Since LEA-5-ES2 used summative and interim assessment data for instructional planning and summative assessments to develop professional development for teachers, the LEA-5-ES2 principal indicated not having these data in the fall will have a “huge impact. They were trying to determine whether they would repeat last year’s plan for 2020–2021 since they missed the 2019–2020 summative assessments.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator noted the elementary schools had incorporated interim assessments into their instructional plans and classrooms. The district mandated selected interim assessments for each elementary grade, with input from teachers. One LEA-5-ES1 teacher participated on a grade-level district action team to review the standards and pacing guides and select interim assessments for the district schedule. LEA-5 had mandated Listening and Speaking interim assessments since 2016 because they had no common assessments for these skills. For the first time, the district mandated three mathematics interim assessments at each elementary grade during the 2019–2020 academic year. For fourth grade, the district required multiplication, division, and fraction interim assessments. The district did not require interim assessments in the secondary schools, although there were individual teachers in the upper grades, primarily in the English departments, who chose to use interim assessments.

At LEA-5-ES2, teachers decided by grade-level which additional interim assessments to use and when. The sixth-grade mathematics teachers chose to use all the interim assessments, administering some more than once. In addition to the mandated interim assessments, most LEA-5-ES1 teachers opted, on an individual basis, to give interim assessments that were not mandated. One LEA-5-ES1 math teacher administered an interim assessment at the end of every unit.

Table C.23 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in the two LEA-5 study schools during the 2019–20 school year, and the number of IAB tests taken by students in all LEA-5 schools. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table indicates how many enrolled students in the LEA and each school are eligible to take the CAASPP Summative Assessments. The table also indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or mathematics) and how many were given in a standardized manner versus a non-standardized manner. In addition to the IABs, one school at LEA-5 administered 162 ICAs, with 110 administered in ELA and 52 in math.

Table C.23 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-5 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # IABs ELA and Math	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized IABs ELA and Math	# Non-Standardized IABs ELA and Math
LEA-5	5,155	10,332	1,847	8,485	6,387	3,945
LEA-5-ES1	525	1,020	0	1,020	831	189
LEA-5-ES2	258	1,669	759	910	667	1,002

Explanation of table contents: *The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s study schools. Row 1 shows LEA-5 had 5,155 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. LEA-5 gave 10,332 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 1,847 tests were for ELA and 8,485 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 6,387 were given in a standardized manner and 3,945 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).*

The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator encouraged teachers to use the IABs in non-standardized ways to engage students in dialogue about test questions. The coordinator supported teachers using individual interim assessment questions to teach students how to use academic language when talking about the test question and what it was asking, and how to craft a response. At LEA-5-ES1, teachers had students work with partners on non-mandated interim assessments. Teachers and students looked at questions to which most students had responded incorrectly. In classroom “strategy time” discussions, they “dissected” the questions to identify whether mistakes were related to content and/or test language.

In LEA-5, all elementary teachers used IABs but not ICAs; some teachers reported using or had planned to use FIABs. One teacher at LEA-5-ES2 considered using the FIABs this year but already had an assessment plan, so planned to look at them for inclusion in next year’s plan. Teachers named several specific interim assessments used in their classrooms: Grammar and Conventions, Writing (several assessments requiring written responses), Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals, Ratios and Proportional Relationships, and Statistics.

Table C.24 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) offered for specific ELA and mathematics IABs, by grade level, across the two LEA-5 study schools during the 2019–2020 school year. As shown, across the two LEA-5 elementary schools, ELA and mathematics interim assessments were administered across all grades. The schools provided a combined three opportunities across grades for five ELA IABs—Read Literacy Texts, Read Informational Texts, Revision, Editing, and Research: Interpret and Integrate Information. The most frequently used mathematics IAB was Numbers and Operations in Base Ten.

Table C.24 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-5, by Domain and Grade 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
ELA	Brief Writes*	0	1	0	0
ELA	Editing**	1	1	1	1
ELA	Language and Vocabulary Use**	1	1	0	0
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	1	0	1	0
ELA	Performance Task*	0	1	0	0
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	1	1	1	1
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	0	2	1	0
ELA	Research	0	1	0	1
ELA	Research: Analyze Information**	0	1	1	0
ELA	Research: Interpret and Integrate Information**	0	2	1	1
ELA	Revision	1	1	1	0
ELA		5	12	7	4
Math	Add & Subtract with Equivalent Fractions**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Dependent & Independent Variables**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Expressions and Equations	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Math	Four Operations: Interpret, Represent, and Solve**	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Geometry**	0	0	1	0
Math	Measurement and Data	0	0	1	N/A

Table C.24 (cont.)

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Math	Number and Operations – Fractions	N/A	0	3	N/A
Math	Numbers and Operations – Fractions**	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten	N/A	3	3	N/A
Math	Number and Operations in Base Ten**	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Numerical Expressions**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	One-Variable Expressions & Equations**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	3	1	1	N/A
Math	Operations with Whole Numbers and Decimals**	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
Math	Performance Task	0	0	0	0
Math	Properties of Multiplication & Division**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Math		12	5	13	8
BOTH		17	17	20	12

*IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

NA indicates the IAB was not available at that grade level.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across the LEA-5 study schools. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows that in LEA-5 there were no testing opportunities for Brief Writes at grades 3, 5, or 6 and one at grade 4.

The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator provided training in hand scoring for ELA teachers. These were provided through Formative Assessments in Action videos available through the Digital Library. In the video, the CAASPP coordinator demonstrated use of rubrics for scoring written responses. The district emphasized the importance of hand scoring and rubrics to teach students the necessary rigor and depth of knowledge required to be successful on the summative assessments. In addition to training elementary school teachers, LEA-5 trained several groups of middle school teachers on using interim assessments and hand scoring. Teachers at LEA-5-ES1 and LEA-5-ES2 reported using performance tasks (e.g., brief writes and exemplars) with hand scoring as teaching tools. Teachers asked students to work with partners or completed the task alongside the students. They discussed how to interpret the question and scored their answers.

The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator stated the timing for setting up supports and accommodations made it difficult for students to get sufficient practice and become comfortable with using the tools. The CDE disseminated a new chart of accommodations in December 2019. In January 2020, LEA-5 brought teams together to plan student supports and accommodations. Teams included special education staff, English learner support staff, Response to Intervention (RTI) teachers, and testing coordinators not already included. The team approach was successful by ensuring all staff associated with students needing accommodations had the necessary information and agreed to updates to student records and test settings.

Teachers at LEA-5-ES2 stated it was easier to administer IAs to students with disabilities and English learners during the 2019–2020 school year compared to prior years because teachers could turn on accommodations; in the past, the testing coordinator was the only person who could enable the supports and tools and could only do so one month before the summative assessments were scheduled. Staff at LEA-5-ES2 also indicated another challenge with the IABs - In classrooms, students used Google for speech-to-text on their Chromebooks, but the Google tool did not work on the assessment platform. The speech-to-text tools the district had tried on the assessment platform were difficult to use and the students did not have success with them.

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

The district provided training and scheduled professional learning collaboration time. Teachers used this time to review interim assessments to track student progress and plan classroom instruction. Teachers looked at how students answered questions and used that information to inform lesson plans. For example, they considered whether they needed to teach or reteach content, discussed whether they should provide test-taking strategies and review question types. For the principal of LEA-5-ES2, the interim assessments served as a “cycle of inquiry” with instruction, interim assessment, and adjusted teaching practices.

Teachers at the elementary schools reported using interim assessments to monitor student progress and inform instruction. The principal at LEA-5-ES1 provided staff with training on how to find interim results and download reports of student achievement levels. Using those reports, teachers examined how students answered certain questions and taught the content again, as needed. Teachers stated the most useful aspect of the IA reports was information about what items students responded to incorrectly. Most teachers used interim assessments to teach critical thinking and test-taking skills; they used the interim assessments to teach students how to closely read questions and interpret what the test questions asked. While reviewing interim assessments as a whole class, problem-by-problem, teachers facilitated class discussions about content and test-taking skills. Some teachers used the interim assessments to identify (a) claims and targets that students met and (b) students needing additional instruction. Teachers focused on skills on which students did not perform well. Some teachers worked with students in small groups, especially the

students they identified as performing near proficient on a standard. A teacher at LEA-5-ES1 stated it was helpful to look at and discuss interim assessment data as a grade-level team. Teachers at LEA-5-ES2 reported using performance tasks as teaching tools, completing the tasks alongside the students. At LEA-5-ES1, one teacher used interim assessments to write parallel assessment questions for use in class. One teacher noted that the interim assessments cover separate topics, so they were not useful for showing growth; however, the overall score provided a snapshot of how students were doing. This teacher gave assessments following instruction so did not use scores to inform instruction.

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

All participating teachers in LEA-5-ES1 and LEA-5-ES2 reported using the interim assessments for preparing students for the summative assessments. A teacher at LEA-5-ES2 stated the interim assessments were effective for teaching skills in test taking, note taking, deduction, and selecting the best answers. One teacher from LEA-5-ES1 commented that the wording of the questions was often difficult for students, so they reviewed interim assessment questions in class to prepare for the summative assessment. Teachers also used interim assessments to familiarize students with using the test platform, to teach students how to use tools such as the calculator, and how to answer different question types.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

LEA-5 produced reports for district-mandated interim assessments and provided the reports to each principal. The LEA CAASPP coordinator reviewed the reports with the principals at district-wide principal meetings, training them in using the data for their schools.

LEA-5-ES1 had a Response to Intervention (RTI) coach who helped teachers access interim assessment data. However, one sixth grade teacher at LEA-5-ES1 reported she could view results for students in her homeroom class, but not for students she taught from other teachers' homerooms. Teachers regularly shared data with students as part of class instruction, especially when administering non-standard assessments and hand scoring as a class exercise.

Student Experiences with Interim Assessments

Of the two LEA-5 schools, only LEA-5-ES1 chose to participate in the optional student questionnaire data collection activity that gathered students' perspective about their experiences with the IABs. Table C.25 summarizes the grade-levels and characteristics of responding students. Students were asked to respond regarding their experience with a specific math IAB. LEA-5-ES1 had 48 respond to the survey, although not all students responded to all questions (frequencies are included for each response).

Table C.25 Summary of LEA-5-ES1 Student Questionnaire Respondents

Student Demographic Variables	Distribution (%)
Grade	
Four	15% (<i>n</i> = 7)
Five	21% (<i>n</i> = 10)
Six	65% (<i>n</i> = 31)
Gender	
Female	29% (<i>n</i> = 14)
Male	67% (<i>n</i> = 32)
Non-Binary	0%
Prefer Not to Say	4% (<i>n</i> = 2)
Racial Identity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	10% (<i>n</i> = 4)
Asian	26% (<i>n</i> = 10)
Black or African American	3% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3% (<i>n</i> = 1)
White	59% (<i>n</i> = 23)
Ethnic Identity	
Hispanic	62% (<i>n</i> = 28)
Non-Hispanic	38% (<i>n</i> = 17)
IEP	
No	91% (<i>n</i> = 29)
Yes	9% (<i>n</i> = 3)

Table C.26 summarizes experiences with the IABs based on students' responses to multiple-choice and multiple select items. As shown, most responding students reported experience taking IABs in a standardized manner; however, 21 percent had taken an IAB only in a non-standardized manner. The most common reason students reported teachers had used math IABs in their classroom was to see how well they learned certain skills, followed by practice on certain skills. Just over half the students reported that performance on IABs led to their teacher reteaching skills. Only five of the 48 students who responded to the questionnaire indicated they had used tools on the IAB.

Table C.26 LEA-5-ES1 Student Questionnaire Responses to Multiple-Choice and Multiple Select Survey Questions for Math IABs

Student IAB Usage Variables	Math IAB Usage
IAB Administration Manner	
Standardized	70% (<i>n</i> = 33)
Standardized and Non-Standardized	9% (<i>n</i> = 4)
Non-Standardized	21% (<i>n</i> = 10)
Teacher's Stated Goals for Administering IAB	
Find out what skills I have been taught/what skills I need to learn	17% (<i>n</i> = 7)
Practice certain skills	24% (<i>n</i> = 10)
Practice taking an online test	10% (<i>n</i> = 4)
See how well I learned certain skills	49% (<i>n</i> = 20)
IAB Data Used to Identify Gaps in Learning	
Do Not Remember	0%
No	63% (<i>n</i> = 30)
Yes	37% (<i>n</i> = 18)
IAB Led to Teacher Reteaching Skills	
Do Not Remember	0%
No	46% (<i>n</i> = 22)
Yes	54% (<i>n</i> = 26)
Student Used IAB Tools	
No	89% (<i>n</i> = 41)
Yes	11% (<i>n</i> = 5)

Some students provided open-ended responses to questionnaire items when prompted. Students in grades four and five indicated needing to work on fractions and mixed numbers. Grade six students were less likely to express IABs led to identifying skills they needed to work on. The few students who noted they learned where they needed to improve spoke about a need to take their time on the test. One student noted they could improve by “taking my time and reading the question right.” Students noted their teacher reviewed as a class the IAB questions that students struggled with. One student stated of their teacher, following an IAB administration, “she would read over the answer, and explain the steps on how to solve it”. Only five students reported having used IAB special settings; four students used the highlighter and one student used the magnifying glass.

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

LEA-5 did not use interim assessments while teaching through distance learning. They spent their time developing lessons, doing the “online learning grid,” and working with their students with disabilities. It was a “pretty rigorous schedule” with a learning curve for teachers to learn and become comfortable with using the distance learning technology. Teachers shared with students results from interim assessments taken before schools closed.

Digital Library

The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator was a member of the Digital Library (DL) network of educators from 2015 through the 2019–2020 academic year. Members attended DL meetings several times a year and were involved in the recent changes to the resources. The CAASPP coordinator created resources for the DL, including a Formative Assessments in Action video of using hand scoring with students, and was involved in the quality control process to vet potential resources. She stated the DL was “pretty solid,” however there were “tons of resources that were just not worth anything at all.” The LEA-5 CAASPP coordinator said she did not push use of the DL as much as CDE suggested because of the general quality of materials. She noted that many teachers did not know what the DL was.

Two teachers who participated in the LEA-5-ES2 focus group learned about the DL during professional development. Using CERS, they often accessed DL resources, especially answer keys for writing tasks. They noted that for grades four and five, there were only exemplars for narrative writing prompts; they would like to see exemplars for various writing genres. These resources helped students prepare for the summative assessment by understanding the writing expected and how responses would be scored. One teacher used the DL for printed answer keys for mathematics performance tasks. The principal at LEA-5-ES1 noted most teachers at the school did not use the DL. None of the LEA-5 study participants reported using the DL Connections Playlist.

Best Practices

HumRRO identified the following CAASPP-related best practices across LEA-5 study schools:

- Use online diagnostic assessments in addition to IABs to familiarize students with taking an assessment on the computer.
- Use professional learning collaboration time to review interim assessment results and plan instruction as a grade-level team.
- Use summative assessment data to develop a five-year plan that focuses instruction on student needs by grade, subject, and student groups.

- Bring together teams of special education staff, English learner support staff, RTI specialists, and testing coordinators to plan and update student supports and accommodations for CAASPP assessments.

LEA-6 Findings

LEA-6 participation included one direct-funded 6–12 charter school that was part of a larger charter system composed of five schools of Transition Kindergarten (TK)–12 students. HumRRO’s primary focus was on collecting and analyzing data from school leaders, teachers, and students of grades six through twelve to represent CAASPP component use related to ELA and mathematics at the middle school and high school levels. Table C.27 summarizes the qualitative data gathered for this LEA. LEA-6 joined the study in February 2020 and thus participated in a limited number of monthly polls. Additionally, school closures resulting because of COVID-19 prohibited an in-person site visit. However, as shown, LEA-6 was responsive in participating in virtual interviews and focus groups, an end-of-year virtual focus group, and optional student questionnaires.

Table C.27 Summary of Data Sources for LEA-6

Data Source	Participants/Description
Virtual Site Visit Educator Focus Group	Six teachers across two focus groups: ELA (grade five) and mathematics (grade one)
Virtual Site Visit Leader Interview	School POC (coordinator, assistant coordinator)
Monthly Polling	December (POC); January (POC)
End-of-Year Virtual Focus Groups	School POC (CAASPP coordinator)
Student Questionnaires	Grade eight – two students Grade nine – one student Grade ten – one student Grade eleven – two students Grade twelve – one student
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC Schedule 2019–2020 • 2019–2020 Calendar • English Department Summer PD • Math Department Summer PD

The CAASPP coordinator acted as the school POC and an assistant coordinator participated in the initial site visit school leader interview. Six teachers total provided data. Three middle school ELA teachers participated in one virtual focus group, with their experience ranging from 5 to 16 years. Two ELA high school teachers and one high school mathematics teacher participated in a second virtual focus group, with their

experience ranging from 6 to 20 years. Only the school POC participated in the monthly polling.

LEA and School Characteristics

LEA-6 is a 6–12 charter school and is part of a direct-funded –TK–12 charter school system in northern California. The school is one of five schools within the charter system. Our data is from only the one 6–12 school throughout this section, unless otherwise noted. The schools included in the charter system support different educational programs that allow students to develop unique skills and talents. School leaders and teachers from the participating 6–12 school participated in the study. Table C.28 summarizes the demographic characteristics and academic achievement of the full charter system. Data were obtained from the 2018–2019 School Accountability Report Card and the CDE’s website (DataQuest).

As shown, LEA-6 had relatively small populations of English learners and students with disabilities compared to other LEAs in the study. Nearly a quarter of LEA-6 students who participated in the study were socioeconomically disadvantaged.

The charter system of LEA-6 performed well academically, with 69 percent of students in grades three through eight and eleven meeting or exceeding ELA standards. School leadership considered high school students “medium-strong” in ELA achievement. However, the school’s overall mathematics achievement was notably lower than its ELA achievement; less than half of students in grades three through eight and eleven met or exceeded mathematics standards.

Table C.28 Demographic Characteristics of LEA-6 Charter System, 2018–2019.

Variables	LEA-6
Enrollment	1,833
% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	25%
% Students with Disabilities	8%
% English Learners	8%
% Reclassified Fluent English Proficient	0%
% Met or Exceeded ELA State Standards	69%
% Met or Exceeded Math State Standards	49%

Explanation of table contents: For each variable in the first column, the second column provides information for the LEA charter system overall. The second column shows (from top to bottom) that for LEA-6 there was a total enrollment of 1,833 in 2018–2019. Of these students, 25% were socioeconomically disadvantaged, 8% were students with disabilities, 8% were English learners, and 0% were reclassified fluent English proficient. Results from the 2018–2019 summative assessments indicated 69% of students met or exceeded ELA state standards and 49% of students met or exceeded math state standards.

Throughout the 2019–2020 academic year, LEA-6 concentrated on special initiatives for student subgroups, such as English learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students. The school focused on effectively incorporating accommodations and services for students with disabilities through their Individual Educational Programs (IEPs). School leadership also worked with middle school and high school teachers to develop six-week intervention programs for English learners and low-achieving students using CAASPP and classroom assessment results.

Professional Learning Communities and Professional Development

Teachers at LEA-6 had several opportunities for collaboration. The school supported teachers forming their own professional inquiry partnerships (PIPs), which met monthly and focused on a chosen topic or grade level. Teachers also collaborated once a month for department-level and grade-level meetings and participated in charter-system-wide grades K through twelve content area meetings. Before the start of the 2019–2020 academic year, ELA and mathematics teachers attended separate summer retreats to review their school’s 2019 CAASPP summative assessment data and discuss plans for interim assessment use during the 2019–2020 academic year.

LEA-6 also provided several professional development opportunities for school leaders and teachers across the charter system, many of which focused on CAASPP components. Two school leaders attended the workshop entitled, *The Results Are In...Now What? Analyzing Assessment Results to Inform Teaching and Learning*. The school POC reported attending many other CAASPP trainings offered by the county education office. Teachers who participated in the study virtual focus groups had attended either onsite or offsite CAASPP trainings on topics such as interim assessment hand scoring, administering interim assessments, and Smarter Balanced Digital Library resources. However, while teachers recalled attending CAASPP-related trainings, two teachers noted the school placed greater emphasis on training related to analyzing data from i-Ready® assessments, and another noted the school had offered teachers release days for training related to analyzing i-Ready data.

Curriculum and Assessments

Because there was no school-adopted curriculum for either ELA or mathematics, the LEA-6 study school created many of its own curricular materials and supplements with curricula from a variety of sources. For ELA, teachers of grades seven, eight, eleven, and twelve used materials from the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC). There was less use of ERWC resources in grades nine and ten. One grade six ELA teacher noted she created many of her own curricular materials focused on study skills that involved reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Mathematics teachers used materials from Flipped Math, Mathspace, and College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM), the last of which they adopted for implementation at grades six through eight for the 2020–2021 school year.

The LEA-6 charter system administered i-Ready® assessments in grades K through eight and grade nine to identify lower-level skills not yet obtained. Additionally, the school's English department chose to pilot CAASPP interim assessment blocks (IABs) during the 2019–2020 academic year. Each teacher would administer two ELA IABs over the course of the academic year—one in the fall and one in the spring—to students in grades six through twelve. The school was also exploring the use of mathematics IABs at the high school level.

Technology

LEA-6 staff had sufficient technology to use CAASPP components. Teachers noted recent improvement in the software related to CAASPP, stating the single sign-on (SSO) enhancement made it much easier to log on and access CAASPP components.

Use of CAASPP Components

LEA-6 relied on multiple measures, including some CAASPP components, to drive school- and classroom-level decisions. The school used summative assessment data to organize intervention groups, establish department goals, evaluate curricular materials, and inform classroom instruction. Additionally, the school began piloting IAs during the 2019–2020 school year, with both ELA and math teachers administering IABs to students in upper grades. Though teachers were aware of the DL, actual use of its resources was minimal across the school. In general, teachers shared mostly positive feedback about CAASPP components. One teacher noted satisfaction with the consistency in the year-to-year format of the summative assessments: “It’s good there aren’t too many major changes...they [students] know what to expect—all the little things that are on there, buttons and so on.”

LEA-6 provided feedback on the weaknesses of some CAASPP components. Teachers noted they would benefit from additional CAASPP trainings, particularly on the DL. One teacher expressed concern over the different devices that students used to take CAASPP assessments. She noted that some students took the test on a desktop computer with a monitor and mouse whereas others took it on a Chromebook with a much smaller screen and trackpad. She was concerned that students taking the test on a Chromebook might become fatigued because it may take longer for them to complete the test.

Additionally, the school POC emphasized the need to receive timely resources from the CDE: “I know the people at CAASPP are working really hard to give us lots of resources, but we are getting resources mid-flow that could have really helped prior. What it does is it ends up making us look like we’re disorganized or not finding things...I make a resource to help them, then a week later CAASPP comes out with a resource...It would be nice if we have everything all set before the window opens.” This POC also noted that it could be difficult to find information in MyTOMS, such as where to access the summative and interim assessments.

Summative Assessments

Use of Summative Data

LEA-6 received its 2019 CAASPP summative assessment results at the end of the 2018–2019 academic year. The school POC separated results for students from each school and distributed them to each school coordinator, who then shared the results with ELA and math department chairs to review with their teams. Teachers reviewed the results prior to the start of the 2019–2020 school year, most saying they discussed the results during their department’s summer retreat. One teacher noted they were instructed not to look at their students’ scores if results became available before the end of the academic year.

Teachers reviewed the following school-level results, disaggregated by grade and cohort: percentages of students who achieved proficiency (i.e., “met” or “exceeded” standard), average distance-from-three results (i.e., the difference between the school’s average scale score and the cut score for proficiency), and claim-level data broken down by achievement level. Additionally, teachers reviewed scores by student subgroups (e.g., students in different schools within the charter system, English learners, students with disabilities, socioeconomically disadvantaged students). Teachers were also presented with comparison data that examined the school’s performance year-to-year and compared its growth to that of other nearby schools. During the virtual focus groups, one teacher noted she reviewed individual student results, including overall achievement-level scores, scale scores, and claim-level scores, though most teachers had not examined individual student scores. One ELA teacher highlighted the benefit of year-to-year CAASPP data to track student growth: “I think the fact they’re taking it vertically across their career is also helpful, too, because you can see aberrations in terms of their performance. Whether it was effort or whether there were truly gaps, I like that they’re taking it consistently and the test is, in theory, standardized. [The data] is always there and we can get it.” However, teachers indicated they had not been provided specific guidance on how to analyze summative assessment results to identify trends in the data.

LEA-6 summative assessment results informed some school- and classroom-level decisions. School administrators examined mathematics CAASPP summative assessment results in combination with i-Ready® scores, grades, and teacher recommendations to develop six-week intervention programs for students in most need of support. At the classroom level, teachers used summative assessment scores to inform instructional decisions. The school’s ELA department reviewed 2019 summative assessment scores and “noticed that listening was an area where the students were consistently performing poorly.” Therefore, the ELA department established a goal of working with all students to improve listening comprehension skills. One ELA teacher had “been working on this skill with them [students] by having them listen to podcasts.” This teacher also exposed students to CAASPP-style questions that targeted listening to “get them used to the format and build their skills in that area.” Additionally, the ELA and math departments used the 2019 summative assessment data to inform their decision on IAB use during the 2019–2020 academic year. One math teacher noted “the

[summative] test itself has been very beneficial to help us see how students are doing. With the introduction of the school dashboard, it's brought on more changes and shown us things we need to work on."

Impacts of School Closure and Cancelled 2020 Summative Testing

The COVID-19 pandemic led to LEA-6's closure and the loss of opportunity to administer the 2020 summative assessment. Therefore, LEA-6 was exploring options for providing instruction at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year on missed content and skills. The school POC noted school staff were focused on the core math and ELA concepts and skills and how they could be integrated into other subjects, such as science, history, physical education, and electives. The school also considered administering ICAs to high-school level students at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year to gauge students' skills.

Interim Assessments

General Interim Assessment Information

The school used IABs across ELA and math, particularly in the upper grades, to “give students more experience with [the] format of the test” and “give teachers more data on specific skills students need support with to inform [their] teaching.” LEA-6 did not mandate the use of interim assessments but did support their use across both content areas as an end-of-unit assessment, particularly in the upper grades. The school's ELA department chose to pilot IABs during the 2019–2020 school year, administering a minimum of two IABs—one in the fall and one in the spring—to students in grades six through twelve. One ELA teacher administered an additional IAB to her grade eleven students. The school's math department also committed to using IABs for the 2019–2020 school year, choosing to incorporate IABs based on the scope and sequence of the curriculum. The school explored how IABs may be used in math as “a part of the regular course content...without making it an additional assessment.” Teachers individually decided which specific IABs to administer to their students and when to administer them. There were different levels of teacher buy-in on using these assessments.

Table C.29 presents the total number of IAB tests taken by students in LEA-6 overall and by school level during the 2019–2020 school year. Counts of tests include those for students who took the same test multiple times. The table indicates how many enrolled students in the LEA and each school were eligible to take the CAASPP Summative Assessments. The table also indicates how many of the total IABs were in each domain (ELA or mathematics) and how many were given in a standardized versus a non-standardized manner. LEA-6 did not administer ICAs in 2019–2020.

LEA-6 focused on using IABs rather than ICAs during the 2019–2020 school year. Teachers who participated in the virtual focus groups were not aware if the IABs they had administered included had FIABs. Most IABs were administered in a standardized

manner. The school had discussed using IABs as end-of-unit diagnostic assessments in the future, particularly at the high school level.

Table C.29 Number of Smarter Balanced IABs Taken by LEA-6 Students, 2019–2020

LEA or School	CAASPP Eligible Students	Total # IABs ELA and Math	# ELA IABs	# Math IABs	# Standardized IABs ELA and Math	# Non-Standardized IABs ELA and Math
LEA-6	1,061	811	663	148	407	404
LEA-6-MS	n/a	316	268	48	316	0
LEA-6-HS	n/a	495	395	100	91	404

Explanation of table contents: *The first row shows data for the LEA overall, and the next rows show data for each of the LEA’s study schools. Row 1 shows LEA-6 had 1,061 students eligible for the CAASPP summative assessments in 2019–2020. LEA-6 gave 811 total IABs (count of tests given). Of these, 663 tests were for ELA and 148 tests were for math. Of the total IABs, 407 were given in a standardized manner and 404 in a non-standardized manner (across ELA and math).*

Table C.30 presents the count of testing opportunities (i.e., test sessions) there were for specific ELA and mathematics IABs, by grade level, across LEA-6 during the 2019–2020 school year. At LEA-6, grade seven administered more IABs in both ELA and mathematics than any other grade. The most frequently administered ELA IAB was Listen/Interpret, which was consistent with the English department’s focus for the year. For mathematics, the most frequently administered IABs were The Number System and Ratios and Proportional Relationships.

LEA-6 did not require teachers to administer IABs with hand scoring components. Some teachers at LEA-6 received hand scoring training with the intent of training other teachers at the school; however, none of the teachers who participated in the virtual focus group had administered an IAB that required hand scoring. One ELA teacher said she intentionally chose an IAB without a hand scoring component because she did not have much training on how to hand score.

The school POC had available supports and accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners to use when taking IABs. However, teachers did not begin working with students until after January 2020 to show them how to use universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. Teachers reviewed universal tools with general education students, and the school’s special education department worked with students with IEPs to show them the designated supports and accommodations available to them. One ELA teacher administered IABs to students with designated supports and accommodations so they could have experience using them when taking the assessment. Two other ELA teachers noted the scores for students with designated supports and accommodations generally correlated to the grades they received in class.

Table C.30 Count of Opportunities to Take Specific Smarter Balanced IABs in LEA-6, by Domain and Grade in 2019–2020

Domain	IAB Name	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	HS
ELA	Editing**	0	0	N/A	1
ELA	Listen/Interpret**	1	1	1	1
ELA	Performance Task*	0	1	0	0
ELA	Read Informational Texts*	0	1	1	0
ELA	Read Literary Texts*	0	1	1	0
ELA	Write and Revise Narratives*,**	0	1	0	0
ELA	SUBTOTAL, all ELA IABs	1	5	3	2
Math	Algebra and Functions II – Quadratic Functions, Equations, and Inequalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	Divide Fractions by Fractions**	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math	Expressions and Equations	0	1	0	0
Math	Functions**	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Math	Ratios & Proportional Relationships**	1	1	N/A	N/A
Math	Solve Equations & Inequalities: Quadratic**	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Math	The Number System**	N/A	1	1	N/A
Math		2	3	2	2
BOTH		3	8	5	4

*IABs that require hand scoring.

**FIABs.

N/A indicates IABs were not available at that grade.

Explanation of table contents: For each IAB named in the second column, the next columns show how many testing opportunities (i.e., test administration sessions) there were at each grade across LEA-6. The number of students who participated in each testing opportunity varied and may have been a full classroom of students or a select group of students. Row 1 shows there were 0 testing opportunities for Editing at grade six or seven, 1 opportunity at HS, and the Editing IAB was not available at grade eight.

Interim Assessments to Track Student Progress and Inform Classroom Instruction

IABs were used by ELA teachers primarily to track student progress and inform classroom instruction. These assessments were used to support the ELA department's goal of improving students' listening and speaking skills. Some ELA teachers had used the Listen/Interpret IABs to familiarize themselves and their students with the question types and build students' skills in that area. One ELA teacher had administered the Editing IAB to "see what the target areas were" and identify patterns that would help her

target instruction. Using results from this particular IAB, she identified students who struggled with parallel structure and focused instruction on this topic.

While there were positive uses of IAB data across the school's ELA department, one teacher noted the ELA department had not explored many IABs beyond the Listen/Interpret IABs, so more time and focus was dedicated to using i-Ready® assessment data to make instructional decisions. Additionally, one ELA teacher noted that teachers did not have much time to analyze the data as a department.

Interim Assessments to Prepare for Summative Assessments

Teachers from LEA-6 used interim assessments to familiarize themselves and students with CAASPP item types. One ELA teacher used IABs to learn what the different item types were, particularly for questions targeting listening and speaking skills, so they could “utilize those types of questions and put them up in a familiar way with the student to get them used to format and build their skills in that area.” Another ELA teacher acknowledged that interim assessments “are a better representation [than i-Ready® assessments] of what we will see on the CAASPP,” though the school spent more time analyzing the results of i-Ready® assessment data. Teachers also administered IABs to allow students an opportunity to practice accessing and using universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations similar to what they would see on the summative assessments.

Interim Assessment Reporting System

LEA-6 conducted on-site, small-group training sessions for teachers on how to access interim assessment results through the California Educator Reporting System (CERS); however, one teacher noted that, while the school expected teachers to access their own data, “the data is not disaggregated or disseminated in a way that’s filtered through the school’s goals of what they want us to do with it...we’re supposed to use the system ourselves, but sometimes there’s been hiccups with permissions and admin rights and reporting groups...sometimes our kids get mixed up and we have to manually sort that.” The school POC also noted that the school encountered technology issues when administering IAs to students: “when a whole class was trying to log in, some of the kids were not able to log in at the same time. We did determine it wasn’t a local issue. It was an issue with CAASPP as well.”

Student Experiences with Interim Assessments

LEA-6 chose to participate in the optional student questionnaire data collection activity to gather students’ perspectives about their experiences with the IABs. Seven students completed the questionnaire regarding ELA IABs. Not all students responded to every question. Table C.31 summarizes the grade-levels and characteristics of responding students.

Table C.31 Summary of LEA-6 Student Questionnaire Respondents

Student Demographic Variables	Distribution (%)
Grade	
Eight	29% (<i>n</i> = 2)
Nine	14% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Ten	14% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Eleven	29% (<i>n</i> = 2)
Twelve	14% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Gender	
Female	57% (<i>n</i> = 4)
Male	43% (<i>n</i> = 3)
Non-Binary	0%
Prefer Not to Say	0%
Racial Identity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	17% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Asian	0%
Black or African American	17% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
White	50% (<i>n</i> = 3)
2 or More Races	17% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Ethnic Identity	
Hispanic	17% (<i>n</i> = 1)
Non-Hispanic	83% (<i>n</i> = 5)
IEP	
No	86% (<i>n</i> = 6)
Yes	14% (<i>n</i> = 1)

Table C.32 summarizes students' experiences with the IABs based on their responses to multiple-choice and multiple select questionnaire items. As shown, all seven students reported experience taking IABs in a standardized manner and two students also took an ELA IAB in a non-standardized manner. The most common reason students reported teachers used IABs in their classroom was to see how well they learned certain skills. Most of the students did not recall if their teachers used data to identify gaps in student learning or to reteach skills. LEA-6 students who responded to the questionnaire did not use special IAB settings.

Table C.32 LEA-6 Student Questionnaire Responses to Multiple-Choice and Multiple Select Survey Questions for ELA IABs

Student IAB Usage Variables	ELA IAB Usage
IAB Administration Manner	
Standardized	71% (n = 5)
Standardized and Non-Standardized	29% (n = 2)
Non-Standardized	0%
Teacher’s Stated Goals for Administering IAB	
Find out what skills I have been taught/what skills I need to learn	20% (n = 1)
Practice certain skills	20% (n = 1)
Practice taking an online test	20% (n = 1)
See how well I learned certain skills	40% (n = 2)
IAB Data Used to Identify Gaps in Learning	
Do Not Remember	71% (n = 5)
No	29% (n = 2)
Yes	0%
IAB Led to Teacher Reteaching Skills	
Do Not Remember	71% (n = 5)
No	29% (n = 2)
Yes	0%
Student Used IAB Tools	
No	100% (n = 7)
Yes	0%

Use of Interim Assessments in Distance Learning

LEA-6 reported no interim assessments were administered during their period of distance learning when schools closed in spring 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One ELA teacher noted some students who participated in the study lacked the technology at home to equitably participate in distance learning. She also expressed concern that the results may not be legitimate because teachers could not control the testing environment at the student’s home and an older sibling could potentially take the assessment on the student’s behalf.

Digital Library

Most LEA-6 teachers did not use DL resources during the 2019–2020 school year. The school POC and teacher on special assignment (TOSA) promoted the use of DL resources among teachers, some of whom received training on this CAASPP component when it was initially implemented. However, teachers noted they did not use, nor were they required to use, any DL resources during the 2019–2020 school year. One teacher did not access the DL but recalled it was discussed during a recent professional development meeting. Teachers who logged in to the DL said they did so via CERS but were not aware of the Connections Playlists link within the Interim Assessment Reporting System (IARS). While most teachers did not review any DL resources, one teacher “looked at it at the beginning of the year to explore the different types of questions” presented within DL resources so she could incorporate the same type of language into her instruction.

The school POC received feedback from teachers about DL resources that “it is overwhelming and daunting.” She noted some teachers logged in and searched for resources, “but only found things they already knew to do. It wasn’t a goldmine.” She recommended “the DL could be more about how to utilize the IAs or how to set kids up for success with the IAs. Maybe what are some strategies or some formats to follow up with after they’ve taken it. The ways to use tools would be better than general teaching strategies because I feel we have a lot of those in a lot of different places. Maybe it’s around how to prepare your kids, maybe emotionally...”

Best Practices

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-6 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- Teachers were given flexibility about which IABs to use and when to administer them, which allowed them to select and administer IABs that corresponded to the scope and sequence of their curriculum.
- Teachers administered IABs to familiarize students with universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations, and summative assessment item types.
- The school used multiple measures, including CAASPP summative assessment results, to develop intervention programs for low-achieving students.
- The school established goals based on students’ summative scores and used CAASPP interim assessments to periodically assess progress toward achieving those goals.

Appendix D: Summaries of LEA-Specific Findings from Case Study

Introduction

The following sections present a summary of findings for each local educational agency (LEA) and its sample of schools participating in the second year of the Case Study. Each summary includes (a) an overview of the context of the LEA and its schools, (b) a summary of findings about usage of each of the three CAASPP components studied (summative and interim assessments and the Digital Library [DL]), and (c) HumRRO's identification of several best practices in the use of CAASPP components.

To keep LEAs and schools anonymous, LEA and school codes are used for identification purposes. Each LEA is numbered (LEA-1 through LEA-6). Among the LEAs studied, there were some variations in the grades at each school level. For the study, HumRRO classified findings from schools consisting of grades between elementary (ES) and high school (HS) as middle schools (MS) to match the most accurate depiction of the grades we included from each school in our study. For example, we classified one school with only grades seven and eight as a MS, and we also classified one school with only grades five and six as MS (which is consistent with the school's own classification). Similarly, because we studied only grades kindergarten through five at a school that also has grades six through eight, our report classifies the school as ES.

In these summaries, phrases such as "schools in the LEA" or "LEA-1 teachers" refer to the schools and teachers studied rather than all schools and teachers in the LEA, unless otherwise specified. The experiences described in this appendix may be useful to LEAs and schools across California interested in increasing their effective use of CAASPP components or identifying ways to improve their implementation. Though HumRRO implemented most planned Case Study activities, we note COVID-19 school closures resulted in a reduced amount of data collected in the final months of our study for some LEAs. See Appendix C for detailed findings from each of the six LEAs, including contextual descriptions and distinctions between findings at the school level (ES, MS, HS).

LEA-1 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-1 is a large district in southern California with schools having varying percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged and English learner student populations. Regarding academic achievement in 2018–2019, just over half of LEA-1 students met or exceeded the grade level performance standard in English language arts (ELA) and just under half did so for mathematics. Staff from the LEA, one ES, one MS (grades five and six), and one HS collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities. Specifically:

- At the LEA level, the CAASPP Coordinator began as the Point of Contact (POC) and was replaced by the CAASPP Administration Project Lead. Both participated in the interview, and the CAASPP Administration Project Lead participated in monthly polling.
- At LEA-1-ES, the principal acted as the study POC and participated in an interview and monthly polling. Four individual teachers each provided data. Three teachers participated in the focus group; they had between 6 and 30 years of teaching experience. These teachers plus one additional teacher participated in monthly polling.
- At LEA-1-MS, the principal acted as the study POC and participated in an interview and monthly polling. Eleven individual teachers each provided data: four math teachers, four ELA teachers, one teacher who taught math and ELA, and one reading intervention teacher. One of these teachers plus an additional teacher participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-1-HS, an interim vice principal and teacher on special assignment acted as study POCs and participated in an interview and monthly polling. Nineteen individual teachers each provided data: four math teachers with between 10 and 21 years of teaching experience and four ELA teachers with between 5 and 27 years of experience participated in the focus groups. All teachers across focus groups had been at their current school for at least 2 years. Three of these teachers participated in monthly polling, plus an additional eleven teachers who did not participate in the focus groups. The school collected 324 student responses to an IAB survey—including 176 regarding a mathematics IAB and 148 regarding an ELA IAB.

LEA-1 teachers described having a strong Professional Learning Community (PLC) culture with clear time carved out for collaboration at the school level. Teachers from LEA-1 schools used a variety of assessments, in addition to CAASPP interim assessments (IAs) and summative assessments, to understand their students' content knowledge and skills growth in ELA and math. The LEA provided teachers access to Illuminate and Hoonuit as platforms for using and generating formative assessments. Studied schools also noted use of assessments through their curriculum, and various other formative and diagnostic assessment tools (Lumos, ACT, DIBELS, and FAST) to better understand and provide alternate measures of student knowledge in ELA and mathematics. Some teachers generated their own assessments through Google Classroom.

Summative assessment data were reviewed annually by LEA-1 and its schools to track progress, compare performance across similar districts and across similar schools within the district, and as one source of information to drive LEA- and school-level goals. Schools used summative assessment data to identify areas requiring improvement, and they sought changes to instruction to address these areas.

LEA-1 did not mandate the use of Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) for the 2019–2020 school year; however, the LEA POC believed many schools were drawn to the IABs after noting success on the summative assessment by those schools choosing to do so in prior years. Teachers played a role in IAB administration decisions at all schools, though to different degrees. The elementary teachers were required by school leadership to administer all available IABs throughout the school year, and they worked in grade-level PLCs to schedule the administrations. The MS and HS teachers had greater flexibility. Although they were expected to administer only one or two IABs (or ICAs, in the case of grades nine and ten); they were permitted to determine which to administer and when.

LEA-1 schools used IABs to track student progress and inform instructional decisions. For example, LEA-1-ES tracked IAB performance data in a shareable Google spreadsheet file viewable by all teachers. Teachers could quickly identify the strengths and weaknesses, by Common Core State Standard (CCSS), of their current, past, and future students. At LEA-1-MS, two teachers discussed incorporating frequently missed IAB items into class warmup activities, and another teacher indicated presenting examples of high and low performance on hand-scored ELA items to help students understand how to respond to this type of items. Teachers at LEA-1-HS had reviewed IAB results with their class and identified where additional focus was required. Teachers at LEA-1-ES and LEA-1-MS felt the IABs were more cognitively demanding than their curriculum and therefore an effective way to provide exposure to a strong level of rigor throughout the school year. Students who participated in the student questionnaire at LEA-1-HS most frequently reported their teachers used IABs to see how well they learned certain skills. The second most frequently reported usage of the IABs was to find out what skills they needed to learn.

LEA-1 and study schools' staff were aware of the DL but rarely used it, citing difficulty with the platform and sufficiency of other available resources.

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-1 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- Teachers at all three participating schools indicated using IAB data to inform instructional decisions, including determining what specific content to reteach or review. Some teachers described sharing IAB results with students individually or as a class, such as reviewing skills to solve questions with a high frequency of incorrect responses.
- Schools provided students, including English learners and students with disabilities, opportunities to practice with technology, tools, and accessibility features on IAs to help students prepare to do their best on the summative assessments.
- Special education teachers worked to ensure students with disabilities had the required learning opportunities and exposure to technology, including settings for embedded designated supports and accommodations, for the best chance at obtaining valid measures of their knowledge.

- Teachers, informed by the rigor of CAASPP summative and interim assessments, targeted that level of rigor in the classroom by generating challenging lessons, homework, and classroom assessments for all students.
- Teachers used hand scoring exemplars to develop assessments to help students understand the expectations for a complete response.
- ES teachers used IABs for additional practice in specific areas of student weakness. They administered about one in five IABs in a nonstandardized manner, such as for classroom warm-ups or review activities.

LEA-2 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-2 is a medium-sized district in central California with a high percentage of English learners and a majority of students classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. In 2018–2019, a little more than one-third of LEA-2 students met or exceeded the grade level standard in ELA, and about one-quarter did so for math. Staff from the LEA, one ES, one MS, and one HS collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities. Specifically:

- At the LEA level, the Coordinator of Assessment and Accountability acted as the main POC, and along with a Curriculum and Instruction staff member participated in an interview, monthly polling, and an end of year focus group.
- At LEA-2-ES, the assistant principal acted as the study POC. The POC, school principal, and ten teachers provided data. The POC and school principal participated in an interview. The POC provided monthly polling and participated in an end of year focus group. Eight teachers participated in one of two focus group; they had between 5 and 27 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers plus two additional teachers participated in monthly polling.
- At LEA-2-MS, the principal acted as POC. The POC, assistant principal, learning director and eight teachers provided data. The POC, assistant principal, and learning director participated in an interview. The POC provided monthly polling data and participated in an end of year focus group. Six teachers with between 4 and 30 years of experience participated in one of two focus groups; these included four ELA teachers and two mathematics teachers. Most of these teachers plus two additional teachers participated in the monthly polling.
- At LEA-2-HS, the assistant principal acted as the study POC. The POC, the principal, and seven teachers provided data. The POC and principal participated in an interview. The POC participated in monthly polling and an end of year focus group. Seven teachers participated in one of two focus groups; these included four ELA teachers and three mathematics teachers with between 3 and 35 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

LEA-2 teachers described having a strong PLC culture with time formally dedicated for collaboration, as well as regular informal communication. Teachers from LEA-2 schools used assessments developed through their curriculum and Benchmark's Oral Reading Records, in addition to CAASPP IAs and summative assessments, to understand their students' knowledge and growth in ELA and math. Teachers across all LEA-2 schools described creating formative and summative assessments in their PLCs (both written and through online programs, including Socrative or Google Forms).

Summative assessment data were reviewed annually by LEA-2 and school administrators as a touchstone to consider what possible program changes the district and schools should make. Schools used the summative results to set goals for student academic achievement and to adjust school schedules to provide time for intervention. Teachers across levels found summative results to be at too high a level (i.e., not detailed enough) to know what specific changes they could make to curriculum or instructional practices that would effect the desired change.

LEA-2 mandated the use of IABs for the 2019–2020 school year, requiring two ELA IABs and between two and five math IABs in all grades that administer the CAASPP summative assessments. LEA-2 specified the particular ELA IABs to be administered at each grade and also specified the math IABs for elementary school grades; intra-district teacher councils selected math IABs for MS and HS grades. Students in grades nine and ten were also required to take an IA, and teacher councils could select whether to use an ICA or relevant IABs. Teachers used IAB data in a variety of ways to inform instructional decisions (e.g., focus instruction on standards associated with IAB items on which students performed poorly, use IABs as a pre-unit test to determine the focus of instruction). At the LEA-level, LEA-2 monitored districtwide IAB results for mandated assessments and sought out teachers or teacher groups whose students performed particularly well for a specific content area. The district identified teaching practices of these effective teachers to share across the LEA. Teachers noted some challenges with IAB use with students with disabilities—particularly, IEPs had to be updated in advance of administering the IAB, and on occasion the proper settings were not in place.

LEA-2 and study schools' staff were aware of the DL but rarely used it, citing difficulty identifying useful materials on the platform.

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-2 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- LEA-2 consistently provided teachers with time for PLCs to meet. This time provided opportunities for collaboration. Given the LEA's requirement to administer IAs, the PLC time allowed groups to consider IA results together and coordinate instructional plans. For example, the MS and HS PLCs used IAB results to determine which students received intervention time for math and on what content that intervention was focused.
- LEA-2-HS required teachers to administer IAs to ninth and tenth grade students. Teachers selected either IABs or IAs to ensure students of grades not required to

take the summative assessments had experience with the CAASPP system, and to collect information about student performance.

- LEA-2 had a strong system for providing professional development to site-level teams. The LEA CAASPP coordinators actively engaged with resources provided by CDE and developed training to transmit these resources to site teams through site-level leaders and education technology specialists. All training resources were readily accessible to teachers.
- Some LEA-2 teachers were able to provide input on the selection of IABs. Those teachers who participated in this process, and those whose instruction aligned with the selected IABs, found the results to be useful for informing instruction.
- LEA-2 monitored districtwide results from standardized administration of IABs over time. The district looked for trends that suggested a teacher or teacher group had found a particularly effective strategy for teaching a set of skills and then aimed to replicate such best practices across sites.

LEA-3 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-3 is a large district in southern California. Schools in LEA-3 range from nearly half of students being socioeconomically disadvantaged to almost all students being socioeconomically disadvantaged. These schools have a varying population of English learners. In 2018–2019, less than half of LEA-3 students met or exceeded the grade level standard in ELA and slightly more than one-quarter did so for math. Staff from the LEA, one ES, one MS, and one HS collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities. The ES serves students from kindergarten through eighth grade, but data gathering focused primarily on students and teachers in grades three through five. Participation across LEA-3 and its schools included:

- At the LEA level, the assistant director acted as POC. The POC, CAASPP Coordinator, and a program specialist provided data. The POC and program specialist participated in an interview, the POC and CAASPP Coordinator participated in monthly polling, and the program specialist participated in an end of year focus group.
- At LEA-3-ES, a program specialist acted as POC. The POC and ten teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview. Ten teachers participated in one focus group; they had between 3 and 33 years of teaching experience. Teachers from this school did not participate in monthly polling.
- At LEA-3-MS, a program facilitator acted as POC. The POC, an assistant principal, and five teachers provided data. The POC and assistant principal participated in an interview. The POC participated in an end of year focus group. Five teachers participated in one focus group; these included two ELA teachers and two mathematics teachers; they had between 1 and 22 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

- At LEA-3-HS, the principal acted as POC. The POC, a program facilitator, and twenty-five teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview and monthly polling. The program facilitator participated in an end of year focus group. Twenty-five teachers participated in one focus group, representing a range of teaching experience in both ELA and mathematics. However, only one of these teachers participated in the monthly polling. The school collected 114 student responses to an IAB survey—including 28 regarding a mathematics IAB and 86 regarding an ELA IAB.

LEA-3 teachers described having a strong PLC culture with formal time dedicated for collaboration and professional development around collaboration. Teachers from LEA-3 schools used some assessments beyond CAASPP IAs and summative assessments to understand their students' knowledge and growth in ELA and math. Schools in the study administered benchmark assessments and STAR assessments by Renaissance. HS teachers administered the LEA's Standard Aligned Assessments as a benchmark twice a year and developed their own classroom assessments to match the rigor of CAASPP.

Summative assessment data were reviewed annually by LEA-3 staff as well as school administrators and teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional practices. Teachers examined data for students from the previous year to determine what adjustments should be made, as well as data for their incoming students, to set goals for them to be successful. Within PLCs, teachers collaborated to understand what practices were most effective (based on summative results) for different standards and units.

LEA-3 did not mandate the use of IAs because requiring these tests at the LEA-level was not permitted by the teachers' union. Because schools had flexibility in their classroom assessment choices, use of IAs varied across its schools. We selected the study schools because they embraced the IAs and made school, grade, or classroom level decisions regarding their use. Teachers in these schools could decide whether to administer an IAB in a standardized or non-standardized manner. The study schools used IABs as tools for both instruction (e.g., using items for classroom discussions) and monitoring (e.g., using IAB data to identify students above and below standards). For example, LEA-3-MS indicated that they planned what needed to be retaught based on IA scores and also used IAs to teach students how to formulate answers for the item types. LEA-3-HS teachers indicated using IAs to help ensure teaching is consistent with standards. Teachers across the three study schools noted using IA data to identify and assist struggling students. Students responding to the student questionnaire most frequently reported IABs were used to see how well they learned certain skills. The second most reported use was to practice certain skills.

LEA-3 provided information and training on the DL, and a small group of teachers and administrators participating in the study had used the resources. Those who had used the DL reported finding it difficult to identify useful resources. Some teachers judged some resources to be insufficiently rigorous, outdated, and difficult to understand. Others used DL resources often for remediation.

HumRRO identified in LEA-3 the following best practices supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- Teachers used PLC time to consider what instructional practices were most effective (based on summative results) for different standards and units.
- The studied schools used IA data to identify student needs and highlight content that needs to be retaught.
- Teachers administered interim assessments in a nonstandardized manner to promote student learning. For example, they selected a single question from an IA as the daily class opening activity; or demonstrated how to disaggregate and interpret a multi-part question and how to create a response to meet the requirements of the scoring rubric.
- LEA-3 supported use of IA results by identifying a method to reduce the need to constantly revise rostering for a mobile student population. For high school, they started with a roster of all students in one group and then filtering by test session number to identify student scores by class. Customized reports enabled teachers to monitor student progress toward learning goals and to inform next steps in instruction. Including all students in one group ensured teachers had access to the current students in their class.

LEA-4 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-4 is a medium-sized district in northern California. LEA-4 schools have relatively few socioeconomically disadvantaged students (on average less than 10%) or English learners (on average less than 10%). In 2018–2019, close to 80 percent of LEA-4 students met or exceeded grade level standards in ELA, and slightly less than 80 percent did so for math. Staff from the LEA, one ES, one MS, and one HS collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities. Specifically:

- At the LEA level, the Assistant Director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation acted as study POC. The POC and an LEA analyst provided data. Both participated in an interview. The POC participated in monthly polling and an end of year focus group.
- At LEA-4-ES, the principal acted as POC. The POC and two teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview and monthly polling. Two teachers, one of whom had 23 years of teaching experience, participated in a focus group and monthly polling.
- At LEA-4-MS, the assistant principal acted as POC. The POC and eight teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview, monthly polling, and an end of year focus group. The eight teachers participated in one focus group and included two ELA teachers, four math teachers, one intervention specialist, and one teacher of a special day class. Teachers in this group had as

many as 19 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

- At LEA-4-HS, an assistant principal acted as POC. The POC, the principal, a second assistant principal, and five teachers provided data. The POC, principal and assistant principal participated in an interview and an end of year focus group. The POC plus one administrator participated in monthly polling. Five teachers and one administrator participated in the focus group; these included two ELA teachers, three math teachers, and one assistant principal, who in the prior year had been a math teacher at another district. Teachers in this group had between 10 and 23 years of teaching experience. Most of these teachers participated in the monthly polling.

LEA-4 teachers described having a strong PLC culture with regular, formal time dedicated for collaboration. Teachers from LEA-4 schools used some assessments beyond CAASPP IAs and summative assessments to understand their students' knowledge and growth in ELA and math. Schools in the study administered assessments from their curriculum: Fountas and Pinell Benchmark Assessments, a district-wide "quick assessment", Newsela, Flocabulary, and NoRedInk. Teachers at all levels also developed their own assessments for their students.

Summative assessment data were reviewed annually by LEA-4 and school administrators and teachers to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely) goals. At the beginning of each year, site administrators met with LEA-4 administrators to review summative data and set subgroup-specific SMART goals. For example, at LEA-4-ES, data identified socioeconomically disadvantaged students as requiring additional support, and at LEA-4-HS, students with disabilities were so identified. LEA-4-MS sought improvement for students overall and their SMART goal included increased use of IABs and identifying methods to increase student motivation on assessments to help reach that goal.

LEA-4 expected its schools to administer two ELA and two math IABs prior to administering the summative assessments; the schools and individual teachers could choose to administer more. LEA-4 administrators provided schools with guidance on various considerations to use when selecting IABs, then allowed teachers to decide which ones to administer in their classrooms. Teachers reported using IABs to support student instruction. For example, LEA-4-MS mathematics teachers used IABs in a nonstandardized manner in advance of the summative assessment and felt this helped prepare for the rigor they would experience. LEA-4-HS used an eighth grade ELA IAB to identify incoming freshmen who needed reading remediation. Though there were many positive experiences, some teachers indicated challenges with aligning IABs with their curriculum.

LEA-4 administrators and teachers had little awareness of the DL and its resources. While some had heard of it, others mistakenly thought of it as an item bank to draw upon for assessments or reviews.

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-4 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- LEA-4 used the CAASPP summative assessment results to set site-level goals targeting improved outcomes for specified subgroups. Each goal included a plan for how it would be achieved, the intended outcome, and how progress toward the goal would be monitored and evaluated.
- LEA-4-HS ELA teachers used an IAB for the purpose of identifying incoming freshmen who needed reading remediation.
- Some teachers administer IABs in a nonstandardized manner for instructional purposes, such as using specific items for practice and review. Teachers and administrators reported positive learning benefits for students from this approach, as measured by classroom and CAASPP summative assessments.

LEA-5 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-5 is a small district in northern California. In 2018–2019, approximately two-thirds of students in the district were socioeconomically disadvantaged and one-quarter were English learners. Just over 40 percent of students across LEA-5 met or exceeded the grade level standard in ELA and just under 30 percent did so for math. Staff from the LEA and two elementary schools collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities. Specifically:

- At the LEA level, the CAASPP Coordinator (also Executive Director) acted as POC. The POC participated in an interview, monthly polling, and end of year focus group.
- At LEA-5-ES1, a sixth grade teacher acted as POC. The POC and four additional teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview, monthly polling, and an end of year focus group. Five teachers (including the school POC) participated in one focus group; they had between 8 and 24 years of teaching experience. Only the school POC participated in the monthly polling. The school collected 48 student responses to an IAB survey regarding mathematics IABs.
- At LEA-5-ES2, the principal acted as POC. The POC and four teachers provided data. The POC participated in an interview and end of year focus group. Four teachers participated in one focus group; they had between 9 and 19 years of teaching experience.

LEA-5 provided scheduled time for educator collaboration and professional development. LEA-5 required teachers to administer universal diagnostic assessments at the beginning of each school year and benchmark and interim assessments (including IAs) throughout the academic year, based on a district pacing guide, to understand their students' knowledge and growth in ELA and math.

Summative assessment data were examined by LEA-5 staff and shared with each principal. Using Illuminate, district and school leaders created reports by grade level and subgroups. District leaders used average scale scores to monitor student subgroup performance. During the 2019–2020 school year, the district focused on students with disabilities and English learners after reviewing data and finding these groups had the largest achievement gaps. LEA-5 schools indicated using information to identify student needs and to establish student groups.

LEA-5 mandated administration of specific ELA and math IABs for elementary grades three through five. The LEA developed action teams to select these IABs based on the standards and pacing guides. Teachers were permitted to administer additional IABs, and many teachers who participated in the focus groups indicated they chose to use more than were required because they felt the exposure was beneficial for their students. LEA-5 encouraged teachers to use IABs in nonstandardized ways to engage students to think about the questions and what a good response entailed. The LEA CAASPP coordinator provided hand scoring training to teachers. Teachers in our study reported using interim assessments to monitor student progress and inform instruction. For example, LEA-5-ES2 indicated they used interim assessments to provide a “cycle of inquiry” with instruction, IA administration, and adjusted teaching practices. Teachers at LEA-5-ES1 used IAs to teach students how to closely read questions and interpret what the questions were asking. Students responding to the student questionnaire most frequently reported IABs were used to see how well they learned certain skills; the second most frequent response was that IABs were used to practice certain skills.

Teachers and staff across LEA-5 were aware of the DL and some teachers had used resources. Specifically, teachers at LEA-5-ES2 accessed the DL via CERS and identified exemplars for narrative writing prompts, and one teacher used it to locate answer keys for math performance tasks. Teachers at LEA-5-ES1 did not use the DL.

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-5 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- LEA-5 developed action teams to select mandated IABs based on the standards and pacing guides. This practice helped ensure that curriculum and assessment were appropriately matched.
- LEA-5 encouraged teachers to use IABs in nonstandardized ways to engage students to think about the questions and what a good response entailed.
- LEA-5 teachers used professional learning collaboration time to review interim assessments results and plan instruction as a grade-level team.
- LEA-5 worked with the California Mathematics Projects (specifically, the regional site at University of California, Davis) to develop a five-year plan to focus instruction on student needs by grade, subject, and student groups using summative assessments as part of a data-driven approach.

- LEA-5 brought teams of special education staff, English learner support staff, response to intervention (RTI) specialists, and testing coordinators together to plan and update student supports and accommodations for CAASPP assessments.

LEA-6 Summary of Findings and Best Practices

LEA-6 is a direct-funded grade six through twelve charter school in northern California, and part of a larger kindergarten through 12 charter system. At LEA-6, about one-quarter of students were socioeconomically disadvantaged and one-tenth of students were English learners. In 2018–2019, close to 70 percent of LEA-6 students met or exceeded the grade level standard in ELA and slightly less than 50 percent did so for math. The following staff collaborated with HumRRO on this study and participated in data collection activities:

- The CAASPP coordinator for the charter school acted as the sole POC for this LEA. The POC and an assistant coordinator participated in the initial site visit school leader interview. The school POC also participated in the monthly polling.
- Six teachers provided data. Three MS-level ELA teachers participated in one virtual focus group; their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 16 years. Two ELA HS-level teachers and one HS-level math teacher participated in a second virtual focus group; their teaching experience ranged from 6 to 20 years. No teachers participated in the monthly polling. The school collected responses to an ELA IAB survey from seven students across grades eight through twelve.

LEA-6 teachers had a strong sense of collaboration within and across grades. Teachers described using i-Ready® assessments in addition to CAASPP IAs and summative assessments to understand their students' knowledge and growth in ELA and math. The i-Ready® assessments were administered to students in kindergarten through grade nine to identify lower-level skills not yet attained.

LEA-6 and school administrators and teachers annually reviewed summative assessment data. These data were examined for students overall and by subgroup, percentages of who achieved proficiency, average distance-from-three results (i.e., the difference between the school's average scale score and the cut score for proficiency), and claim-level data broken down by achievement level. Data were used to inform school and classroom decision making. LEA-6 used CAASPP summative assessment, along with other data points, to determine intervention programs for students most in need of support. PLCs and individual teachers also made instructional adjustments based on summative assessment data.

LEA-6 did not mandate the use of IABs, but it did support use of IABs as an end-of-unit assessments in ELA and math. Teachers selected which IABs to administer and when to administer them. Teachers generally used IABs to target areas with low performance on the summative assessment and to identify areas in which students needed further instruction. Only seven students participated in the survey, and there was variability in

how they responded regarding the reason their teacher administered the IABs. Two students reported to see how well they learned a certain skill, and each other option had one student having selected it (find out what skills they had been taught, practice certain skills, and practice taking an online test). Two students did not respond to this survey item.

LEA-6 administrators provided training on DL resources during the 2019–2020 school year even though most teachers reported not using the DL. Teachers who had accessed the DL found it overwhelming and daunting.

HumRRO identified the following best practices in LEA-6 supporting effective use of CAASPP components to improve teaching and student learning:

- Teachers were given flexibility to decide which IABs to use and when to administer them, which encouraged teachers to give assessments that corresponded to the scope and sequence of their curriculum.
- Teachers administered IABs to familiarize students with using online accessibility features (universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations) and summative assessment item types.
- LEA-6 used multiple measures, including CAASPP summative assessment results, to identify low-achieving students and develop intervention programs for them.
- LEA-6 established goals based on students' summative scores and used CAASPP IAs to periodically assess progress toward achieving those goals.

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