

English Language Arts Growth and Mathematics Growth Indicators



On the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools that serve students in grade four through grade eight receive Growth Performance Categories for both English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics (math). Growth Performance Categories are based on at least two years of students' performance on the statewide California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress' Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in ELA and math. Science does not have growth scores because the California Science Test is not taken in consecutive grade levels. For the 2026 Dashboard, the ELA Growth and Math Growth Indicators are published to the Dashboard in the Student Achievement section and will not be used for Local Control Funding Formula eligibility criteria.

What Is Growth?

The ELA Growth and Math Growth Indicators on the Dashboard measure how ELA and math assessment scores for an LEA, school, or student group have changed compared to prior years, and how that growth compares to average growth across the state. At the student level, growth reflects the difference between a student's expected and actual test scores from one grade level to the next grade level. On the Dashboard, however, results are reported as average growth scores, providing a summary of LEAs, schools, or student groups. In California, the ELA Growth and Math Growth Indicators were developed specifically to be used only for accountability purposes and therefore are focused on producing average growth scores rather than individual student growth scores.

Growth and Distance from Proficiency

Growth is different from the Distance from Proficiency (DFP) measurement used for the ELA and Math Indicators. DFP reflects current year performance by measuring the distance students are from meeting the lowest scale score for Level 3/Proficient on their assessments. DFP also includes a change metric, which captures improvement or decline in average performance from the prior year.

Growth measures student progress differently. Rather than focusing on how close students are to proficiency, it compares students to peers with similar prior test scores, allowing LEAs, schools, and student groups to demonstrate progress regardless of where students started.

"Typical" growth represents the statewide average for students with similar prior scores. Groups whose students are scoring higher than these peers demonstrate "Above Typical" growth, while those performing below their peers demonstrate "Below Typical" growth.

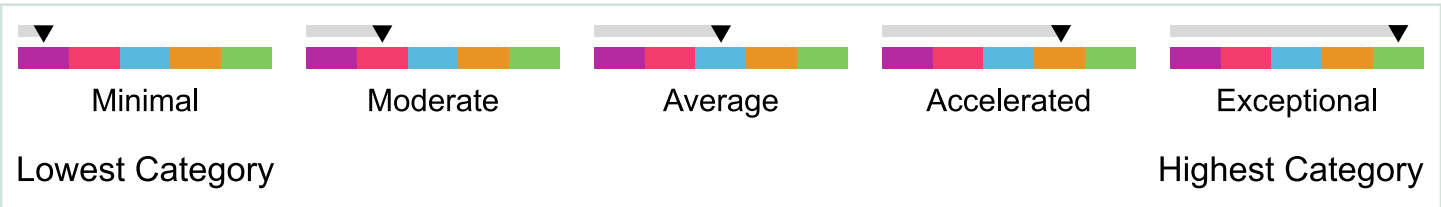
Differentiated Assistance Determinations on the 2026 Dashboard

The State Board of Education adopted ELA Growth and Math Growth as full state indicators within Local Control Funding Formula Priority Area 4—Student Achievement, starting with the 2026 Dashboard. However, ELA Growth and Math Growth will not be used in 2026 state or federal support determinations.

Calculating Growth Scores

Growth on the Dashboard is calculated by looking at the performance of all students in California, and then averaging individual scores at the school, LEA, and student group levels. California’s student-level growth data uses the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments results from students in grades four through eight in both ELA and math. Students who take the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in grade eleven and all students who take the California Alternate Assessments are not included in the calculations. For the 2026 Dashboard, scores from the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments taken in 2024, 2025, and 2026 will be used to calculate aggregate growth scores and determine Growth Performance Categories for schools, LEAs, or within student groups.

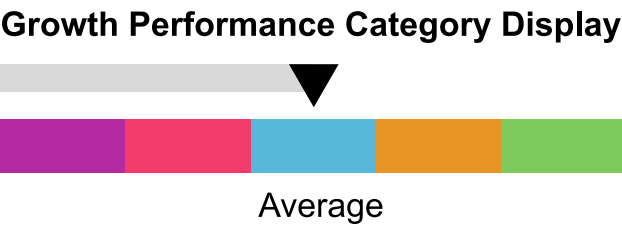
The first step in calculating individual student growth scores for a subject area (ELA or math) is to determine the student’s expected test score. The expected test score is determined by looking at students who had similar test scores in the prior grade level and then evaluating their test scores in the current year. Once expected test scores are determined for each student, the differences between students’ expected test scores and their actual test scores are compared to arrive at their individual growth scores. These individual scores are then averaged for students at the LEA, school, and student group levels and compared to the average growth score for the state to determine a Growth Performance Category.



Growth Performance Categories range from “Minimal,” which represents the lowest Performance Category, to “Exceptional,” which represents the highest Performance Category. For a complete review of ELA Growth and Math Growth, please refer to the [California Department of Education \(CDE\) California Student Growth Data web page](#).

Growth on the Dashboard

The Dashboard has individual Dashboard cards for both the ELA Growth and Math Growth Indicators. The Dashboard cards include a graphic displaying the Growth Performance Category of the school, LEA, or student group. The sample display below shows that this LEA, school, or student group received a Growth Performance Category of “Average.” The Dashboard card will also display the percentage of students whose scores improved from the prior year. Like other Dashboard cards, growth will have an Equity Report with the number of student groups in each Growth Performance Category.



For more information, visit the [CDE California School Dashboard and System of Support web page](#).

Contact the Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division by email at dashboard@cde.ca.gov.

