

Science Indicator



On the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools that serve students in grades five, eight, and high school will receive a Science Indicator with performance colors. This indicator reflects student performance on the California Science Test (CAST) and the California Alternate Assessment for Science (CAA for Science) assessments. The Science Indicator is calculated using two components: Science Points (SPs) and participation rate.

Science Points

SPs are a simplified way to understand student performance on the CAST and CAA for Science. While each grade level has its own unique scale score range, SPs always range from 0 to 100. This makes it easier to interpret results across grade levels. A student's scale score is converted into SPs, where 0 is the lowest possible score and 100 is the highest possible score.

For students who take the CAA for Science, their scores are matched to the CAST through a crosswalk. If a student scores in Level 1, 2, or 3 on the CAA for Science, they are given the highest possible score for that same level on the CAST. This scale score is then used to determine how many SPs the student earned.

Participation Rate

The California State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a participation rate requirement within the Science Indicator to require LEAs, schools, and student groups to test at least 95 percent of their students. When this target is not met, a Lowest Obtainable Scale Score (LOSS) is assigned to each student needed to bring the participation rate of the LEA, school, and/or student group to 95 percent. The LOSS assigned to each student who did not test will be used in calculating the average SPs. If an LEA, school, and/or student group participation rate is 95 percent or above, assigned LOSS is not applied.

In March 2026, the SBE approved a change to how the participation rate is calculated for the English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics (Math), and Science Indicators by eliminating the use of grace periods in participation rate calculations for future Dashboard publications.

For further details, please refer to the ELA, Math, and Science Indicators Participation Rate Calculation for the Dashboard flyer which can be found on the [California Department of Education \(CDE\) Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page](#).

State and Federal Support Determinations on the 2026 Dashboard

The SBE adopted Science as a full state indicator within Local Control Funding Formula Priority Area 4—Student Achievement, starting with the 2026 Dashboard, at their July 2026 meeting. However, Science will not be used in 2026 for state or federal support determinations.

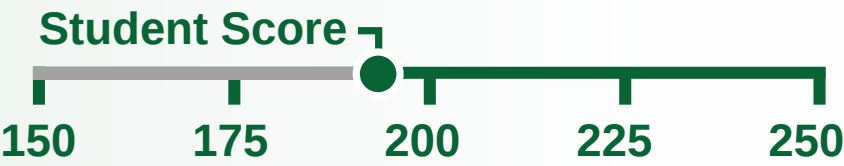
Calculating Current Year Data (Status)

Status for the Science Indicator will be calculated using a two-step process:

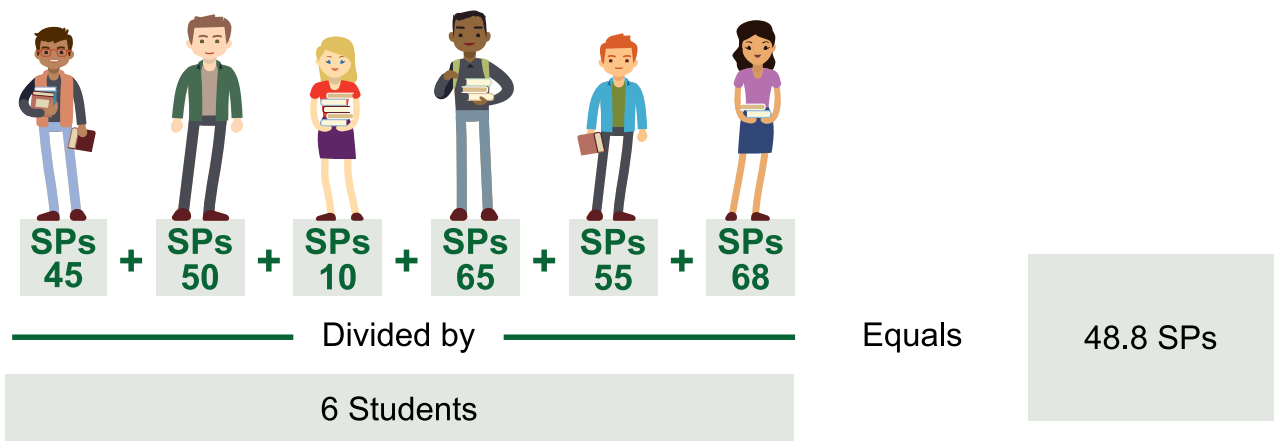
- **Step 1:** Calculate the SPs for each student.

Examples:

A grade five student receives a CAST score of 195. The student has 45 SPs because their score is 45 above the lowest obtainable scale score, which is 150.



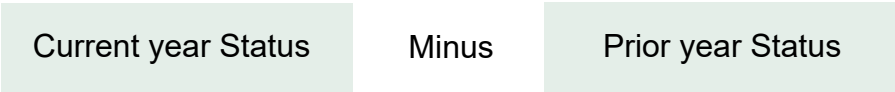
- **Step 2:** Calculate the average SPs for a school or district using all students' SPs values to determine the Status.*



*The average SPs calculation will include assigned LOSS scores only if the 95 percent participation rate is not met.

Comparing Current and Prior Year Data (Change)

Current and prior year data are compared to determine whether a school or district's SPs changed.



Current year data and its comparison with prior year data are taken together to determine a Performance Level, or color. Access the flyer about How Dashboard Colors are Determined on the [CDE Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page](#).

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.

