

English Language Arts and Mathematics Indicators



On the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools serving students in grades three through eight and/or grade eleven receive the English Language Arts (ELA) and the Mathematics (Math) Indicators. These indicators reflect student performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Summative Assessments and the California Alternate Assessments (CAAs). Both the ELA Indicator and the Math Indicator are calculated using two components: Distance from Proficiency (DFP) and participation rate.

Distance from Proficiency

The DFP is the distance between a student's score on the SBAC and the lowest possible scale score for Level 3/Proficient. The scale score ranges for the SBAC vary by content area—ELA and math—and by grade level. DFP was formerly known as Distance from Standard (DFS). The State Board of Education (SBE) updated DFS to DFP to match the Achievement Level Descriptor labels on the SBAC.

For the CAAs, the California Department of Education (CDE) has created a crosswalk to convert levels of the CAAs to corresponding levels on the SBAC. Students who obtain a score placing them in Level 1 for the CAA will be assigned the highest Level 1 scale score for the SBAC. Likewise, students who obtain a CAA score placing them in Level 2 will be assigned the highest Level 2 scale score for the SBAC. Students who obtain a CAA score placing them in Level 3 will be assigned the highest Level 3 scale score for the SBAC. This new scale score will be used to calculate the DFP.

Participation Rate

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all states must test at least 95 percent of their students in ELA and math. When this target is not met, California is required to assign a Lowest Obtainable Scale Score (LOSS) 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 of these students who did not test will be used to calculate the DFP. 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 ELA, Math, and Science Indicators by eliminating the use of grace periods in participation rate calculations for future Dashboard publications.

For further details on participation rate, please refer to the ELA, Math, and Science Indicators Participation Rate Calculation for the Dashboard flyer on the [CDE Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page](#).

Calculating Current Year Data (Status)

Status for the ELA Indicator and Math Indicator will be calculated using a two-step process:

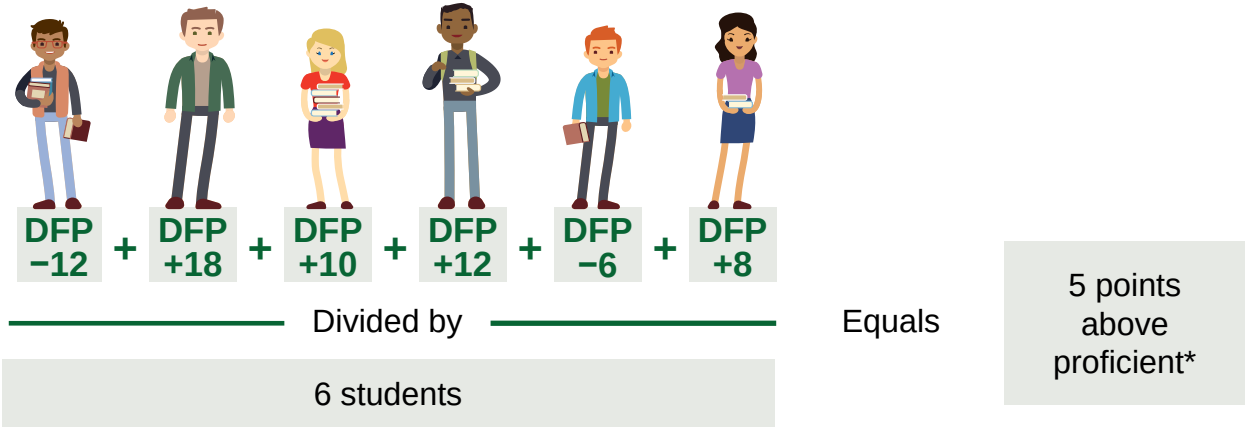
- **Step 1:** Calculate the DFP for each student.

Examples:

A third-grade student receives an ELA score of 2420. The student has a DFP of -12 because their score is 12 points below the lowest possible score for the Level 3/ Proficient (Level 3), which is 2432.



- **Step 2:** Calculate the average DFP for an LEA or school using all students’ DFP values to determine Status.*



*The average DFP calculation will also include the assignment of LOSS scores only if the federal 95 percent participation rate target is not met.

Comparing Current and Prior Year Data (Change)

Current and prior year data are compared to determine whether an LEA or school’s DFP 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, please 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.

