California Department of Education

Report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the
Legislative Analyst’s Office: 2024 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
Annual Implementation Update and Five-Year Cost Projection



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*Description*: Annual update on the implementation of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, covering the 2024 calendar year and providing a five-year projection of costs

*Authority:* California *Education Code* Section 60604(b)

*Recipient:* The Governor, the Legislature, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office

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California Department of Education

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## 2024 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Annual Implementation Update and Five-Year Cost Projection

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## California Department of Education

## Report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Legislative Analyst’s Office:

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## Executive Summary

California *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 60604(b) requires that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction annually update the California State Legislature on an implementation plan, five-year cost projection, and timeline for implementing the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System. This report covers the 2024 calendar year. It is divided into the following sections:

* **Program Information**—Background information on the CAASPP System, including its history, purpose, and components.
* **Implementation Update**—A brief discussion of CAASPP implementation activities during the 2024 calendar year.
* **Contract Costs**—Costs and other information regarding the various types of CAASPP contracts, including state-managed services contract costs, extending through fiscal year (FY) 2027–28. The current test administration contract (CN220002) with the testing contractor ETS began on July 1, 2022, and will end on December 31, 2027, for the following administrations: 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027.
* **Apportionment Costs**—Annual CAASPP apportionment reimbursements to local educational agencies (LEAs).
* **Five-Year Cost Projection**—Projected annual CAASPP contract and LEA apportionment costs, including a timeline of the assessments that are anticipated to be a part of each CAASPP test administration.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Mao Vang, Director, Assessment Development and Administration Division, at 916-324-9566 or mvang@cde.ca.gov.

You can find this report on the California Department of Education Implementation of CAASPP web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caasppimplementation.asp>.

If you need a copy of this report, please contact Chad Portney, Associate Director, Assessment Development and Administration Division, at 916-319-0575 or cportney@cde.ca.gov.

## Program Information

The CAASPP System was established in California *EC* sections 606400 through 60648.5.

The purpose of the CAASPP System is to provide a system of assessments primarily aimed at supporting educators and administrators in promoting high-quality teaching and learning by using a variety of assessment approaches. The statute provides for the development and administration of assessments through technology, where feasible.

This report provides information about the CAASPP System as it relates to California *EC* Section 60604(b), which requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop and annually provide to the California State Legislature an update on an implementation plan, a five-year cost projection, and a timeline for implementing the CAASPP System.

Per *EC* Section 60605.7, California became a governing state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Consortium) in June 2011, working on the development of English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics assessments. As stipulated in *EC* Section 60640(b)(1), the Consortium assessments measure the Common Core State Standards for ELA and mathematics adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE). The Smarter Balanced Assessment System is comprised of three components—summative assessments, interim assessments, and Tools for Teachers, a compendium of formative assessment resources designed to support instruction and professional learning throughout the year.

As addressed in state law, the CAASPP summative assessments include the following:

* Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics
* California Science Test (CAST)
* California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) for ELA, mathematics, and science—for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as designated in their individualized education program (IEP)
* California Spanish Assessment (CSA), for Spanish reading/language arts (optional)

The CAASPP summative assessments are computer-based tests that measure what students know and can do. These assessments produce scores that can be aggregated and disaggregated for the purpose of informing parents/guardians, LEAs, the public, and the state about students’ achievement in their learning of the California academic content standards. The CAASPP summative assessments: (1) provide individual student results to students, parents/guardians, and teachers; (2) produce school-, district-, and county-level results that allow for the monitoring of schools’ progress; and (3) produce results to meet the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted on December 10, 2015, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Under the federal requirements of ESSA, all states receiving Title I federal funds for use by LEAs must assess students as follows:

* For ELA and mathematics—assessments are administered annually in grades three through eight and once in high school
* For science—assessments are administered annually, once in grades three through five, once in grades six through eight, and once in high school (i.e., grade ten, eleven, or twelve)

CAASPP summative assessments were used to meet federal requirements in
2023–24 through the administration of the following:

* The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and the CAAs for ELA and mathematics in grades three through eight and grade eleven
* The CAST and CAA for Science in grades five and eight and one time in high school (i.e., grade ten, eleven, or twelve)

All contracts for the development, purchase, or administration of the CAASPP tests are subject to approval by the California Department of Education (CDE), the SBE, and the Department of Finance (DOF) per *EC* Section 60643(b)(1). The SBE’s approval must be obtained for the following work components:

* The test blueprints—excluding Consortium assessments—which specify the standards to be assessed and the number of items to be tested for each standard included in the tests.
* The achievement levels used in the CAASPP System and the threshold scores—excluding Consortium assessments—used to identify students’ achievement levels.
* The regulations, testing period, calendar of when results are to be delivered to the state, LEAs, and parents/guardians; and when results are to be posted for the public.

The ETS contract also calls for the development of a plan for continuous improvement. ETS worked with the CDE to create a plan that supports continuous improvement of the California Assessment System, which includes CAASPP and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). In addition to opportunities for improvement identified in the plan, ETS proposed opportunities for program improvements that have emerged over multiple years. More information regarding the CAASPP is available on the CDE CAASPP System web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>.

Table 1, below, and table 2, on the following page, identify the required and optional CAASPP assessments that were administered in 2023–24.

**Table 1: CAASPP Required Assessments Administered in 2023–24, by Grade and Content Area**

| **Test** | **Type** | **Students** | **Grades** | **Content Area(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics | Computer adaptive test | All students, unless they have an IEP indicating an alternate assessment (recently arrived English learner [EL] students are exempted from the ELA assessment) | third through eighth and eleventh | ELA and mathematics |
| CAST | Computer-basedtest | All students, unless they have an IEP indicating an alternate assessment (i.e., CAA for Science) | fifth, eighth, and once in high school | science |
| CAAs for ELA and mathematics | Computer-based test | Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose IEPs indicate assessment with an alternate test (i.e., CAA) (recently arrived EL students are exempted from the ELA assessment) | third through eighth and eleventh | ELA and mathematics |
| CAA for Science | Computer-basedtest | Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose IEPs indicate assessment with an alternate test (i.e., CAA for Science) | fifth, eighth, and once in high school | science |

**Table 2: Optional CAASPP Assessments and Assessment Tools Available in 2023–24, by Grade and Content Area**

| **Test/Tool** | **Type** | **Students** | **Grades** | **Content Area(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Assessments | Computer-based test | All students | Kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) | ELA, mathematics, science, and ELPAC |
| Tools for Teachers | N/A | All students | K–12 | ELA, mathematics, and science |
| CSA | Computer-based test | All students | Third through eighth and high school | Spanish reading/language arts |

California continues full statewide testing in person. Remote testing continues to be availablethrough a computer-based system where either the student(s) or test administrator is not on-site. Remote administration is intended as an option for LEAs only when students are receiving remote instruction. Students receiving in-person instruction should be tested in person.

## Implementation Update

### Content Standards

There were no changes to the content standards for any of the summative assessments during this reporting period.

### Periodic Updates of Assessment Developments

The 2024 activities carried out in support of periodic updates of assessment developments were as follows:

* In January, the SBE approved the receipt of the CAST innovation concept paper. The SBE also approved the request to ratify a response letter to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Regarding the 1.0 percent cap on the percentage of eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who may be assessed with an Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) for ELA, mathematics, and science.
* In February, the CDE provided reports on the California Assessment System feedback, which provided key information and direction for the CDE to consider in determining future assessment related outreach efforts.
* In March, the CDE provided a summary of developments and updates related to the Smarter Balanced interim assessments, ELPAC interim assessments, California Educator Reporting System (CERS) trainings, and the 2023–24 testing windows.
* In May, the SBE approved the proposed 2023–24 apportionment rates for CAASPP. In addition, the CDE provided updates on testing windows, CERS spring trainings, and interim and formative assessment summer and fall trainings.
* In July, the SBE approved a response letter to the ED regarding the 1.0 percent cap on the percentage of eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who may be assessed with an AA-AAAS for ELA, mathematics, and science. In addition, the CDE provided a summary of developments and updates related to the 2023–24 state testing windows, 2023–24 test results available for local use, website redesign for CAASPP and ELPAC, enhancements to CERS, interim assessments, and Tools for Teachers.
* In August, the CDE provided an update on the proposed revisions of the addendum to the high-level test design (HLTD) for the CSA, including general achievement level descriptors (ALDs); test blueprint; and score reporting structure.
* In September, the SBE approved the proposed revised addendum to the HLTD for CSA, which includes the general ALDs; test blueprint; and the score reporting structure. To further support better understanding of student performance on the Smarter Balanced assessments, the CDE also provided information on the one-page brief titled, “Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments: What Do the Scores Mean?”
* In October, the CDE provided information on the proposed revisions to the reporting ALDs for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and Mathematics and CAST. In addition, the CDE provided information on the proposed revisions to the Student Score Reports (SSRs) for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and Mathematics, CAST, and Initial ELPAC.
* In November, the CDE sought approval from the SBE of the proposed revisions to the SSRs and reporting ALDs. In addition, the CDE provided a summary of the public release of the 2023–24 CAASPP and ELPAC aggregate results. The SBE also approved the authorization to pursue a waiver for the 2024–25 school year of the 1.0 percent cap on the percentage of eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who may be assessed with an AA-AAAS for ELA, mathematics, and science.
* In December, the CDE provided a status update on the proposed revisions to the reporting ALDs and SSRs for CAASPP.

### Informational Materials

The 2024 activities in support of informational materials were as follows:

* The CDE, in coordination with testing contractor ETS, provided opportunities for teacher participation in the form of item writing workshops, item review meetings, data review meetings, and range finding. In addition, outreach activities, such as webcasts, pretest workshops, and the Data Leadership Training Series communicated key information to LEAs and were reported in CAASPP update items for the SBE.
* The CDE met with the Regional Assessment Network (RAN), a subcommittee of the Curricular and Improvement Support Committee (CISC) of the California County Superintendents, five times during the year to elicit feedback on informational materials and activities under development for all California assessments. This committee is also charged with disseminating information on behalf of the CDE.
* The CDE meets monthly with representatives from California educational associations to share assessment-related topics and receive feedback to help inform the ongoing work of the CDE Assessment Development and Administration Division (ADAD).
* The CDE participated in four Bilingual Coordinators Network meetings to share assessment updates and gather feedback. CDE staff attend these meetings throughout the year.
* The CDE, in coordination with Sacramento County Office of Education, conducted quarterly meetings for charter school assessment coordinators. These meetings offered targeted support to charter school assessment coordinators and administrators through the sharing of assessment updates, best practices, and support networks.
* The CDE participated in two Consortium collaboration meetings and two Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. Member states met to collaborate, plan, and prepare for the implementation of ongoing enhancements to the Smarter Balanced assessments, covering such topics as item and test development, scoring, and reporting. The TAC members provided guidance on technical assessment matters pertaining to the validity, reliability, accuracy, and fairness of those assessments.
* Throughout the year, the CDE’s weekly newsletter *Assessment Spotlight* was disseminated to over 17,600 CAASPP listserv subscribers and others to alert them to the latest information about the testing programs.
* Throughout the year, the CDE offered training to new CAASPP coordinators to support them in their new roles.
* In February the CDE presented to 100 California bilingual educators at the 2024 California Association for Bilingual Education Conference in Anaheim, California on supporting multilingual and EL students with the Tools for Teachers website, how the California assessments support multilingual and EL students and a workshop on accessibility resources.
* On February 23, the CDE presented to 20 special education educators at the 2024 California Association of Resource and Special Educators Conference in Sacramento, California, on how to support special education students in the classroom and on California assessment with the use of accessibility resources. In addition, the CDE presented to 8 educators on the organization and administration of the CAA for Science.
* On March 6, the CDE presented to 90 state and federal program directors, educational leaders, and administrators at the All Titles Conference in Los Angeles, California. The CDE presented on maximizing the use of interim assessments and on accessibility resources for all students.
* In July, August, and September, the CDE offered a virtual Interim and Formative Assessment Training Series. This facilitated training for classroom teachers and administrators focused on the design of CAASPP and ELPAC interim assessments; hand scoring for Interim Assessment items for Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, and ELPAC; and how to use the interim assessments and formative assessment resources on the Tools for Teachers website to support teaching and learning. In addition to the facilitated hand scoring trainings for interim assessments, the CDE also provided hand scoring training in the form of asynchronous online learning modules for educators to access as needed
* In August, the CDE hosted three two-hour virtual Assessment Accountability Information Meetings to provide coordinators, administrators, and LEA staff with the most recent information and developments on California's assessment and accountability systems.
* In September and October, the CDE offered a virtual Interim Assessment Shared Practices Webinar Series. Three sessions were offered and each webinar in the series focused on a different set of interim assessments, including those for Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, ELPAC, and CAST. During each webinar, members of the CDE, along with classroom teachers, LEA staff, and administrators, shared how they are promoting and utilizing state-provided interim assessments to support teaching and learning in the classroom.
* The Site Administrator Convenings in September provided an opportunity for school site administrators to ask questions and get valuable information from the ADAD of the CDE, as well as network and share best assessment practices with other site administrators throughout California. This session focused on the CAASPP and ELPAC interim assessments and how to successfully implement them at their sites.
* In October, the CDE participated in a podcast highlighting Tools for Teachers. The podcast recording is available on the California Educators Together website.
* In October, the CDE held its sixth annual California Assessment Conference in Riverside, California for over 800 attendees. This conference, for classroom teachers, offered opportunities for participants to explore the connection between assessments and classroom instruction, hear from other educators about their experiences with the comprehensive assessment system, and learn how to use assessment resources.
* On November 7, the CDE presented to 20 California education researchers and educators at the 2024 California Education Research Association Conference in Burlingame, California, on the new CAST Innovations: Performance Tasks Embedded in Learning. The CDE also presented to 35 educators on the topic of California Statewide Assessments: Ten Years of Innovations.
* On November 9, the CDE gave a presentation to approximately 60 science educators at the 2024 California Science Education Conference in Sacramento, California, in a workshop about utilizing the California Science Interim and Summative assessment data. The CDE also presented a second workshop to approximately 50 educators to draw attention to the various CDE resources available for use in the classroom to prepare for the CAST.

### Interest Holder Input

The 2024 implementation activities in support of interest holder input were as follows:

* The CDE conducted monthly meetings with the Assessment Interest Holder Committee to provide a forum for sharing information about state assessment-related developments and receiving feedback. Starting in the 2024−25 school year, were held on a bi-monthly basis. The members of this committee included representatives from key California educational associations:
	+ Advisory Commission on Special Education
	+ Association of California School Administrators
	+ California Association of Bilingual Educators
	+ California Association of Resource and Special Educators
	+ California Association of Science Educators
	+ California County Superintendents
	+ California Federation of Teachers
	+ California Parent–Teacher Association
	+ California School Boards Association
	+ California Science Teachers Association
	+ California Teachers Association
	+ Californians Together
	+ Children Now
	+ Small School Districts’ Association
	+ Special Education Local Plan Area Association
* Bimonthly meetings were held in 2024 with the CISC’s RAN, consisting of representatives from all 11 of the network’s regions throughout California. This group meets bimonthly following the SBE meetings. The CDE’s ADAD highlighted the latest developments and activities for all statewide assessments at each meeting. The 2024 meeting dates were as follows:
	+ January 24
	+ March 13
	+ May 15
	+ September 18
	+ November 20

### Practice and Training Tests

The 2024 implementation activities in support of practice and training tests were as follows:

* In July, the Consortium made the 2024–25 Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests for ELA and mathematics content update and the administration packages available to Consortium members.

### Regulations

In September 2024, the Office of Administrative Law approved the Rulemaking File to adjust the CAASPP state testing window to end on June 30 annually, or the weekday preceding June 30 if June 30 is not a weekday. This change is necessary to allow for the public reporting of aggregate CAASPP results by October 15 annually, as now required by *EC* section 60641.

### Contracts

In the 2024 calendar year, the California Assessment System was working under three contracts: one Consortium-managed contract and two state-managed contracts.

In January 2022, the SBE approved the contract extension for the Consortium-managed services contract with the Regents of the University of California (CN170202), through June 30, 2027, to continue the customization, configuration, and implementation of the CERS.

The SBE approved the negotiated contract (CN220002) in November 2021. Work under this negotiated contract with ETS began on July 1, 2022, and will end on December 31, 2027, for the following administrations: 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027.

### Technology Readiness

The 2024 implementation activities in support of technology readiness were as follows:

* The CDE continued to work with its contractor to enhance the Assessment Technology Platform solution to implement efficiencies and improve user experience with the California Assessment Delivery System, including all components required to deliver the Smarter Balanced and non-Smarter Balanced assessments, which include the CAST, CAAs, CSA, and ELPAC.

### Test Security

No test security incidents occurred that compromised the integrity of the assessments for this reporting period.

### Performance Standards

There were no changes for this reporting period.

### Reporting of Results

For the 2023–24 administration, all CAASPP results were reported through SSRs, CERS, and the Test Results for California Assessments website. Results for each of the CAASPP assessments are reported as an overall scale score and an overall achievement level. Results for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics and the CAST also include subscores—known as claim results for the Smarter Balanced Assessments for ELA and mathematics—and domain results for the CAST. For example, the four reported claims for the Smarter Balanced Assessment for ELA are Reading, Writing, Listening, and Research/Inquiry, and the three reported domains for the CAST are Earth and Space Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences.

In May 2023, the Consortium confirmed the reporting of composite claim results for the ELA and mathematics adjusted form blueprint. For California, starting with the 2023–24 administration, composite claims results for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics are included on SSRs, The Test Results for California's Assessments website, as well as CERS. For ELA, the current Reading and Listening claims have been combined into a single Reading and Listening composite claim, while the Writing and Research claims have been combined into a single Writing and Research composite claim. For mathematics, the Concepts and Procedures claim has not changed, while the other three claims have been combined into a single Mathematical Practices composite claim.

In addition, SSRs were revised for clarity and to also include additional student measures, such as student writing scores as well as Lexile and Quantile measures.

### Peer Review Status

The CDE’s assessments are required to undergo a federal peer review process during which the CDE submits documents to the ED demonstrating that California’s assessments meet the federal requirements for validity, reliability, and fairness established for states by ESSA. As new assessments become operational, the CDE must provide additional evidence for peer review, covering each assessment that is required under ESSA. Peer review is often an iterative process, with states submitting additional evidence to meet the requirements as the evidence becomes available. The four possible outcomes are “meets requirements,” “substantially meets requirements,” “partially meets requirements,” and “does not meet requirements.” Both “meets requirements” and “substantially meets requirements” are passing results for peer review. The status of each California assessment subject to the peer review process is as follows:

* **Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics**—In November 2022, the ED notified the CDE that it met all requirements for these assessments based on the full form blueprints. Continued use of the adjusted blueprints will require additional evidence submissions.
* **CAAs for ELA and mathematics**—In November 2022, the ED notified the CDE that a small number of additional documents are required to fully meet requirements (e.g., evidence related to procedures for hand-scored items). The CDE submitted this additional evidence in June 2023 and anticipates feedback from ED by early 2025.
* **CAA for Science**—The 2020–21 administration was the first operational field test of the CAA for Science. However, due to the pandemic and the requirement to test students in person for the CAA for Science, the number of students who completed testing was insufficient to complete the standard setting process. Therefore, the CAA for Science had a second operational field test year beginning in September 2021. The CDE submitted its first submission for the CAA for Science in June 2023 and anticipates receiving feedback from ED by early 2025.
* **CAST**—The CAST was first administered operationally in 2018–19. The CDE submitted over 200 documents in support of the CAST peer review in December 2021. In November 2022, the CDE received a rating of “substantially meets requirements” from the ED for this submission. The CDE submitted additional documents fulfilling the ED’s outstanding requirements in June 2023 and anticipates receiving feedback from ED by early 2025.

### Smarter Balanced Assessments

The 2024 implementation activities in support of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, interim assessments, and Tools for Teachers were as follows:

### Summative Assessments

* Educators from Consortium member states convened virtually for several annual development activities, including item writing training, item review, data review, and range finding. California educators participated in these events.

### Interim Assessments

* In August 2024, the 2024–25 Smarter Balanced and CAST interim assessments were made available for use. This included 128 Smarter Balanced ELA interim assessments,100 mathematics interim assessments, and 19 CAST Interim Assessments.
* By December 31, 2024, LEAs had administered the following numbers of interim assessments since they became available for the 2024–25 school year:
	+ more than 1.2 million Smarter Balanced ELA Interim Assessments
	+ more than 1.1 million Smarter Balanced Mathematics Interim Assessments
	+ more than 120,000 CAST Interim Assessments

### Tools for Teachers

* The Tools for Teachers website continued to provide instructional lesson plans and professional learning activities using the formative assessment process with embedded strategies for instructional differentiation.
* In July 2024, the CDE conducted a science formative assessment resource development workshop, adding 14 science instructional resources for kindergarten through high school to Tools for Teachers. As of September 13, 2024, 92 science instructional resources were available to educators in Tools for Teachers for California LEAs.
* In December 2024, Smarter Balanced added 88 new ELA and mathematics instructional resources for grades three through twelve. Tools for Teachers now include over 350 ELA instructional resources and over 320 mathematics resources.

### California Alternate Assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics

The 2024 implementation activities in support of the CAAs for ELA and mathematics included the following:

* On January 9, the CAAs for ELA and mathematics became available to LEAs to begin administration.
* From June 25–27, the CDE conducted a virtual Alternate Assessments data review meeting where participants reviewed data on the performance of items on the CAAs for ELA and mathematics.

### California Science Test

The 2024 implementation activities in support of the CAST were as follows:

* On January 9, the CAST became available for administration by LEAs.
* On January 23–24, and 30, and March 26–27 and April 2–3, the CDE conducted virtual item review meetings with educators to evaluate CAST assessment items for the field test segments.
* On April 2–4, the CDE conducted a virtual phase 1 CAST range finding meeting with 23 California science educators to score student responses for constructed-response items and identify samples of student responses for training purposes.
* On June 18–20, the CDE conducted a virtual CAST data review meeting with 24 California science educators where participants reviewed data on operational CAST items to discuss how they performed.
* On June 25–27, the CDE conducted a virtual Alternate Assessments data review meeting, which included 30 California science educators. During this meeting, participants reviewed data on operational CAA for Science items to discuss how they performed.

### Science Instructional Resources

The CDE continues to add resources to support the CAST. In July 2024, the CDE conducted the 2024 Science Instructional Resource Development Workshop with 14 California educators in Sacramento, California. This was a hybrid workshop that included asynchronous training and four days of in-person training. The workshop aimed to develop science resources spanning from kindergarten through high school for inclusion on the Tools for Teachers website. These resources cover all three science domains (Earth and Space Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences) and include Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science. The CDE posted 14 new resources on the Tools for Teachers website. A total of 92 science formative assessment resources are now available for teachers to use in the classroom.

### Development of Science Interim Assessments

The CDE released the first set of interim assessments aligning with the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS). Grades three, four, and five have one interim assessment per grade, each of which covers all three CA NGSS domains—Earth and Space Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. Middle and high schools have three interim assessments each, with one for each domain. The purpose of these interims is to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. A second set of interims will be released in 2024–25.

### California Science Test Assessment Innovations

Throughout the year, the CDE worked with assessment contractor ETS to conduct a review of existing Performance Tasks (PTs) and assemble a framework for the use of PTs in assessment systems approved in the new contract. A group of science educators and assessment experts identified features that they recommend should be prioritized for implementation in the contexts of classroom and summative assessment use. The CAST Innovations Concept Paper, required in the California Assessment System contract, was presented to the SBE for approval of receipt at the January 2024 board meeting. The concept paper describes the research conducted by the contractor and a proposal for an innovative approach for future design and development of the CAST. The proposed approach includes PTs embedded in learning that provide teachers and students with authentic and engaging experiences through doing science. The CDE also requested feedback and direction from the SBE on next steps in relation to the concept paper.

### California Alternate Assessment for Science

The 2024 implementation activities in support of the CAA for Science were as follows:

* Between February 7–8, the CDE conducted virtual item review meetings with educators to review items to verify alignment with Science Core Content Connectors.
* From June 25–27, the CDE conducted a virtual CAA for Science data review meeting with seven California special education and science educators to review data on the performance of operational items from the PTs.
* In September, the CAA for Science test became available to LEAs.

### California Spanish Assessment

The 2024 implementation activities in support of the CSA were as follows:

* On January 9, the CSA became available to LEAs for administration.
* In January and March, the CDE conducted an item review meeting with educators to review items for issues related to content, and bias and sensitivity that may affect the performance of particular groups of students.
* In March through June, the CDE conducted Speaking range finding workshops with educators to determine the anchors and training sets needed for scoring the constructed-response items.
* In April through June, the CDE conducted writing range finding workshops with educators to determine the anchors and training sets needed for scoring the constructed-response items.
* On July 31 and August 1, the CDE conducted a data review meeting with educators to discuss the performance of items that had been field-tested in the spring 2024 administration.

### Expansion of Speaking and Writing Domains

The CDE is in the third year of expansion of the CSA. The CSA is an optional assessment administered to students in grades three through eight and high school who are seeking a measure of their Spanish skills in reading, writing mechanics, and listening. Based on feedback gathered during the 2023–24 administration, changes were proposed to the expansion and approved by the SBE to remove Speaking from grades three through eight. Therefore, the expansion for the 2024–25 administration will include an assessment of speaking domain at the high school level and the addition of a full-write essay to the writing domain for all grades. Once the expanded CSA becomes operational, the CDE will recommend to the Legislature that the CSA be included as one of the options to meet, in part, the requirements for the State Seal of Biliteracy.

In spring 2024, ETS conducted a rigorous speaking and writing range finding process with educators to determine anchor and training set responses to be used for scoring the new speaking and full-write essay items.

### Early Assessment Program

Grade eleven Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics results continued to be used for the Early Assessment Program (EAP) in collaboration with the California State University (CSU). Results are only used to determine a student’s placement after he or she has been admitted to the CSU. Some, but not all, California Community Colleges (CCC) accept EAP scores. Students may submit a copy of their score report to a CCC if requested.

### Grade Two Diagnostic Assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics

With the sunset of the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program for ELA and mathematics in 2013, the requirement that students in grade two participate in the summative assessment was eliminated. To ensure that teachers have information about the developing language arts and computational skills of their grade two students, *EC* Section 60644 required the CDE to gather information regarding existing diagnostic assessments, evaluate that information to ensure that the legal requirements and other criteria are met, and make the information available to LEAs.

The requirement was met in 2014, as described in the CDE memo to the SBE carrying the subject line “Plan for Senate Bill 247 Grade Two Diagnostic Test List” ([https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/pts-dsib-adad-oct14item03.doc](https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-dsib-adad-oct14item03.doc)). The CDE continues to receive inquiries from testing vendors about the possible inclusion of their assessment on the list that appears on the CDE Grade Two Diagnostics Assessments web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/da/>). The CDE’s response to those inquiries is that the Legislature must appropriate funds to conduct another evaluation. Apportionment records show that over 250,000 students are administered these assessments during most testing years.

## Contract Costs

CAASPP contract costs require SBE approval and are contingent on the review of the contract by the DOF during contract negotiations. Per *EC*Section 60643, the CDE, in consultation with the SBE, may make material amendments to the contract that do not increase the contract cost. Contract amendments that increase contract costs may be made only with the approval of the CDE, the SBE, and the DOF. As of the date of this report, the CAASPP System includes the following contracts: (1) Consortium-managed services; and (2) state-managed services.

### Smarter Balanced Consortium-Managed Services Contract

The Consortium-managed services contract is a multiyear, sole-source contract with costs based on an annual fee structure for Consortium services provided by a Consortium-selected contractor. This contract provides California with access to Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment items for statewide testing; the ongoing refreshment of Smarter Balanced test items, validation research, blueprint realignment, and accommodations and accessibility research; access to Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments for K–12 teachers for optional use; and access to formative tools in the Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers website, which also are for K–12 teachers’ optional use.

The original CDE contract with the Regents of the University of California, representing the Santa Cruz campus for the Consortium, began on July 1, 2017, and ended on June 30, 2022. In November 2018, the SBE approved a request by the CDE to amend the contract to include activities related to the reporting of assessment results to educators. In January 2022, the SBE approved the contract extension through June 30, 2027, to continue the customization, configuration, and implementation of CERS. The total contract amount is $94,817,000.

Table 3, below, provides a breakdown of contract costs for the current Regents of the University of California, on behalf of the Santa Cruz campus, per fiscal year (FY).

**Table 3: Consortium-Managed Services Contract Costs**

| **Fiscal Year** | **Total Cost** | **Package** | **Per-Student Rate** | **Students[[1]](#footnote-2)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2023–24 | $9,000,000 membership fee and $507,001 educator reporting activities | Summative, Interim, Tools for Teachers, and educator reporting | $9 Summative, Interim, and Tools for Teachers | 1 million (cap) |
| 2024–25 | $9,000,000 membership fee and $524,117 educator reporting activities | Summative, Interim, Tools for Teachers, and educator reporting | $9 Summative, Interim, and Tools for Teachers | 1 million (cap) |
| 2025–26 | $9,000,000 membership fee and $541,942 educator reporting activities | Summative, Interim, Tools for Teachers, and educator reporting | $9 Summative, Interim, and Tools for Teachers | 1 million (cap) |
| 2026–27 | $9,000,000 membership fee and $560,517 educator reporting activities | Summative, Interim, Tools for Teachers, and educator reporting | $9 Summative, Interim, and Tools for Teachers | 1 million (cap) |

### State-Managed Services Contract

The state-managed services contract is a multiyear contract for the annual administration of all CAASPP assessments, including the Smarter Balanced assessments. This contract was competitively bid through a Request for Submission process, with input from CDE and SBE staff. In that process, the SBE designated the contractor. As allowed by state law, the final Scope of Work and budget were then negotiated and approved by the CDE, the SBE, and the DOF.

The SBE approved the negotiated contract (CN220002) in November 2021, with the work under this contract with ETS beginning on July 1, 2022, and ending on December 31, 2027.

Table 4, below, provides a breakdown of the current contract costs per FY.

**Table 4: State-Managed Services Contract Costs for CN220002**

| **Fiscal Year** | **Total Cost** | **Cost Breakdown per Test Administration** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2023–24 | $66,124,917 | * $193,703 for 2022–23 test administration costs
* $65,417,111 for 2023–24 test administration costs
* $514,103 for 2024–25 test administration costs
 |
| 2024–25 | $66,846,717 | * $202,085 for 2023–24 test administration costs
* $66,101,719 for 2024–25 test administration costs
* $542,913 for 2025–26 test administration costs
 |
| 2025–26 | $66,326,669 | * $210,864 for 2024–25 test administration costs
* $65,607,690 for 2025–26 test administration costs
* $508,115 for 2026–27 test administration costs
 |
| 2026–27 | $66,704,081 | * $223,057 for 2025–26 test administration costs
* $66,481,024 for 2026–27 test administration costs
 |
| 2027–28[[2]](#footnote-3) | $66,336,727 | * $1,029,716 for 2026–27 test administration costs
* $65,307,011 for 2027–28 test administration costs
 |

## Apportionment Costs

The CAASPP apportionment costs are funded annually within the Budget Act as part of the assessment apportionments schedule that includes funding for apportionments to LEAs for the CAASPP System. State testing apportionments for a specific year are not paid to LEAs until the following FY, after all testing has been completed for the school year and the final number of students tested has been certified by the LEAs. *EC*Section 60640(l)(2) states that the SBE shall annually establish the amount of funding to be apportioned to LEAs for specified CAASPP assessments, which include the optional CSA.

*EC* Section 60644 also specifies that the savings realized from the elimination of the grade two standards-based achievement tests shall be used by LEAs to administer, at the option and cost of the LEA, a grade two diagnostic assessment identified by the CDE as meeting the requirements of *EC* Section 60644. State CAASPP regulations authorize the CDE to provide this funding to LEAs through the annual CAASPP apportionment process. Approximately 600 LEAs will receive an apportionment for the grade two diagnostic assessment in the 2023–24 school year.

In May 2024, the SBE approved the LEA apportionment rates for CAASPP for the 2023–24 school year. The estimates for the CAST and the CAA for Science are based on the estimated number of students tested in grade ten or grade twelve only—students in these grades are not required to take an additional CAASPP test. The estimates for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and CAAs for ELA and mathematics apportionments already include an LEA apportionment reimbursement for students in grades five, eight, and high school who also will take the CAST or CAA for Science.

Table 5, on the following page, provides a breakdown of estimated apportionment costs, by assessment.

**Table 5: Estimated Apportionment Costs for 2023–24 CAASPP Testing**

| **Assessment** | **Per-Pupil Rate** | **Estimated 2023‒24 Pupil Population** | **Estimated Apportionment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics | $4.00 | 3,000,000 | $12,000,000 |
| CAST | $2.00 | 1,330,000 | $2,660,000 |
| CAAs for ELA and mathematics | $5.00 | 36,000 | $180,000 |
| CAA for Science | $5.00 | 15,000 | $75,000 |
| CSA | $5.00 | 56,000 | $280,000 |
| Grade 2 diagnostic assessments(*EC* Section 60644)  | $2.52 | 425,000 | $1,071,000 |
| Students not tested due to medical emergency and parent/guardian exemptions | $1.00 | 30,000 | $30,000 |
| Total: | -- | -- | $16,296,000 |

## Five-Year Cost Projection

The annual Budget Act provides funding for both contract costs and LEA apportionment costs. Cost projections are refined annually as contracts are negotiated and approved and as activities are completed for each implementation phase of the CAASPP System.

Cost projections for the state-managed services contract are from the approved state-managed CAASPP contract services (see table 4). State-managed services contract costs include funding for the development of the CAST, the CAA for Science, and the CSA. The costs for 2023–28 include reporting the results of the CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and science. Tables 6 and 7, on the following page, provide an updated five-year projection of CAASPP contract and apportionment costs.

**Table 6: Five-Year Projection of CAASPP Contract Costs**

| **Fiscal Year** | **Consortium-Managed Services Cost** | **State-Managed Contract Cost** | **Total CAASPP Contract Cost** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2023–24 | $9.6 million | $66.2 million | $75.8 million |
| 2024–25 | $9.6 million | $66.9 million | $76.5 million |
| 2025–26 | $9.6 million | $66.4 million | $76.0 million |
| 2026–27 | $9.6 million | $67.8 million | $77.4 million |
| 2027–28[[3]](#footnote-4) | $10.2 million | $66.4 million | $76.6 million |

**Table 7: Five-Year Projection of CAASPP LEA Apportionment Costs**

| **Fiscal Year**[[4]](#footnote-5) | **LEA Apportionment Cost** | **Test Administration Reimbursed** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2023–24 | $17.4 million | 2022–23 test administration |
| 2024–25 | $16.9 million | 2023–24 test administration |
| 2025–26 | $16.9 million | 2024–25 test administration |
| 2026–27 | $16.9 million | 2025–26 test administration |
| 2027–28 | $16.9 million | 2026–27 test administration |

These projections are based on the current approved CAASPP apportionment rates. The SBE may modify the amount to be apportioned in subsequent years to address changes to LEA test administration activities. Any adjustment to the CAASPP apportionment rates that will increase the total amount apportioned annually will require DOF approval. The CDE provided the DOF with estimated assessment apportionments for FY 2023–24, including approximately $16.3 million in estimated costs for the CAASPP System.

The 2024 Budget Act appropriation of $16.3 million was sufficient funding for the CAASPP apportionments to LEAs for the specified CAASPP assessments. Funding for FY 2025–26 and beyond will be contingent upon an annual appropriation being made available by the Legislature in future fiscal years.

### Cost Projection Variations of Proposed Budgets, 2020–24

The 2020 Budget Act, 2021 Budget Act, 2022 Budget Act, 2023 Budget Act, and 2024 Budget Act, all provided sufficient funding for CAASPP contract costs and apportionment costs. The total Budget Act funding for various CAASPP contract costs were as follows:

* 2020 – $87.2 million
* 2021 – $87.0 million
* 2022 – $72.9 million
* 2023 – $75.1 million
* 2024 – $76.4 million

### California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Timeline

The CAASPP timeline shown in table 8 below provides information on the assessments that are anticipated to be a part of each CAASPP test administration per FY.

**Table 8: CAASPP Timeline**

| **Fiscal Year** | **Test Administrations** | **Operational Assessments** | **Assessments Undergoing Census or Sample Pilot and Field Testing** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2023–24 | 2022–23 test administration and 2023–24 test administration | Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and Science, CSA | CSA—field test of Speaking and full-write items for Writing |
| 2024–25 | 2023–24 test administration and 2024–25 test administration | Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and Science, CSA | CSA—operational with the inclusion of Speaking (high school only) and full-write items for writing |
| 2025–26 | 2024–25 test administration and 2025–26 test administration | Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and Science, CSA | None |
| 2026–27 | 2025–26 test administration and 2026–27 test administration | Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and Science, CSA | None |
| 2027–28 | 2026–27 test administration and 2027–28 test administration | Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics, CAST, CAAs for ELA, mathematics, and Science, CSA | None |

1. California tests approximately 3.2 million students annually with Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Estimated using the current FY 2027–28 total, along with the FY 2022–23 total to create the first-year contract cost for the future, new contract. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. FY 2027–28 is beyond the current term of the contract. Estimates are based on an increase in cost for the Consortium-managed services. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Assessment apportionments are distributed the following fiscal year when all testing for the previous year has been completed. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)