Growth Data

California School DASHBOARD

2026 Dashboard Toolkit

On the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools that serve students in grades four through eight receive Growth Performance Levels for both English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. Growth Performance Levels are based on students' performance on the statewide California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress' Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. Science does not have growth scores because the California Science Test is not taken in consecutive grade levels. The Growth Performance Levels are Minimal, Moderate, Average, Accelerated, and Exceptional. For the 2025 Dashboard, Student Growth is published to the Dashboard in the informational purposes section and will not be used for Local Control Funding Formula eligibility criteria.

What Is Growth?

Growth data on the Dashboard measures how an LEA's or a school's ELA and mathematics assessment scores have grown between the current year and the previous years and how that growth compares to average growth across the state. While individual growth scores look at the difference between the students' expected test scores and their actual test scores from one grade level to the next, the average growth scores shown on the Dashboard for LEAs, schools, and student groups provide a picture of average growth for students. In California, growth data was developed specifically to be used only for accountability purposes and is therefore focused on producing average growth scores rather than individual student growth scores.

Growth Versus Distance from Standard

Growth is different from the Distance from Standard (DFS) measurement used for the Academic Indicators.

DFS measures how students at a school or LEA have performed on the ELA and mathematics assessments in the current year using scale score points. This average performance provides an overall Status level for a school on the same scale as the assessments and shares the distance the average student performance is from the lowest scale score for Level 3. The Change metric for the Academic Indicator shows how the school or LEA's average performance improved or declined between the current and prior year.

Growth measures the difference in student assessment scale scores from one grade level or year to the next grade level or year. Any student whose assessment scale score is higher in the current year than it was in the prior year is reflected in the percentage of students making growth. Additionally, the Growth Performance Level category for the growth score reflects the average magnitude of growth at a school or LEA, as compared to average growth within California that year.

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 mathematics. Students who take the California Alternate Assessments are not included in the calculations.

The first step in calculating individual student growth scores for a subject area (ELA or mathematics) 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 previous 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. An example of a growth score calculation is provided below.

In each case, we consider scores from the previous year and current year for a group of students.

- **Step 1**: Organize students into groups by their performance on the previous grade level's test scores.
- **Step 2**: Determine students' scores on the current grade level's test.
- **Step 3**: Determine the average current score for students who are grouped based on having similar previous scores. This is considered to be a student's expected score.
- **Step 4**: Determine the difference between a student's current year score and their expected test score for their group. This is a student's individual growth score.

These individual scores are averaged for students at the LEA, school, and student group levels, using either a simple average for student groups with more than 500 students with a test score at the LEA level, or a weighted average for student groups with 500 or fewer students with test scores at the LEA level. The weighted average is also used for the **All** student group at the school and LEA level, as well as other student groups at a school level. For the 2025 Dashboard, the 2023, 2024, and 2025 Smarter Balanced Assessment scores in ELA and mathematics were used to calculate aggregate growth scores and determine Growth Performance Levels—Minimal, Moderate, Average, Accelerated, and Exceptional—for schools, LEAs, and student groups.

For a complete technical review of growth, please access the Additional Resources found on the California Department of Education (CDE) Growth Data web page.

Accessing Growth Data

Growth scores for LEAs and schools that serve students in grades four through eight are not displayed on the Dashboard but are available in a downloadable data file on the CDE website. The file includes the numerical growth score values for LEAs, schools, and student groups, along with the performance category. Additional information, such as the percentage of students who increased their score from the prior year, as well as whether the value was calculated using the simple or weighted average, is also included in the file.

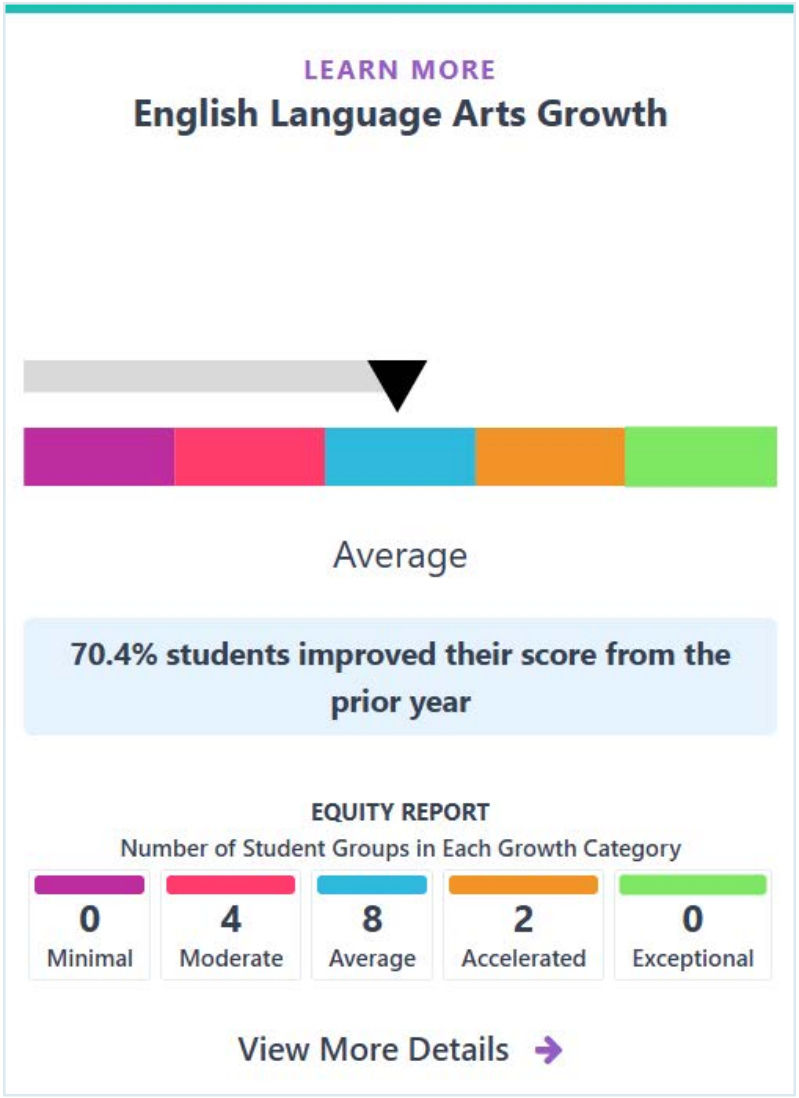
Dashboard Card

ELA and mathematics growth have individual Dashboard cards for the first time on the 2025 Dashboard. The Dashboard cards include a graphic displaying the Growth Performance Level of the school, LEA, or student group as well as the percentage of students whose scores improved from the prior year. Like other Dashboard cards, growth has an Equity Report with the number of student groups in each Performance Level.

On the sample ELA student growth Dashboard card provided, the LEA received an **Average** Growth Performance Level and 70.4 percent of students improved their score from the prior year.

At the bottom of the card is the Equity Report. This report prominently displays the number of student groups placed in each Growth Performance Level. In the Equity Report on the sample student growth card provided, zero student groups made Minimal growth, four student groups made Moderate growth, eight student groups made Average growth, two student groups made Accelerated growth, and zero student groups made Exceptional growth.

Select the **View More Details** button below the Equity Report for detailed information on the growth each student group made.



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.

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