

California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-003 (REV. 11/2017)

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# California State Board of Education January 2018 Agenda Item #06

## Subject

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress: Approval of California Alternate Assessment for Science Test Blueprint, General Achievement Level Descriptors, and Score Reporting Structure, and Approval of the 2018 Local Educational Agency Apportionment Rates.

## Type of Action

Action, Information

## Summary of the Issue(s)

The California Department of Education (CDE) continues the development of the California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science consistent with the State Board of Education (SBE) approved high-level test design and timeline. The CAA for Science test blueprints, general achievement level descriptors (ALDs), and score reporting structure are critical elements to that continued development.

Additionally, the SBE establishes the local educational agency (LEA) apportionment rates for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) as set forth in California *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 60640(I)(B)(2).

## Recommendation

### California Alternate Assessment for Science

The CDE recommends that the SBE approve and authorize CDE staff to make technical edits, as necessary, to the following draft CAA for Science-related test development documents:

* Blueprint (Attachment 1)
* General ALDs (Attachment 2)
* Score Reporting Structure

### 2018 Local Educational Agency Apportionment Rates

The CDE recommends that the SBE approve the following LEA apportionment rates for tests administered, as part of the CAASPP System, during the 2017–18 school year:

* $4.00 per pupil administered any portion of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and/or California Science Test (CAST)
* $5.00 per pupil administered any portion of the CAAs and/or CAA for Science
* $5.00 per pupil administered any portion of the California Spanish Assessment (CSA)
* $2.52 per eligible English learner (EL) pupil administered, at the option of the LEA, the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)
* $1.00 for preparing and providing required electronic test registration information to the contractor prior to the beginning of the LEA’s testing window for pupils mandated to be tested who were then not tested, for any reason (e.g., due to parent exemption, being absent the entire testing window, etc.)
* $2.52 per-pupil LEA apportionment reimbursement rate for CDE-certified grade two diagnostic tests administered during the 2017–18 school year, at the option and cost of the LEA per *EC* Section 60644.

## Brief History of Key Issues

### California Alternate Assessment for Science

The CAA for Science, aligned with the Core Content Connectors that are linked with the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS), is administered to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose individualized education program (IEP) indicates the use of an alternate assessment. In accordance with the high-level test design approved by the SBE in July 2016, the development of the draft CAA for Science blueprint has focused on integrating the Disciplinary Core Ideas, Science and Engineering Practices, and Crosscutting Concepts by aligning with the Core Content Connectors developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

The high-level test design requires that all eligible students in the tested grades participate in embedded performance tasks. “Embedded” refers to administering each performance task immediately following instruction. Test examiners, who are familiar with the student, administer the online embedded performance task one-on-one with the student.

The CAA for Science is administered to all students in grades five and eight and once in high school (i.e., grade ten, eleven, or twelve) whose IEP indicates the use of an alternate assessment. For enrolled students designated as ungraded in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System, grade-level will be determined based on the student's age as of September 1 of the current school year.

The CAA for Science is part of the CAASPP System. Table 1 displays the timeline for the development of the CAA for Science.

Table 1: CAA for Science Timeline

| **Development Activity** | **Date** |
| --- | --- |
| Pilot test | Spring 2017 |
| Pilot test, year two | Spring 2018 |
| Field test | Spring 2019 |
| Operational test | Spring 2020 |

The CDE, in collaboration with ETS, continues the development of the CAA for Science. The draft CAA for Science blueprint, general ALDs, and score reporting structure play a large role in bringing the development of the CAA for Science closer to the operational phase and closer to online administration.

#### Blueprint

A test blueprint documents the CA NGSS Performance Expectations to be measured using the assessment, and for the CAA for Science it documents the modified alternate achievement standards aligned to those grade level content standards. The development of the CAA for Science draft blueprint (Attachment 1) has focused on strengthening the links between the test items, the CA NGSS, and the Core Content Connectors. The Core Content Connectors illustrate the necessary knowledge and skills needed to reach the grade-level assessment targets within the CA NGSS. The Core Content Connectors align appropriately with the needs of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and serve as the basis for the state’s CA NGSS alternate summative assessments for eligible students. In accordance with the high-level test design, each embedded performance task will align with at least two Core Content Connectors and, therefore, two CA NGSS Performance Expectations.

The draft blueprint was developed to be consistent with the CAST blueprint at each grade level. The CAA for Science blueprint uses the same proportion of science domains in the CA NGSS as the CAST, although the range of Performance Expectations that are covered is less due to the structure of the test (i.e., performance tasks only and a reduced number of items). Therefore, a subset of CA NGSS Performance Expectations and subsequently Core Content Connectors has been identified as appropriate for inclusion in the CAA for Science.

Once operational, each student who is administered the CAA for Science will receive four embedded performance tasks. Three embedded performance tasks will be from each of the three science domains in the CA NGSS (Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth and Space Science). The fourth embedded performance task will be used for field-testing purposes and will be randomly selected from one of the three science domains. The design of the CAA for Science allows for students to be administered the embedded performance tasks soon after they receive instruction related to the Core Content Connector being assessed. A test examiner may also individualize parts of the embedded performance task so that the test can best meet the needs of each individual student. For example, a test examiner may modify the wording of some test questions or select different materials for an activity to best meet the needs of an individual student to demonstrate what they know and can do.

In preparation for the operational CAA for Science, items currently under development will account for the cognitive complexity of skills by assigning items within the embedded performance task to low, medium, and high complexity. Students will then receive items of differing complexity based on the percentages defined in the blueprint.

California science educators and administrators who participated in item writing and review committees, various stakeholder groups, such as the California Science Teacher Association, and national experts in science, assessment, and special education, reviewed and provided input to the proposed blueprint.

#### General Achievement Level Descriptors

The CAA for Science general ALDs, sometimes referred to as policy ALDs, provide generic descriptions of student achievement level expectations across three levels (Attachment 2). The general ALDs will be used to set grade-level-specific ALDs and will be used to develop reporting ALDs that describe levels of achievement to educators, students, and parents. ETS, in collaboration with CDE staff, worked with California science educators and other national experts to review and provide input to the proposed general ALDs.

#### Score Reporting Structure

The draft CAA for Science student score reporting structure consists of an overall scale score with three achievement levels. Data from the year-two pilot and field test administrations will be used to evaluate the reliability of the score reporting structure, and changes, if necessary, will be brought to the SBE following that analysis. The CDE and ETS will continue to explore other reliable reporting structures for the SBE’s consideration. This proposed reporting structure provides one source of information about the student; however, teachers who administer the assessments can observe, in real time, detailed information about students’ performance that can provide insight to adjust instruction immediately following the test.

### 2018 Local Educational Agency Apportionment Rates

*EC* Section 60640(l)(1) specifies that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall apportion funds to LEAs to enable LEAs to administer the tests within the CAASPP System. For the 2017–18 school year, the CAASPP System consists of the following assessments, which include authorized apportionment funding per state law:

* Computer-based assessments (*Note*: Paper-pencil versions of Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are only available for LEAs that meet specific criteria)
  + Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics in grades three through eight, inclusive, and grade eleven
  + CAST in grades five and eight and once in high school—grade ten, eleven, or twelve
  + Optional for LEAs, CSA for reading/language arts administered to Spanish-speaking EL pupils in grades two through eleven, inclusive (LEAs who administer this assessment to students who are not Spanish-speaking ELs will not receive an apportionment)
* Computer-based alternate assessments
  + CAA for ELA and mathematics in grades three through eight, inclusive, and grade eleven
  + CAA for Science in grades five and eight and once in high school—grade ten, eleven, or twelve
* Paper-pencil assessments
  + Optional for LEAs, paper-pencil STS for reading/language arts administered to Spanish-speaking EL pupils in grades two through eleven, inclusive (LEAs who administer this assessment to pupils who are not Spanish-speaking ELs will not receive apportionment)

State law does not authorize LEA apportionments for the optional Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments or formative tools (Digital Library) that are provided as a part of the CAASPP System.

The recommended 2017–18 LEA apportionment rates for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, CAAs, CSA, STS, and the CDE-certified grade two diagnostic assessments are the same apportionment rates previously approved by the SBE in January 2017.

The CAST will be administered as a field test in school year 2017–18. The recommended rate for the computer-based CAST is the same rate as for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. The CAA for Science will be administered for the second year as part of a pilot test in school year 2017–18. The recommended apportionment rate for the CAA for Science is at the same rate as the CAAs for ELA and mathematics. The CSA will be administered as an optional pilot test in school year 2017–18. The recommended rate for the computer-based CSA is the same rate as the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

For each pupil tested with any portion of the computer-based tests required in that grade, excluding alternate assessments, an LEA will receive $4.00. For each eligible pupil tested with any portion of the computer-based alternate assessments, an LEA will receive $5.00. An LEA will receive $1.00 for any pupil required to be tested but is not tested, for any reason (e.g., due to parent exemption, being absent the entire testing window, etc.). The $1.00 would be in lieu of the $4.00 or $5.00 the LEA would have received if the pupil had been tested.

For eligible Spanish-speaking ELs administered the STS as a second test at the option of the LEA, the LEA will receive an additional $2.52 for each pupil. For each pupil administered a CDE-certified grade two diagnostic assessment at the option of the LEA per *EC* 60644, as reported to the CDE by the LEA, the LEA will receive $2.52 per pupil.

Assessment apportionments are not distributed until the following fiscal year, when all testing for the previous year has been completed (i.e., LEAs will be reimbursed in 2018–19 for testing that occurs in 2017–18). The assessment apportionment funds are unrestricted funds to reimburse LEAs for the following costs:

1. Staffing costs, including the district coordinator, the test site coordinators, staff training, and other staff expenses related to testing;
2. Expenses related to testing incurred at the LEA level and school level;
3. Transportation costs for delivering and retrieving tests and test materials within the school district; and
4. Costs associated with the collection and submission of pupil demographic information intended to provide the complete and accurate data required for student group reporting per state regulations.

## Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

In December 2017, the CDE provided the SBE with an Information Memorandum that included updates on the CAASPP System.

[URL to be provided after memo is posted]

In January 2017, the SBE approved LEA apportionment rates for the 2016–17 CAASPP test administration and CDE-approved grade two diagnostic assessments (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/jan17item09.doc>).

In July 2016, the SBE approved the CAA for Science high-level test design (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/documents/jul16item01.doc>).

In January 2016, the SBE approved LEA apportionment rates for the 2015–16 CAASPP test administration and CDE-approved grade two diagnostic assessments (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/agenda201601.asp>).

In January 2016, November 2015, and September 2015, the CDE provided the SBE with updates on the CA NGSS assessments

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/documents/jan16item03.doc>)

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/nov15item03.doc>)

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/sep15item01.doc>).

In July 2015, June 2015, and May 2015, the CDE provided the SBE with updates on the CA NGSS assessments

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/jul15item03.doc>)

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-dsib-adad-jun15item03.doc>)

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/may15item02.doc>).

In May 2015, the SBE designated ETS as the CAASPP contractor for the 2015–16, 2016–17, and 2017–18 test administrations, including the test development, pilot testing, and field testing of three new CA NGSS science assessments (including the CA NGSS alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities) in the grades and content areas to be approved by the SBE. This included a new primary language assessment aligned to the Common Core State Standards

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/documents/may15item01.doc>).

In January 2015, the SBE approved LEA apportionment rates for the 2014–15 CAASPP test administration and CDE-approved grade two diagnostic assessments (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr15/agenda201501.asp>).

In January 2014, the SBE approved LEA apportionment rates for the 2013–14 CAASPP test administration (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr14/agenda201401.asp>).

## Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

The proposed 2017–18 Budget Act includes the funding necessary for the 2017–18 CAASPP administration contract activities. Funding for 2018–19 and beyond will be contingent upon an annual appropriation being made available from the Legislature in future fiscal years.

The CDE has provided the Department of Finance estimated costs per each test for statewide assessment apportionments to be administered in 2017–18, including approximately $16.5 million for the CAASPP System.

Using the recommended per pupil rates for 2017–18 CAASPP testing, the projected apportionment costs for 2017–18 are based on the estimates in Table 2.

**Table 2. Estimated Apportionment Costs for 2017–18 CAASPP Testing**

| **Assessment** | **Per Pupil Rate** | **Estimated Pupil Population** | **Estimated Apportionment for 2017–18 Testing** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Smarter Balanced Summative | $4.00 | 3,200,000 | $12,800,000 |
| CAST1 | $4.00 | 600,0001 | $2,400,000 |
| CAA | $5.00 | 39,000 | $195,000 |
| CAA for Science1 | $5.00 | 5,0001 | $25,000 |
| CSA | $4.00 | 2,500 | $10,000 |
| STS | $2.52 | 9,000 | $22,680 |
| *EC* 60644 grade 2 diagnostic | $2.52 | 420,000 | $1,058,400 |
| **Total** |  |  | **$16,511,080** |

1. The estimates for the CAST and CAA for Science are based on the estimated number of pupils tested in grade ten or grade twelve only—pupils not required to take an additional CAASPP assessment. The estimates for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and CAA apportionment already include an LEA apportionment reimbursement for pupils in grades five, eight, and eleven who also will also take the CAST and/or CAA for Science.

**Attachment(s)**

* Attachment 1: Draft California Alternate Assessment for Science Blueprint   
  (21 Pages)
* Attachment 2: Draft California Alternate Assessment for Science General Achievement Level Descriptors (1 Page)

# Attachment 2

**DRAFT—California Alternate Assessment for Science General Achievement Level Descriptors**

General achievement level descriptors (ALDs), or policy ALDs, are generic descriptors of student performance level expectations. They provide the range of measurement for the assessment and characterize results with regard to the defined standards. General ALDs apply across grade levels and are referenced when drafting the specific descriptors used in setting threshold scores.

The proposed California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science general ALDs, presented below, were originally developed for the CAAs for English language arts/literacy and mathematics and adopted by the State Board of Education in January 2016.

| **Level** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **3** | Students at this level demonstrate **understanding** of core subject matter in the content area. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on the essential knowledge and skills and may need occasional prompts and assistance to complete tasks and activities. |
| **2** | Students at this level demonstrate **foundational understanding** of core subject matter in the content area when provided with frequent prompts and supports. They are actively working with adapted grade-level content that focuses on the essential knowledge and skills and may frequently need supports to complete tasks and activities. |
| **1** | Students at this level demonstrate **limited understanding** of adapted grade-level content that focuses on much of the basic knowledge and skills, even with extensive supports. |