California Department of Education

Executive Office

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 21, 2025

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress: Proposed Revisions to the Student Score Reports

## Summary of Key Issues

This memorandum provides an update on the proposed Student Score Reports (SSRs) for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)—California Science Test (CAST), Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) and Mathematics, and California Spanish Assessment (CSA).

## Background

The following sections provide background on the changes to the CAASPP SSRs.

### **General English, Mathematics, Science**

In March 2025, the California State Board of Education (SBE) approved revisions to the reporting achievement level descriptors (ALDs) and labels for the CAST and Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and Mathematics. In May 2025, the SBE approved one additional technical edit to the Level 1 reporting ALD for the CAST and Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and Mathematics. Further information about the approved revisions to the reporting ALDs and levels can be found in the March 2025 SBE Agenda Item 04 at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr25/documents/mar25item04.docx> and in the May 2025 SBE Agenda Item 03 at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr25/documents/may25item03rev.docx>.

To reflect the changes made to the revised ALDs, the California Department of Education (CDE) provided a June 2025 SBE Information Memorandum at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/jun25memoadad01.docx> and Attachment 1 at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/jun25memoadad01a1.pdf> that details the recommended revisions to the CAASPP SSRs for ELA, mathematics, and science. Further feedback on the proposed SSRs was solicited from interest holders in July 2025. The CDE will recommend approval of the proposed SSRs at the September 2025 SBE meeting. The recommended changes include the following:

**Page 1, “What Do the Scores Mean?”**

* The second sentence in the first paragraph has been revised to say “There are four different achievement levels that describe students’ grade-level knowledge and skills:”
* The achievement levels have been revised to “Level 4: Advanced,” “Level 3: Proficient,” “Level 2: Developing,” and “Level 1: Minimal.”
* The second and third paragraphs have been replaced with “In addition, there is more detailed information about student performance in specific areas, which is reported as one of three categories:"
* The performance levels have been revised to “Above Proficient,” “At or Near Proficient,” and “Below Proficient” to reference the new Level 3 label.
* The sentence “These results provide a measure of where students are excelling and where they can improve” has been changed to “These results provide a measure of where students are in the development of their knowledge and skills.”

**Pages 2 and 3, “[Student]’s Overall Score”**

* The conditional text in the blue box above the overall achievement level graphic has been revised to replace references to the standard with grade-level knowledge and skills.
* The sentence “A score of XXXX or higher meets the grade XX standard.” has been removed from the paragraph below the overall achievement level graphic.

After the June 2025 SBE Information Memorandum, the CDE invited feedback from local educational agencies (LEAs) and interest holders regarding the proposed revisions to the SSRs. The CDE proposed the removal of the dotted line separating Level 2 and Level 3 in the vertical score charts. The CDE received feedback from various interest holders expressing a desire to maintain the dotted line of the vertical score charts so that the expectation for proficiency is clearly expressed on SSRs. The dotted line was not added back to the SSRs to emphasize that the levels represent a continuum of grade-level performance at differing degrees of complexity.

The CDE has also received feedback from interest holders requesting more detailed information on the Smarter Balanced for Mathematics SSR regarding what specific skills students have mastered or are still in the process of mastering. The CDE is committed to providing detailed and actionable achievement information to students, families, and educators. While it is not possible to provide individual student results at the claim or target level without increasing the number of items on the assessment—and, as a result, noticeably increasing testing time for students and schools—the CDE does provide aggregate results at the claim and target level on the Test Results for California’s Assessment website and in the California Educator Reporting System, respectively.

### **California Spanish Assessment**

In May 2025, the CDE and testing contractor, ETS, held focus groups with parents/guardians and educators using newly designed CSA SSRs and gathered feedback. The English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) Technical Advisory Group and assessment interest holder members were also consulted in early June 2025.

In general, the focus group participants, interest holders, and technical experts’ feedback indicated that they appreciated the proposed cleaner layout, domain icons, and score history information section. They noted that the new CSASSRs now resembled other California assessment reports, which aided in their comprehension of the content.

In the June 2025 SBE Information Memorandum 01 and Attachment 1, the CDE provided the SBE with samples of the proposed CSA SSRs. The proposed CSA SSRs have been revised to align with the CAASPP SSRs for consistency, where applicable. Additionally, with the inclusion of speaking at the high school grade span, similar graphics used for the Summative ELPAC composite scores are recommended to be implemented on the CSA SSR.

In July 2025, the CDE invited further feedback from LEAs and interest holders regarding the proposed revisions to the SSRs. After receiving this latest feedback, the CDE recommends additional revisions to the newly redesigned CSA SSRs that were included in the June 2025 Information Memorandum to the SBE.

These additional proposed changes include:

* Updates to the language in the “What do the Scores Means?” section on page 1 to address the inclusion of the two composite areas (Oral Literacy and Written Literacy) on the high school SSR and simplified domain (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking [high school only]) description due to space constraints on both SSRs for consistency.
* Three new reporting categories—Beginning, Progressing, and Well Developed—were added to each domain with a new graphic representation.
* Domain icon colors and graphics are changed to align with the ELA, mathematics, and science SSRs areas/domains.
* Scale score numbers are changed to “XXX” as a placeholder to represent the threshold scale which has not been approved by the SBE.
* The sentence “The goal for all students is to reach the highest level” on page 1 has been removed.
* The sentence “These results provide a measure of where students are excelling and where they can improve” on page 1 of the SSRs has been changed to “These results provide a measure of where students are in the development of their knowledge and skills.”
* On the high school SSR, the Performance Areas section has been changed to a revised vertical format that clearly shows the relationship between the domains and the composite areas. In addition, due to a lack of space, the high school domain descriptor statements were removed.
* The Performance Area descriptor has been revised to better explain the graphic on the bottom of page 2: “Mia's overall score consists of 50 percent from the oral literacy (Listening and Speaking domains) score and 50 percent from the written literacy (Reading and Writing domains) score.” Based on the feedback, the revised oral literacy and written literacy percentages make it easier for educators, parents/guardians, and students to understand how the overall score is calculated.
* On the grades three through eight SSR, the questions for each domain are updated.
* Updated California Elementary School to California High School and the ELPAC logo to the CAASPP logo on the high school SSR.

The CDE has also received feedback requesting other revisions. While the CDE is committed to providing detailed and actionable achievement information to students, families, and educators, it is not possible to provide the following:

* More than three domain achievement levels for the CSA, due to the length of the assessment there is not sufficient information to provide more than three domain levels
* Identical reporting level descriptors to other CAASPP tests, due to the unique content measured and purposes of the CSA
* Spanish Lexile levels like the ELA, due to the need for further study
* Dotted line between Level 2 and Level 3 in the vertical score charts, due to the fact that the levels represent a continuum of grade-level performance at differing degrees of complexity

These revisions to the CSA SSRs will be brought to the SBE for approval in September 2025. The proposed SSR revisions are included in Attachment 1.

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: Sample Proposed Student Score Report for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (10 pages)