



# CAASPP in Action

---

Sharing Practices  
in Implementing  
the CAASPP System  
to Improve Teaching  
and Learning

---



California Assessment of  
Student Performance and Progress

*Implementing the  
Interim Assessment Blocks*  
Anaheim Elementary School District



# Implementing the Interim Assessment Blocks Anaheim Elementary School District



## Mission Statement

Anaheim Elementary School District provides a high-quality education designed to reach and teach all students and to prepare them for a bright and promising future in our rapidly changing world. We seek to develop student responsibility, confidence, creativity, enthusiasm, and strong academic and social skills for lifelong learning.

## DISTRICT PROFILE

GRADES SERVED **K-6**

SCHOOLS **24**

TEACHERS **823**

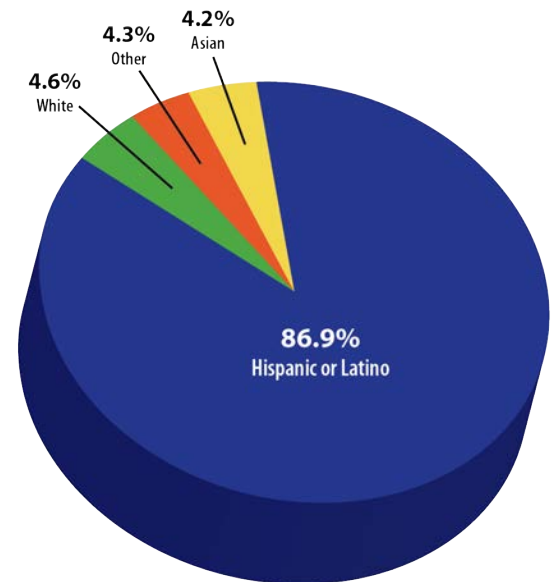
ENROLLMENT **19,164**

ENGLISH LEARNERS **58%**

LOW INCOME **87%**

SPECIAL EDUCATION **11%**

ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS



## GOAL

Implement the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) in grades three through six at all 24 elementary schools.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Program Evaluations Department took the lead on implementing the goal. As plans were being implemented, the CAASPP Institute training opportunity was announced and the district created a team consisting of the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, the Director of Program Evaluation, including a teacher working on special assignment, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the CAASPP Coordinator, a Curriculum Specialist from Special Services, and the English Learner Coordinator.

*“It was beneficial for the state to release to us a whole suite of tools to use and explore and to see the rigor and expectations for students. . . . We had been given a phenomenal opportunity that the state was offering for free!”*

## APPROACH

Anaheim Elementary had been using locally developed, paper-pencil common assessments for several years. Teachers were familiar with those assessments, and they were aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), but with the exception of the writing prompts, all the questions on the district common assessments were multiple choice and most were measuring Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level 1 (i.e., recall and reproduction). Continued use of the district common assessments would not help students prepare for the rigor of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, leading them to explore use of the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Providing students and teachers experience with the Smarter Balanced test delivery platform and exposing students to the available universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available were also substantial factors in the district’s decision to explore the IABs.

With the support of district leadership and other crucial stakeholders, the district embarked on a two-year plan to implement the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments at grades three through six at all 24 of their elementary school sites.

### ***Year 1: Pilot Test Both ICAs and IABs with a Few Schools***

In Spring 2015, the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) were pilot tested at three school sites. The ICAs were pilot tested at grades four, five, and six, and select IABs in mathematics and English-language arts were also pilot tested in grades three through six. Pilot sites were selected on the basis of their technology infrastructure, teachers’ interest and engagement with assessment (i.e., an “assessment forward” mentality), and a willingness to provide honest and constructive feedback on the process.

At the conclusion of the pilot testing and after discussing the process with the teachers and site administrators at the pilot sites, the district team made the following recommendations for the 2015–16 school year: all schools administer three IABs in mathematics and three IABs in ELA. The selection of the IABs was influenced by the following factors:

- Instructional time required to administer
- Hand scoring requirements
- Content linked to curriculum and pacing

The district team did not recommend continued use of the ICAs because of the amount of instructional time ICAs take to administer and the amount of hand scoring required compared to the IABs. The next step was to place the selected IABs onto the assessment calendars that are aligned with instructional pacing. During their springtime annual presentation on the assessment and pacing calendar, principals and curriculum coaches were informed about the plan to use the IABs. This springtime announcement allowed principals time to meet with the staff before the end of the year and in advance of summer planning time.

---

The placement of the IABs onto the assessment calendar was a deliberate process . . . the team looked at the IABs and the assessment targets that were addressed and placed the IABs on the calendar where they made sense to teachers. A CAASPP/Smarter Balanced graphic is on the calendar indicating to teachers when they should use the IAB.

---

## APPROACH, continued

### Year 2: Implement IABs in Grades Three Through Six in Both ELA and Mathematics at All Schools

#### Summer 2015

Trainings were provided to site administrators, curriculum coaches, and digital learning coaches to support IAB administration. The first training session focused on providing an overview of the selected IABs, and the administration, scoring, and reporting requirements and procedures, and introducing the accessibility supports. The district team strongly emphasized that all universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are available and modifiable when administering IABs and that it was important to take advantage of this opportunity to familiarize students with these supports prior to summative testing. Subsequent training sessions focused on the test blueprints, the assessment targets, rigor, and student performance expectations.

#### Fall 2015

As school started, teachers were prepared to administer the selected IABs. In ELA, the Read Informational Texts, Read Literary Texts and Edit Revise IABs were administered in grades three through six. The mathematics IABs varied by grade (Figure 1).

The district also conducted follow-up training for all curriculum coaches on hand scoring and analysis of results that the coaches could use with grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at school sites. This training session was completed in one hour because that is how much time the coaches would have to work with the teachers in the weekly PLC time.

Figure 1: Selected IABs in Mathematics by Grade

Grade	Mathematics
3	Operations and Algebraic Thinking Fractions Measurement and Data
4	Numbers and Operations Base 10 Operations and Algebraic Thinking Fractions
5	Numbers and Operations Base 10 Fractions Measurement and Data
6	Ratios and Proportional Relationships Expressions and Equations Geometry

## IMPACT OF EFFORTS TO DATE

All 24 schools administered three IABs in ELA and three IABs in mathematics to students in grades three through six! Based on their experience the district team offered the following observations:

- Part of the power of this system [Smarter Balanced] is providing teacher access to high-quality test questions that model what everyone wants to see in high-quality instruction. After exploring the IABs, many teachers realized that current instruction isn't at the level they want it to be, and they need to build bridges between the expectations and rigor of the CCSS and what is currently being done in their classrooms.
- It was eye opening for teachers to compare student written responses to the test questions to teacher expectations. The depth of understanding that teachers were expecting wasn't reflected in the student responses. This was particularly evident amongst high-performing students.
- Because teachers have been opening test sessions all year long and students have been logging in all year long the opening of the summative assessment testing window was a non-event. Administering the IABs through the year, worked out any "kinks" in the system along the way.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Pilot test before large-scale implementation.** Take the time to pilot test, observe the process, and get feedback from teachers before making final decisions. A pilot, no matter how small, makes a huge difference in the success of implementation efforts.
- **Organizational structures are important to success.** The Training of Trainers model worked very well for Anaheim Elementary. The curriculum coaches were critical in sharing information and providing training at the site level. Because all coaches were familiar with their school sites, they were able to tailor and customize the trainings to increase teacher and staff buy-in.
- **Communicate early and often.** Take the time to plan carefully and communicate effectively with all stakeholders so that everyone is on the same page and understands the rationale behind the change and the expected results.

In hindsight, “we would have gotten out ahead of [teacher concerns about the lack of data from the IABs] . . . we replaced the district common assessment real estate on the testing calendar, but we didn’t take as much time as we should have to talk to teachers about what data will be available and how it can be used.”

Following the CAASPP e-mail blast model, the Program Evaluations Department synthesizes the information coming from the CDE and adds to it important reminders for their instructional and technical staff (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Sample E-mail Blast About CAASPP Testing

Dear 3rd-6th grade teachers and CAASPP site coordinators,

Interim Assessment Block results are coming in!

This IAB information will be of interest to you:

- When students submit their IABs, it takes up to 72 hours (excludes holidays/weekends) to appear in SMART. Contact us (or your curriculum coach) if you don’t see your results after 3 full business days.
- The SMART report available at this time is a roster report at the classroom level. Go to My Tests, CAASPP to view students’ results. We are in the process of creating additional reports, such as an individual student report that can be shared with parents.
- An [IAB Results Descriptions document](#) has been created to support the analysis of our first round of math results. What does it mean when a student scores Above, At/Near, or Below Standard? This language will be used in future SMART reports.
- Assessing students at the claim level is very new to us. IAB Blueprints have been posted to the [Pacing and Assessment tab of the Program Evaluations website](#). These detail the claims, assessment targets, and standards assessed on each IAB.

Contact us with any questions, and have a wonderful week!

## LESSONS LEARNED, continued

- **Be mindful about the amount of hand scoring required.** Anaheim Elementary felt that much of their success was due to the limited amount of hand scoring required in the first year of implementation. Because the IABs selected during the first year of implementation had limited hand scoring, teachers could learn and grow together without feeling overwhelmed by the task. Going into the second year of implementation, the teachers are much more familiar and comfortable with the hand scoring process so that adding another IAB that requires hand scoring isn't as overwhelming.

## NEXT STEPS

- **Expand use of the IABs.** The IAB choices during the first year of implementation focused on limiting the amount of hand scoring required to allow teachers time to learn the system. In 2016–17 a mathematics performance task will be added to the assessment calendar for at each grade. In 2017–18, the Brief Writes IAB will likely be added.
- **Provide professional development opportunities on developing and using performance tasks.** To continue emphasizing the shift in rigor, the district scheduled professional development for the use of performance tasks.
- **Communicate with parents about student performance on the IABs.** The focus of the IABs in the first year of implementation was to get the information in the hands of the teachers for instructional use. The district is working on expanding communication with parents for 2016–17 and is planning to develop custom parent reports.
- **Continue emphasizing the consistent identification of students for accessibility supports.** All schools have been trained on the accessibility supports available to students but a district-wide process has not been developed. Identifying students for accessibility supports is currently a site-based decision. District staff will continue providing information and support to teachers about identifying students for appropriate accessibility supports and using those accessibility supports on the IABs throughout the year.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Rhonda Robertson

Director, Program Evaluation Services  
[rrobertson@anaheimelementary.org](mailto:rrobertson@anaheimelementary.org)

### Karen Gray

Teacher on Special Assignment  
[Kgray@anaheimelementary.org](mailto:Kgray@anaheimelementary.org)

### Leisha Morton

Curriculum Specialist  
[lmorton@anaheimelementary.org](mailto:lmorton@anaheimelementary.org)

**CDE CAASPP Web page**  
[www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca)

**CAASPP Portal**  
[www.caaspp.org](http://www.caaspp.org)

