Appendix A. Parent and Guardian Guides

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests are administered annually to measure how well schools are providing instruction covering—and how well students are achieving—the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level as identified in the California content standards. The content standards are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Content Standards Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/.

The STAR test results are a vital part of the state and federal district and school accountability systems. Answers to commonly asked STAR questions are provided below.

**What are the tests of the STAR Program?**

- **California Standards Tests (CSTs),** which measure students’ achievement of the content standards for English–language arts,* mathematics, science, and history–social science.

- **California Modified Assessment (CMA),** which measures students’ achievement of the content standards for English–language arts,* mathematics, and science. This assessment is given to students who meet the CMA eligibility criteria and whose individualized education program (IEP) calls for assessment with the CMA in specific content areas.

- **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA),** which measures students’ achievement of the content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. This assessment is given to students who

*Students in grades four and seven also take the CST or CMA for Writing.

have an IEP and significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to take the CSTs with accommodations and/or modifications and/or the CMA with accommodations.

- **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS),** which measure students’ achievement of the content standards for English–language arts that address reading/language arts and content standards for mathematics. These assessments are given in Spanish to Spanish-speaking English learners in addition to the CSTs or CMA given in English.

Students with disabilities who take the CSTs also may also take the CMA in one or more subjects if their IEP indicates participation in the CMA.

**Must all students participate?**

All students in grades two through eleven in California’s public schools, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners, must participate unless their parents or guardians have submitted to the school a written request to exempt their child from STAR testing (Education Code Section 60615). It is important that all students take part in STAR testing for school accountability purposes. Each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in order to meet federal participation requirements.

**When are the STAR tests administered?**

State law requires that all schools administer the STAR tests at approximately the same time during the instructional year. The STAR testing window is a 25-day window, scheduled for 12 days before and 12 days after the day on which a school completes 85 percent of its instructional
days for the year. Individual school calendars vary. The STAR end-of-course tests also are administered within the STAR testing window—not at the completion of the course.

For the CST and CMA for Writing in grades four and seven, a date is set in March, with a May date set for schools not in session during the March date.

**Are the STAR tests timed?**

The STAR tests are not timed. School districts are provided with recommended times, which vary by grade and subject, for students to complete the tests. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time are allowed more time to complete it.

**May I see the STAR tests?**

No. State law (Education Code Section 60616) states that the STAR tests are to remain secure. A CDE STAR Sample Questions Web page is available at [www.starsamplequestions.org](http://www.starsamplequestions.org). It includes former test questions as well as a parent guide for each grade level.

**When will I receive my child’s test results?**

Most parents and guardians will receive their child’s STAR Student Report, which contains their child’s test results, by the end of September. Individual student results are made available only to parents or guardians and can be obtained only from the school and school district where the student was tested.

**What information will my child’s STAR Student Report include?**

The STAR Student Reports for the CSTs, CMA, CAPA, and STS will show scores and performance levels for each subject on which a student was tested. The five STAR performance levels are: advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; and far below basic. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that your child is meeting or surpassing the state’s target for academic achievement. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area of learning that needs improvement. The CSTs, CMA, and STS reports will also include results for the specific content areas within each subject tested.

Results of the CSTs, CMA, CAPA, and STS are reported on separate STAR Student Reports. The STAR Student Report for the STS is provided in Spanish.

**How are the STAR test results used to improve my child’s education?**

- They provide information about each child’s progress, which is used to help parents, guardians, and teachers work together to improve student learning.
- They can be used by schools to identify curricular strengths and needs.
- They can be used along with other available data, such as grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom and district assessments, to assist in identifying students for retention, promotion, or special intervention or enrichment programs. Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make decisions about a student’s education.

**For More Information**

If you have more questions about the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find further information on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).
Parent/Guardian Guide to the California Standards Tests

The California Standards Tests (CSTs) are developed exclusively for California public schools as a part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program to measure how well schools are providing instruction covering—and how well students are achieving—the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level identified in the content standards. The content standards are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Content Standards Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss. Answers to commonly asked questions about the CSTs are provided below.

Who takes the CSTs?

Students enrolled in grades two through eleven, including students with disabilities and English learners (ELs), take the CSTs except students whose individualized education program (IEP) specifies that they take the California Modified Assessment (CMA) or the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA).

May I request that my child be excused from the STAR Program tests, including the CSTs?

Yes. Parents and guardians may submit a written request to the school to exempt their child from any or all STAR Program tests (Education Code Section 60615). Please contact your child’s teacher or school administration about the process for submitting a written request for an exemption. It is important that all students take part in the STAR Program for school accountability purposes. Each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in statewide assessments in order to meet federal accountability participation requirements.

What is done to help students with disabilities who take the CSTs?

Some students with disabilities may require testing accommodations and/or modifications to be able to take the CSTs. These are listed in “Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments,” which is available on the CDE Assessment Information Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/.

For students to be eligible to use accommodations and/or modifications for testing, the accommodations and/or modifications must be specified in their IEP or Section 504 plan. Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom.

What is done to help students who are English learners?

During testing, students who are ELs may use English-to-primary-language translation glossaries or word lists that regularly are used in the classroom for all content areas on the CSTs except English-language arts. The glossaries or word lists may not include definitions or formulas. ELs may have test directions translated for them and may ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all CSTs. Variations allowed for ELs are listed in “Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners;” which is available on the CDE Assessment Information Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/.

What content is tested on the CSTs?

There are three kinds of CSTs, all of which are based on California’s content standards:
The CST test blueprints specifying the standards and number of items to be tested on each standard can be found on the CDE STAR Resources Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp.

Which grades and subjects are included in the CSTs?

The following grades and subjects are included in the CSTs:

Grades two, three, and four:*
- English–language arts
- Mathematics

Grade five:
- English–language arts
- Mathematics
- Science

Grades six and seven:*  
- English–language arts
- Mathematics

Grade eight:
- English–language arts
- Mathematics EOC
- History–social science

Grade nine:
- English–language arts
- Mathematics EOC
- Science EOC
- History–social science EOC

*Students in grades four and seven also take the CST for Writing.

End-of-Course CSTs

The mathematics EOC CSTs (grades eight through eleven) include:
- Algebra I (may be taken by students in grade seven if they are completing an Algebra I course)
- General Mathematics
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Summative High School Mathematics
- Integrated Mathematics 1, 2, and 3

The science EOC CSTs (grades nine through eleven) include:
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth Science
- Physics
- Integrated/Coordinated Science 1, 2, 3, and 4

The history–social science EOC CST (grades nine through eleven) is World History.

What question format is found on the CSTs?

With the exception of the CST for Writing, a component of the CST for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven, all CST questions are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question, or a passage and corresponding questions, and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices.

Released test questions on the CSTs from
previous years are available on the CDE STAR Program Resources Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp. In addition, a CDE STAR Sample Questions Web page is available at www.starsamplequestions.org. It includes former test questions as well as a parent guide for each grade level.

**When are the CSTs administered?**

The current STAR multiple-choice testing window is a 25-day window, scheduled for 12 days before and 12 days after the day on which a school completes 85 percent of its instructional days for the year. Individual school calendars vary. The STAR EOC tests are also administered within the STAR testing window—not at the completion of the course.

For the CST in Writing in grades four and seven, a date is set in March of each year, with a May date set for schools, programs, and tracks not in session during the March administration.

**Are the CSTs timed?**

The CSTs are not timed. School districts are provided with recommended times, which vary by grade and subject, for students to complete the tests. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time are allowed more time to complete it.

**When will I receive my child’s STAR Student Report for the CSTs?**

Parents or guardians should receive their child’s STAR Student Report for the CSTs by the end of September. Districts receive the STAR Student Reports by August 8 and are required to forward the STAR Student Reports to parents and guardians within 20 working days after receiving them. Individual student results are made available only to parents or guardians and can be obtained only from the schools and school districts where students were tested.

Students taking other STAR tests in addition to the CSTs (some students with disabilities, Spanish-speaking English learners) will have a separate report for each test taken.

**What information will my child’s report include?**

The STAR Student Reports for the CSTs will show scores and performance levels for all subjects tested. The report will also include results for the content areas within each subject tested. The five performance levels are: advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; and far below basic. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that your child is meeting or surpassing the state’s target for academic achievement. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area of learning that needs improvement.

**What is the meaning of the California Reading List number found on the back of the STAR Student Report for the CSTs?**

The California Reading List (CRL) is a Web-based resource that gives students, parents, guardians, and teachers access to lists of book titles, organized by level of reading difficulty. A recommended CRL number is based on the student’s score on the CST for English–Language Arts. This number identifies a list of books that may be appropriate for the student’s independent reading level. Note that the CRL number does not represent a grade level. You can find this list on the CDE CRL Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp.

**How can the STAR test results be used to improve my child’s education?**

STAR results can be used by schools to help make decisions about how best to improve instruction and support student achievement. STAR results are only one source of information about the progress students are making in school. STAR results can be used along with other available data, such as grades, classroom
work, and the results from other classroom and district assessments, to identify students’ academic strengths and areas that need improvement, to assist in identifying students for promotion or retention, and for special intervention or enrichment programs. Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a student’s education.

**How are CST results used by the state?**

STAR Program tests are used to measure school, district, and state performance in providing instruction covering the academic content standards. STAR tests produce school, district, and county results that allow the state to monitor, by using the Academic Performance Index (API), school progress toward meeting state performance targets and produce results that allow the federal government to monitor the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools and districts toward meeting the accountability targets of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. You can find information regarding the API and AYP on the CDE Accountability Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/).

**Are CST results received in middle and high school grades used for academic recognition for graduating seniors?**

The SBE approved school districts using the results on specified CSTs administered in grades eight through eleven for graduating seniors to qualify for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma (GSSMD) and receive an insignia on their diploma and transcript to recognize their mastery of the high school curriculum. School districts are required by state law to identify eligible graduating seniors and to request GSSMD insignias from the CDE. Further information is available on the CDE GSSMD Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/meritdiploma.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/meritdiploma.asp).

**Are CST results for students in grade eleven used to assess college readiness?**

As a collaborative effort between the CDE and The California State University (CSU), the Early Assessment Program (EAP) for English–Language Arts (including a writing task) and EAP for Mathematics were added as a voluntary component of the annual STAR test administration as an augmentation for students in grade eleven taking the grade eleven CST for English–Language Arts, CST for Algebra II, and CST for Summative High School Mathematics to produce information about students’ readiness for college. The EAP was accepted for use by California Community Colleges in 2008. Information regarding the EAP can be found on the CSU EAP Web site at [http://www.calstate.edu/eap/about.shtml](http://www.calstate.edu/eap/about.shtml).

**For More Information**

If you have more questions about the CSTs or other tests in the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR tests on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).
As part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, students in grades four and seven complete a writing task as a part of the California Standards Test (CST) for English–Language Arts. Answers to commonly asked questions about this test are provided below.

**What type of writing is required?**

The type, or genre, of writing required is not announced in advance. Students in grade four may be asked to produce a fictional narrative, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. Students in grade seven may be asked to produce a fictional narrative, a summary of a reading passage, a response to literature, or a persuasive letter or essay.

**Where can parents and guardians see sample writing tasks?**

Writing tasks used in previous tests and samples of student responses can be found in the teacher guides that are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) STAR Program Resources Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp).

**Is the writing task timed?**

The writing task is not timed. Students are given approximately 75 minutes to read the information, plan their written response, and complete the writing. Students who are actively working at the end of the allotted time are allowed more time to complete their responses.

**How are the responses scored?**

The readers who score the writing take into account that each response is an on-demand first draft. These readers are trained to use specific guidelines to score the students’ responses. These scoring guidelines are included in the teacher guides available on the CDE STAR Program Resources Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp).

**What are the key traits readers look for to determine the score?**

Readers carefully read each response to determine the level of writing skill the student has shown, as indicated by the guidelines. For example, readers examine the writing to determine whether ideas are thoroughly developed and supported with appropriate details. Readers also evaluate the writing for organization, word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization).

**Helping Your Child**

Here are some suggestions for helping your child improve his or her writing skills:

- Talk with teachers and administrators about the school’s writing program and the expectations for students’ writing performance.
- Encourage your child to write lists, notes, thank-you cards, requests, journals, recipes, letters, book reports, short stories, e-mails, and other types of writing. Writing improves with practice.

**For More Information**

If you have more questions, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR tests on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).
The California Modified Assessment (CMA) is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards. It is an assessment for students with disabilities who have an individualized education program (IEP) and meet the eligibility criteria. Each student’s IEP team decides whether the student should take the CMA and, if so, in which subject(s). Parents and guardians are encouraged to work closely with their child’s IEP team. Students who take the CMA also may participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program by taking the California Standards Tests (CSTs) in one or more subjects.

**Who takes the CMA?**

The CMA is taken by special education students as specified in their IEP. Participation criteria for the CMA include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Either (1) the student took a CST and scored below basic or far below basic in the subject tested and may have taken the CST with a modification; or (2) the student scored proficient or advanced on California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Levels II through V in two previous years.

- Objective evidence of academic progress (or lack of progress), based on multiple measurements over a period of time, indicates that the student will not achieve grade-level standards as measured by a proficient performance on the CSTs, even with accommodations.


**Can students who take the CMA receive a high school diploma?**

Yes. Students who take the CMA are not prevented from completing the requirements for a high school diploma.

**Which grades and subjects are included in the CMA?**

The CMA is administered to eligible students in grades three through eleven. The CMA includes the following assessments:

- English–language arts* in grades three through eleven
- Mathematics in grades three through seven
- Algebra I† end-of-course (EOC) in grades eight through eleven
- Geometry EOC in grades eight through eleven
- Science in grades five, eight, and ten

Test blueprints specifying the standards and number of items to be tested on each standard included in the CMA tests can be found on the CDE STAR Resources Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp).

**Will a child taking the CMA be required to take any additional STAR tests?**

Students taking the CMA in grades eight and eleven also must take the grade-level CST for History–Social Science. Students taking the CMA in grades nine through eleven also must take the end-of-course

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*Students in grades four and seven also take the CMA for Writing

† Students may take the Algebra I EOC if they are completing an Algebra I course
CST for World History if completing a World History course and an end-of-course science CST if completing an applicable science course.

**What is the question format on the CMA?**

Except for the writing task (CMA for Writing) in grades four and seven, questions on the CMA are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question, or a passage and corresponding questions, and asked to select the correct answer from three possible response options (rather than the four possible response options included on the CSTs). The CMA questions are presented differently from other STAR Program tests in that the font is larger, reading passages are shorter, and more graphics are included. Examples of the format changes between the CSTs and the CMA can be found on the CDE CMA Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr07/documents/bluenov07item14a6.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr07/documents/bluenov07item14a6.pdf).

**Are testing accommodations allowed?**

If a student with disabilities has an IEP specifying that the test questions for the CMA and/or the CMA for Writing are to be read aloud, the test question and/or prompt and the answer options may be read aloud; however, the student must read all reading passages independently. Additional test variations and accommodations may be provided to students as specified in “Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments,” which is available on the CDE Assessment Information Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/). Modifications are not allowed for the CMA.

**What is done to help students who are English learners?**

During testing, students who are English learners may use English-to-primary-language translation glossaries or word lists that regularly are used in the classroom for all content areas on the CMA except English-language arts. The glossaries or word lists may not include definitions or formulas. Additional variations allowed for English learners taking the CMA are listed in “Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners,” which is available on the CDE Assessment Information Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/).

**When is the CMA administered?**

State law requires that all schools administer the STAR tests, including the CMA, to pupils at approximately the same time during the instructional year. The STAR multiple-choice testing window is a 25-day window, scheduled for 12 days before and 12 days after the day on which a school completes 85 percent of its instructional days for the year. Individual school calendars vary. Please check with your child’s school or school district for the testing dates. The STAR EOC tests taken in secondary grades are also administered within the STAR testing window—not at the completion of the course.

For the CMA for Writing in grades four and seven, a date is set in March of each year, with a May date set for schools, programs, and tracks not in session during the March administration.

**Are the CMA tests timed?**

The CMA is not timed. School districts are provided with recommended times, which vary by grade and subject, for students to complete the tests. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time are allowed more time to complete it.
May I request that my child be excused from the STAR Program tests, including the CMA?

Yes. Parents and guardians may submit a written request to the school to exempt their child from any or all STAR Program tests (Education Code Section 60615). Please contact your child’s teacher or school administration about the process for submitting a written request for an exemption. It is important that all students take part in the STAR Program for school accountability purposes. Each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in statewide assessments in order to meet federal accountability participation requirements.

When will I receive my child’s results?

Parents or guardians should receive their child’s STAR Student Report for the CMA by the end of September. Districts receive the STAR Student Reports by August 8 and are required to forward the STAR Student Reports to parents and guardians within 20 working days after receiving them. Individual student results are made available only to parents or guardians and can be obtained only from the school and school district where the student was tested.

Students who take the CMA also might take CSTs in one or more subjects and/or, in the case of Spanish-speaking English learners, might take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish. Those students will have a separate report for each test taken.

What information will my child’s report include?

The STAR Student Report for the CMA will show scores and performance levels (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic) for each subject tested. The report also will include results for the content areas within each subject tested. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that your child is meeting or surpassing the state’s target for academic achievement. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area of learning that needs improvement.

How are CMA results used to improve my child’s education?

CMA results are used to monitor students’ academic progress. The results are reviewed along with other information about student achievement to make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs.

How are CMA results used by the state?

STAR Program tests are used to measure school, district, and state performance in providing instruction covering the academic content standards. STAR tests produce school, district, and county results that allow the state to monitor, by using the Academic Performance Index (API), school progress toward meeting state performance targets and produce results that allow the federal government to monitor the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools and districts toward meeting the accountability targets of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. You can find information regarding the API and AYP on the CDE Accountability Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/.

For More Information

If you have more questions about the CMA or other tests in the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR Program on the CDE STAR Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/.
As part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, eligible students in grades four and seven who participate in the multiple-choice part of the California English–Language Arts Modified Assessment (CMA for English–Language Arts) must complete a writing task as a part of this assessment. Answers to commonly asked questions about this assessment are provided below.

**What type of writing is required?**

The type of writing that will be required is not announced in advance. Students in grade four may be asked to produce a fictional narrative, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. Students in grade seven may be asked to produce a fictional narrative, a summary of a reading passage, a response to literature, or a persuasive letter or essay.

**Were the content standards for writing modified for the CMA writing task?**

No. The CMA writing task addresses the same content standards for writing as does the writing task for the California Standards Test (CST).

**What question format is used on the CMA for Writing?**

The CMA for Writing follows the same format as does the writing task for the CST, but the CMA prompt has been changed to facilitate the student's response. Changes in the prompt include shorter reading passages, language that is more accessible, more space between lines in the student's response booklet, and a graphic organizer. (A graphic organizer is a chart used to organize ideas and information to facilitate writing. Graphic organizers are found in English–language arts curriculum textbooks.)

**Is the writing task timed?**

The writing task is not timed. Students are given approximately 75 minutes to read the information, plan their written response, and complete the writing. Students who are actively working at the end of the allotted time are allowed more time to complete their responses.

**How are the responses scored?**

The readers who score the writing take into account that each response is a first draft. Readers are trained to use specific guidelines to score the student responses. They use the guidelines for the writing task for the CST to score the writing task for the CMA; however, CMA responses are compared only to other CMA responses.

**What are the key traits readers look for to determine the writing score?**

Readers carefully read each response to determine the level of writing skill the student has shown, as indicated by the guidelines. For example, readers examine the writing to determine whether ideas are developed and supported with appropriate details. Readers also evaluate the writing for organization, word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization).

**For More Information**

If you have more questions, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR tests on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).
The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate assessment for students in grades two through eleven with an individualized education program (IEP) and significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) with appropriate accommodations or modifications or the California Modified Assessment (CMA) with appropriate accommodations. The goal of the CAPA is to ensure that all of California’s students have an opportunity to participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Answers to commonly asked questions about this assessment are provided below.

**Who takes the CAPA, and how do schools decide which CAPA level a student takes?**

To be eligible to take the CAPA, a student’s IEP must specify that he or she take the CAPA. The student’s IEP team also decides which level of the CAPA the student will take. The five CAPA levels are as follows:

- **Level I** — grades two through eleven (students with the most significant cognitive disabilities)
- **Level II** — grades two and three
- **Level III** — grades four and five
- **Level IV** — grades six through eight
- **Level V** — grades nine through eleven

**Which subjects are assessed by the CAPA?**

Students taking the CAPA in grades two through eleven will be assessed in English-language arts and mathematics. Students in grades five, eight, and ten also will be assessed in science. The CAPA is linked to the California content standards that are appropriate for students taking the CAPA. The content standards addressed by the CAPA are posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) CAPA Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capa.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capa.asp).

**How is the CAPA administered?**

The CAPA is administered by a certificated or licensed member of the district staff who is trained annually in CAPA testing procedures. The examiner works with students individually. The CAPA is administered in the same language used to provide instruction to the student. As the student is asked to perform a task, the examiner observes the performance and records the response according to a specific scoring guide. A second examiner independently scores the CAPA responses for 10 percent of the students assessed at each school and each level to verify the reliability of the scoring.

**When is the CAPA administered?**

State law requires that all schools administer the STAR tests, including the CAPA, to pupils at approximately the same time during the instructional year. The STAR multiple-choice testing window is a 25-day window, scheduled for 12 days before and 12 days after the day on which a school completes 85 percent of its instructional days for the year. Individual school calendars vary. Please check with your child’s school or school district for the testing dates.

**Is the CAPA a timed test?**

The CAPA is administered individually, and the testing time will vary from one student to another, based on such factors as the student’s response time and attention span. A student may be tested with the CAPA.
over as many days as required within the school district’s testing window.

**May I request that my child be excused from the STAR Program tests, including the CAPA?**

Yes. Parents and guardians may submit a written request to the school to exempt their child from any or all STAR Program tests (*Education Code* Section 60615). Please contact your child’s teacher or school administration about the process for submitting a written request for an exemption. It is important that all students take part in the STAR Program for school accountability purposes. Each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in statewide assessments in order to meet federal accountability participation requirements.

**When will I receive my child’s STAR Student Report for the CAPA?**

Parents or guardians should receive their child’s STAR Student Report for the CAPA by the end of September. Districts receive the STAR Student Reports by August 8 and are required to forward the STAR Student Reports to parents and guardians within 20 working days after receiving them. Individual student results are made available only to parents or guardians and can be obtained only from the school and school district where the student was tested.

**What information will my child’s report include?**

The STAR Student Report for the CAPA will provide results that describe how well students achieved on an assessment linked to California’s content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science, depending on the CAPA level taken. The report will show CAPA scores and performance levels in English–language arts and mathematics for Levels I through V and in science (in grades five, eight, and ten only) for Levels I, III, IV, and V.

The five performance levels are: advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; and far below basic. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that your child is meeting or surpassing the state’s target for academic achievement. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area of learning that needs improvement.

**How are CAPA results used?**

The IEP team—including teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and/or support staff—uses the CAPA results every year to help monitor each student’s academic progress. The IEP team also uses the results to determine whether the student will take the CSTs, CMA, or CAPA in subsequent years. The results are reviewed annually along with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs.

**How are the CAPA results used by the state?**

The CAPA results are used along with results of other state tests to meet state and federal school accountability requirements.

**For More Information**

If you have more questions about the CAPA or other tests in the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR tests on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests are given in California’s public schools each spring to all students, including English learners, in grades two through eleven to measure their achievement of California’s content standards. Regardless of their primary language, English learners must take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA), which are administered in English. In addition, state law (California Education Code Section 60640[g]) requires that English learners take a second test in his or her primary language, if available. Students who are Spanish-speaking English learners take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) to demonstrate what they know and can do on a test given in their primary language. It is important to know that the STS is not the translation of the CSTs into Spanish. Although the STS shares the same test blueprints as the CSTs, it follows an independent procedure for test development and establishment of performance levels.

Answers to commonly asked questions about the STS are provided below.

Who is required to take the STS?

Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven are required to take the STS in addition to the CSTs or CMA if either of the following criteria applies:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative)

Schools also may choose to use the STS to test Spanish-speaking English learners who have been in a United States school 12 months or more and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish.

May I request that my child be excused from taking the STS?

Yes. Parents and guardians may submit a written request to the school to exempt their child from any or all STAR Program tests (Education Code Section 60615). Please contact your child’s teacher or school administration about the process for submitting a written exemption request.

Which subjects are included in the STS?

The STS measures how well Spanish-speaking English learners have achieved the content standards for English-language arts that address reading/language arts and the content standards for mathematics. The STS includes the following grades and subjects:

- Reading/language arts in grades two through eleven
- Mathematics in grades two through seven
- Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) in grades eight through eleven (students in grade seven may take the Algebra I EOC if they are completing an Algebra I course)
- Geometry EOC in grades eight through eleven

When will the STS be given to my child?

The STAR testing window is a 25-day window, scheduled for 12 days before and 12 days after the day on which a school completes 85 percent of its instructional days for the year. The EOC tests are administered within the STAR testing window—not at the completion of the course. School calendars are a local
decision and testing windows vary. Please check with your child’s school or school district for the testing dates.

**What is the question format on the STS?**

All STS questions are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet. Students in other grades mark their answer choices on a separate answer document.

**What is done to help students taking the STS?**

Some English learners with disabilities may require test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the STS. See the “Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments,” which is available on the CDE Assessment Information Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/). For students to be eligible to use accommodations and/or modifications for testing, the accommodations and/or modifications must be specified in their IEP or Section 504 plan. Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom.

**When will I receive my child’s results?**

Parents or guardians should receive their child’s STAR Student Report for the STS by the end of September. In addition to the STS results, you will receive results for the CST or CMA. Results of the STS, CSTs, and CMA will be reported on separate STAR Student Reports. Individual student results are made available only to parents or guardians and can be obtained only from the school and school district where the student was tested.

**What information will be included on the STAR Student Report for the STS?**

The STAR Student Report for the STS will show how well students achieved the content standards for English–language arts that address reading/language arts and the content standards for mathematics. The reports will show scores and performance levels (advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; and far below basic) for each subject tested. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that your child is meeting or surpassing the state’s target for academic achievement. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area of learning that needs improvement.

**How are STS results used?**

The results of the STS provide information that can be used with other achievement data, including the results on the CSTs and/or CMA, to identify Spanish-speaking English learners’ academic strengths and areas that need improvement. Parents or guardians also should review grades, classroom work, and results from other classroom, school district, and state tests for a more complete picture of their child’s academic progress.

The STS results are not used for state or federal school accountability measures.

**For More Information**

If you have more questions about the STS or other tests in the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office. You also can find answers to questions about the STAR tests on the CDE STAR Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/).
Appendix B. Communicating with Parents and Guardians: Sample Letters and Letter Attachments

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, along with other public school students throughout California, will take part in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program this spring. Students in grades two through eleven will take the California Standards Tests (CSTs). In addition, students in grades four and seven will take the California Writing Standards Test as a part of the California English–Language Arts Standards Test. These tests measure how well students are achieving California’s content standards for all subjects tested.

Students with disabilities with an individualized education program (IEP) in grades three through eleven whose IEP identifies them as eligible for the California Modified Assessment (CMA) will take the CMA instead of the CST in one or more subjects as specified in their IEP. Students taking the CMA for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven also will complete a writing task as a part of the assessment. The CMA is based on California’s content standards for the subjects tested.

Students with an IEP who have significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the CSTs with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications and/or the CMA with the appropriate accommodations will take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The CAPA is linked to California’s content standards for the subjects tested.

In addition to either the CSTs or CMA, students who are Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven also will take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS), the designated primary language test for the STAR Program, if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also can use the STS to test Spanish-speaking English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish. English learners who speak a primary language other than Spanish will not participate in a designated primary language test.

The results of the STAR Program tests provide valuable information to measure how well schools are providing instruction covering the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level identified in California’s academic content standards. It is
important, therefore, that students do their best on these tests. On testing days, please make
sure your child attends school, gets a good night’s rest the night before, and has a healthy
breakfast.

The STAR Program testing and makeup dates for our school district are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Testing Dates</th>
<th>School District Makeup Dates</th>
<th>STAR Program Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Modified Assessment (CMA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Testing Date</th>
<th>School District Makeup Date</th>
<th>STAR Program Writing Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Part of the CST and CMA for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing tasks for the CST and CMA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAR results will be sent to your home address in a STAR Student Report within 20 working
days after the school district has received the reports. The CST, CMA, CAPA, and STS results
will each be sent in a separate report. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only
with parents or guardians and their child’s teacher(s). Please keep these reports for use when
talking with your child’s teacher(s) about ways to support your child’s learning.

Contact [Insert local contact information] during regular school hours if you have questions about
the STAR Program or the testing schedule.

Sincerely,
Sample Parent/Guardian Letter

Before STAR Testing Begins: For Students Taking the California Modified Assessment

NOTE TO DISTRICT/SCHOOLSTAFF: Before this letter is distributed, be sure to insert the information required in the table or in brackets and in bold.

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, along with public school students throughout California, will participate this spring in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which measures how well students are achieving California’s content standards. State and federal law require that all students participate in this mandated testing program.

Your child’s individualized education program (IEP) specifies that he or she will participate in the STAR Program by taking the California Modified Assessment (CMA). The CMA is a test that has been designed to provide students in grades three through eleven who meet the CMA eligibility criteria greater access to an assessment based on California’s content standards. [Insert which subject(s) the student will take on the CMA. If the student is to take a CST, also indicate which CST.]

The results of the STAR Program tests provide valuable information to measure how well schools are providing instruction covering the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level identified in California’s academically rigorous content standards. It is important, therefore, that students do their best on these tests. On testing days, please make sure your child attends school, gets a good night’s rest the night before, and has a healthy breakfast.

Test results for the CMA will be sent to your home address on the STAR Student Report for the CMA within 20 working days after the school district has received the reports. The STAR Student Report for the CMA will be sent separately from other STAR Program test reports. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and their child’s teacher(s). Please plan to keep these reports for use when talking with your child’s teacher(s) about ways to support your child’s academic progress.

Contact [Insert local contact information] during regular school hours if you have questions about the CMA or the testing schedule.

The CMA testing dates for the STAR Program for our school district are [Insert dates].

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, along with public school students throughout California, will participate this spring in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which measures how well students are achieving California’s content standards. State and federal laws require that all students participate in this mandated testing program.

Your child’s individualized education program (IEP) specifies that he or she will participate in the STAR Program by taking the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The CAPA is specifically designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities and is linked to California’s content standards for the student’s designated grade.

The STAR Program provides valuable information about students’ academic achievement. It is important, therefore, that students do their best. On testing days, please make sure your child attends school, gets a good night’s rest the night before, and has a healthy breakfast.

Test results for the CAPA will be sent to your home address on the STAR Student Report for the CAPA within 20 working days after the school district has received the reports. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and their child’s teacher(s). Please plan to keep these reports for use when talking with your child’s teacher(s) about ways to support your child’s academic progress.

Contact [Insert local contact information] during regular school hours if you have questions about the CAPA or the testing schedule.

The CAPA testing dates for the STAR Program for our school district are [Insert dates].

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, along with all of California’s public school students in grades two through eleven, will take part in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program this spring. All students who are English learners, including your child, must take the STAR Program tests that are administered in English, including the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and/or the California Modified Assessment (CMA).

In addition, state law (Education Code Section 60640) requires Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven to take the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS). Spanish-speaking English learners are required to take the STS if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States); or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

Schools also can use the STS to test Spanish-speaking English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish. English learners who speak a primary language other than Spanish will not participate in a designated primary language test.

The results of the STAR Program tests provide valuable information to measure how well schools are providing instruction covering—and how well students are achieving—the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level identified in California’s academic content standards. It is important, therefore, that students do their best on these tests. On testing days, please make sure your child attends school, gets a good night’s rest the night before, and has a healthy breakfast.

The STAR Program tests for all students (including English learners) are to be given in our school district on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Testing Dates</th>
<th>School District Makeup Dates</th>
<th>STAR Program Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Modified Assessment (CMA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Testing Dates</td>
<td>School District Makeup Dates</td>
<td>STAR Program Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Testing Date</th>
<th>School District Makeup Date</th>
<th>STAR Program Writing Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Part of the CST and CMA for English–Language Arts in grades four and seven)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing tasks for the CST and CMA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test results for the CSTs, CMA, and STS will be sent to your home address within 20 working days after the school district has received them. The STAR Student Report for the CST or CMA will be sent separately from the STAR Student Report for the STS. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and their child’s teacher(s). Please keep these test reports for use when talking with your child’s teacher(s) about ways to support your child’s academic progress.

Contact [Insert local contact information] during regular school hours if you have questions about the STS, the STAR Program, or the testing schedule.

Sincerely,
NOTE TO DISTRICT/SCHOOL STAFF: Before this letter attachment is distributed, be sure to insert the testing and makeup dates in the last two rows of the chart.

## STAR Program at a Glance:
### Elementary School—Grades Two Through Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSTs</th>
<th>CMA</th>
<th>CAPA</th>
<th>STS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>California Standards Tests</td>
<td>California Modified Assessment</td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Tested</td>
<td>Students in grades two through five</td>
<td>Students in grades three through five with an individualized education program (IEP) who meet the CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education</td>
<td>Students in grades two through five with an IEP and significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications and/or the CMA with the appropriate accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English (grade five)</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Focus</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Testing Dates</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Makeup Dates</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
<td>California’s content standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Letter Attachment, Grades Six Through Eight

**NOTE TO DISTRICT/SCHOOL STAFF:** Before this letter attachment is distributed, be sure to insert the testing and makeup dates in the last two rows of the chart.

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### STAR Program at a Glance: Middle School—Grades Six Through Eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CSTs</th>
<th>CMA</th>
<th>CAPA</th>
<th>STS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>California Standards Tests</td>
<td>California Modified Assessment</td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment</td>
<td>Standards-based Tests in Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Tested</td>
<td>Students in grades six through eight</td>
<td>Students in grades six through eight with an individualized education program (IEP) who meet the CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education IEP must specify content areas of CMA participation</td>
<td>Students in grades six through eight with an IEP and significant cognitive disabilities and who are unable to take the CSTs with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications and/or the CMA with the appropriate accommodations</td>
<td>Students who are Spanish-speaking English learners in grades six through eight who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months (cumulative) At the option of the school district, schools also may use the STS to test Spanish-speaking English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Subjects             | ■ English–language arts  
■ Mathematics  
■ Science (grade eight)  
■ History–social science (grade eight) | ■ English–language arts  
■ Mathematics  
■ Science (grade eight) | ■ English–language arts  
■ Mathematics  
■ Science (grade eight) | ■ Reading/language arts  
■ Mathematics |
| Language             | English            | English       | English                    | Spanish                           |
| Content Focus        | California’s content standards | California’s content standards | California’s content standards | California’s content standards |
| School District Testing Dates |                     |               |                           |                                   |
| School District Makeup Dates |                     |               |                           |                                   |
**STAR Program at a Glance:**
**High School—Grades Nine Through Eleven**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSTs</th>
<th>CMA</th>
<th>CAPA</th>
<th>STS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>California Standards Tests</td>
<td>California Modified Assessment</td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students Tested**
- Students in grades nine through eleven with an individualized education program (IEP) who meet the CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education.
- IEP must specify content areas of CMA participation.
- Students in grades nine through eleven who are receiving instruction in Spanish.
- Students who are Spanish-speaking English learners in grades nine through eleven who are receiving instruction in Spanish or who have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than 12 months (cumulative).

**Subjects**
- English—language arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Life Science (grade ten)
- History—social science
- English—language arts
- Mathematics
- Science (grade eight)
- English—language arts
- Mathematics
- Science (grade ten)
- Reading/language arts
- Mathematics

**Language**
- English
- English
- English
- Spanish

**Content Focus**
- California’s content standards
- California’s content standards
- California’s content standards
- California’s content standards

**School District Testing Dates**

**School District Makeup Dates**
Appendix C. Sample Letters to Accompany
STAR Student Reports

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests are an important part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the CSTs is to determine how well students are achieving California’s content standards.

The CSTs were given in the following grades and subjects:

- Grades two, three, and four: English–language arts and mathematics
- Grade five: English–language arts, mathematics, and science
- Grades six and seven: English–language arts and mathematics
- Grade eight: English–language arts, mathematics, history–social science, and science

Students answered the multiple-choice questions on the CSTs by selecting one of four options as the correct answer. As a part of the CST for English–Language Arts, students in grades four and seven also were required to write a response to a writing task. Scores on the multiple-choice questions and the writing task were combined to determine the overall score for the CST for English–Language Arts.

The STAR Student Report for the CSTs provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and content area results for each subject tested on a CST. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. There are five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The state target is for all students to perform at the proficient or advanced level on the CSTs. You are encouraged to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher(s) or counselor if your child’s performance does not meet the state target in one or more subjects tested.

It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report for the CSTs is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, and other test results also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teacher(s). You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests are an important part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the CSTs is to determine how well students are achieving California’s content standards.

The CSTs were given in grades nine, ten, and eleven in the following subjects: English–language arts, mathematics, history–social science, and science. Students answered the multiple-choice questions on the CSTs by selecting one of four options as the correct answer.

The STAR Student Report for the CSTs provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and content area results for each subject tested on a CST. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. There are five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The state target is for all students to perform at the proficient or advanced level on the CSTs. You are encouraged to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher(s) or counselor if your child’s performance does not meet the state target in one or more subjects tested.

If your child is in grade eleven, he or she may have taken the English–Language Arts Early Assessment Program (EAP) test and/or the mathematics EAP test. These tests assess the readiness of eleventh graders to take entry-level courses at a California State University campus or participating California community college in those core subjects. The EAP results are intended to give students information about additional skills they may need to develop during their senior year of high school in order to be ready to enroll in baccalaureate courses when they enter college. Results for students who take one or both of the EAP tests are provided on the back of the STAR Student Report for the CSTs for grade eleven.

It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report for the CSTs is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, and other test results also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teacher(s). You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the California Modified Assessment (CMA). This test is an important part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the CMA is to determine how well students are achieving California’s content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. It is for students with an individualized education program (IEP) who are unable achieve grade-level proficiency on the California Standards Tests with or without accommodations and/or modifications and who meet the eligibility criteria.

The CMA was given in the following grades and subjects:

- Grades three, four, six, and seven: English–language arts and mathematics
- Grade five and eight: English–language arts, mathematics, and science

Students answered the multiple-choice questions on the CMA by selecting one of three options as the correct answer. As a part of the CMA for English–Language Arts, students in grades four and seven were required to write a response to a writing task (CMA for Writing). Scores on the multiple-choice questions and the writing task were combined to determine the overall score for the CMA for English–Language Arts. If your child is in grade eight, please note that students in grade eight who took the CMA also took the California Standards Test for History–Social Science. You will receive a separate report for your child’s results on that test.

The STAR Student Report for the CMA provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and content area results for each subject tested on a CMA. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. There are five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The state target is for all students to perform at the proficient or advanced level on the CMA. You are encouraged to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher(s) or counselor if your child’s performance does not meet the state target in one or more subjects tested. It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, and other test results also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have any questions about the CMA or your child’s report, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teacher(s). You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the California Modified Assessment (CMA). This test is an important part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the CMA is to determine how well students are achieving California’s content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. It is for students with an individualized education program (IEP) who cannot achieve grade-level proficiency on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) with or without accommodations and/or modifications and who meet the eligibility criteria.

The CMA was given in the following grades and subjects:

- Grades nine through eleven: English–language arts, Algebra I (end of course), Geometry (end of course)
- Grade ten: Life Science

If your child is in grade eleven, please note that students in grade eleven who took the CMA also took the California Standards Test for History–Social Science. Results of the CMA and the CSTs will be reported on separate STAR Student Reports.

The STAR Student Report for the CMA provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and content area results for each subject tested on a CMA. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. There are five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. The state target is for all students to perform at the proficient or advanced level on the CMA. You are encouraged to schedule a meeting with your child’s teacher(s) or counselor if your child’s performance does not meet the state target in one or more subjects tested.

It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report for the CMA is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, teacher evaluations, and other test results also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have any questions about the CMA or your child’s report, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teachers. You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Sample Parent/Guardian Letter

STAR Student Report:
California Alternate Performance Assessment—Grades Two Through Eleven

NOTE TO DISTRICT/SCHOOLSTAFF: Before this letter is distributed, be sure to insert the information required in the table or in brackets and in bold.

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). This test is an important part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the CAPA is to measure students’ understanding of a selected set of California’s content standards for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. Students taking the CAPA in grades two through eleven will be assessed in English–language arts and mathematics. Students in grades five, eight, and ten also are assessed in science.

This alternate assessment is given to students who have an individualized education program (IEP) and significant cognitive disabilities and who are unable to take the California Standards Tests with appropriate accommodations or modifications or the California Modified Assessment with appropriate accommodations. Each student’s IEP team determines whether the student will take the CAPA and which level of the CAPA he or she will take.

The CAPA levels correspond to specific grades as follows:

- Level I: Grades two through eleven (students with the most significant disabilities)
- Level II: Grades two and three
- Level III: Grades four and five
- Level IV: Grades six through eight
- Level V: Grades nine through eleven

The STAR Student Report for the CAPA shows the student’s CAPA scale scores and performance levels for English–language arts, mathematics, and science. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that the student is meeting or exceeding the state’s target for students taking the CAPA. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area that needs improvement. It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report for the CAPA is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, and teacher evaluations also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have any questions about the CAPA or your child’s report, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teacher(s). You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is the STAR Student Report that provides your child’s test results for the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS), an important part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The purpose of the STS is to measure your child’s understanding of California’s content standards that address reading/language arts and mathematics when tested in his or her primary language of Spanish.

The STS was given in grades two through eleven in the following subjects:

- Reading/language arts
- Mathematics

The enclosed STAR Student Report for the STS (Reporte individual de los resultados de STAR) provides the test results in Spanish.

Your child also participated in the STAR Program by taking the California Standards Tests (CSTs) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA), which are given in English, in one or more subjects. The results for these tests are reported in the STAR Student Report for the CSTs or the CMA, which may be sent to your home separately.

The STAR Student Report for the STS shows scores and performance levels for reading/language arts in grades two through eleven, for mathematics in grades two through seven, and for Algebra I and Geometry. Scale scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly and determine the student’s level of performance for each subject tested. A performance level of proficient or advanced indicates that the student is meeting or exceeding the state’s target for students taking the STS. A performance level of basic, below basic, or far below basic indicates an area that needs improvement.

It is important to keep in mind that the STAR Student Report for the STS is only one source of information about the progress your child is making in school. Classroom work, grades, other test results, and teacher evaluation also should be reviewed for a more complete picture of your child’s academic progress.

If you have questions about the STS or your child’s report, please contact the school at [insert contact information] or talk with your child’s teacher(s). You also are invited to attend a STAR Program information meeting being held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location]. We look forward to talking with you about your child’s educational achievements.

Sincerely,
Appendix D. Newsletter Inserts

The CDE has developed sample newsletter inserts to communicate with parents and guardians about the STAR Program. Sample newsletter inserts entitled “Helping Your Children Achieve on the STAR Tests,” “What Kinds of Score Reports Will Parents and Guardians Receive?” and “Which STAR Student Report(s) Will Parents and Guardians Receive?” appear on the following pages.
Parents and guardians play a very important part in their children’s education. Encouraging children to do their best in school and to complete school assignments well and on time can have a positive impact on children’s learning. Research about how children learn shows that a great deal can be done at home to increase their academic performance.

One question you may have about the STAR Program is, “How can I help my child do better on the tests?” The question really is, “How can I help my child do well in school?” What you do at home can make a very big difference in how well your children achieve in school.

Most Important of All

Let your children know how important their work at school is and how interested you are in what they are doing. Talk with them every day about:

- What they did at school
- What homework must be finished for the next day
- What needs to be done on a future project

Here are some suggestions for helping your children in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas:

For Reading and Writing

- Listen to your children read. Read stories aloud to and with them.
- Talk about what you and your children are reading. Ask questions and discuss words that are new or difficult.
- Spend time together as a family, reading newspapers, magazines, and books.

- Encourage your children to write lists, notes, thank-you notes, requests, journals, recipes, short stories, and other types of writing used in everyday life.
- For writing assignments, talk with your children about what the assignment requires; help them list the points to cover. Take your children to the library or help them use the Internet if more information is needed.
- Set a limit on the amount of time your children watch television or use the computer. Watch and discuss television programs with them whenever possible.

For Mathematics

- Review homework every day with your children to make sure assignments are completed. Ask your children to explain some of their math problems and how they solved them.
- Attend classes for parents and guardians about mathematics to prepare yourself for questions your children might ask you at home.
- Have your children help solve “real” mathematical problems as you play games, cook a meal, or prepare to do a home project.
- Show your children how mathematics is used in everyday life, including cooking, shopping, making crafts, sewing, and doing home repairs.
- Help your children read charts or graphs in newspapers and magazines. Read maps when going on a family trip. It is important to help your children apply what they are learning.
For Other Academic Areas

For other academic areas, such as science and history–social science, challenge children to use reading, writing, and mathematics skills along with their knowledge about the subject. As your children read about a subject, ask them to tell you about it. This reinforces what they have learned and promotes the use of their new vocabulary.

Share your interest in any academic area because children become interested in what is discussed at home. Family trips to museums, special television programs, news about a recent scientific discovery, and important world and local events should be shared and discussed. At times, let your children take the lead in talking about topics of interest to them.

You Can Help Your Children Do Better on State Tests

- Visit the school to find out how your children’s classroom instruction addresses California’s content standards.
- Attend parent/guardian/teacher conferences to find out how well your children are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
- Discuss with your children the importance of going to school every day and doing their best on assignments and tests.
- Make sure your children have a quiet place to study and that they complete all homework assignments.
- Attend information meetings for parents and guardians. Ask about the major tests given to children and other ways academic achievement is measured.
- Know when the major tests, such as tests in the STAR Program, are given and find out what you can do to help make sure your children are prepared.
- Discuss upcoming tests with your children and try to reduce their anxieties about test taking. Reassure them that the test results will provide useful information about what they know and what they still need to learn.
- Make sure your children attend school on testing days, get a good night’s rest, and have breakfast before a big test.

Get Involved

Children do better in school when parents and guardians get involved. In addition to the suggestions already described in this brochure, you can become involved by attending school events, joining parent/guardian groups, and visiting your school’s Web site.

You also are encouraged to contact the school for additional information about your children’s academic progress and the tests they are taking at school.

To Find Out More

Additional information on the STAR Program is available on the California Department of Education STAR Program Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/.
All parents and guardians of students who participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program will receive at least one STAR Student Report showing scores that indicate how well their children are meeting California’s content standards for each subject tested. The school district will send the STAR student reports to each student’s home within 20 working days after the school district has received them. This date may be different for each school district; however, parents and guardians should receive the reports no later than the end of September. Individual student results are confidential and may be obtained only from the schools and school districts where students were tested.

Parents and guardians will receive a separate report for each applicable STAR Program test taken by their child. The four STAR Program tests include:

- California Standards Test (CST)
- California Modified Assessment (CMA)
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)

STAR Student Report: CST

*CST results.* The STAR Student Report for the CST will show overall scale score, performance level (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic), and content area results for each subject on which the student was tested by a CST. The state target is for all students to score at the proficient or advanced level. In addition, all CST results are reported by content area, showing how a student performed on clusters of standards within each subject. These results are reported as percent correct scores. A graphic also compares the student’s performance to that of students throughout California scoring proficient on the CST for each subject.

*California Reading List number.* The California Reading List (CRL) is a Web-based tool students and their parents or guardians can use to access lists of book titles organized by levels of reading difficulty. The CRL number links the student’s score on the CST for English–Language Arts with a list of books at an appropriate reading level for the student. Note that the CRL number does not represent a grade level. The CRL is available on the California Department of Education California Reading List Web page at [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp).

Early Assessment Program Results. The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a voluntary component of STAR testing for students in grade eleven taking the CST for English–language Arts (include an EAP writing task), CST for Algebra II, and CST for Summative High School Mathematics to produce information about students’ readiness for college. If a student participated, the EAP results will be found on page 2 of his or her CST STAR Student Report. Information about the EAP can be found on the California State University EAP Web site at [http://www.calstate.edu/eap/about.shtml](http://www.calstate.edu/eap/about.shtml).

STAR Student Report: CMA

The STAR Student Report for the CMA will show overall scale score, performance level (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic), and content area results for each subject on which the student was
tested by a CMA. The state target is for all students to score at the proficient or advanced level.

In addition, all CMA results are reported by content areas that show how a student performed on clusters of standards within each subject. These results are reported as percent correct scores. A graphic also compares the student’s performance to that of students throughout California scoring proficient on the CMA for each subject.

**STAR Student Report: CAPA**

The STAR Student Report for the CAPA will show overall scale scores and performance-level (advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; or far below basic) for English–language arts and mathematics for Levels I through V and for science for Levels I, III, IV, and V. The state target is for all students to score at the proficient or advanced level.

**STAR Student Report: STS**

The STAR Student Report for the STS will show overall scale scores, performance levels (advanced; proficient; basic; below basic; or far below basic), and content area results for reading/language arts and mathematics in grades two through eleven. The reports for the STS are provided in Spanish. Students who took the STS did so in addition to the CST and/or the CMA. The STS report is separate from the CST report and CMA report.

**How STAR Program Results Are Used**

STAR Program test results are used for the following purposes:

- **Monitoring student achievement.** Individual STAR Program results, along with school and school district assessment reports and classroom work, are used to monitor student achievement for a variety of purposes. Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make decisions about a student’s education.

- **Evaluating school programs.** Each year, school district and school staff thoroughly review test results for groups of students by grade and subject to identify program strengths and weaknesses.

- **Providing data to accountability programs.** STAR Program test results are used for state and federal accountability programs that monitor the progress each school district and school has made toward achieving established goals.

- **Eligibility for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma.** STAR Program test results on particular CSTs administered in grades eight through eleven are used for graduating seniors to qualify for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma (GSSMD) to recognize their mastery of the high school curriculum. More information is available on the CDE GSSMD Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/meritdiploma.asp.

- **Providing information about student readiness for college.** Results for the EAP provide information about students’ readiness for college. More information about the EAP can be found on the California State University EAP Web site at http://www.calstate.edu/eap/about.shtml.

**More Information**

If you have any questions about California’s content standards or the STAR Program, please direct them to your child’s teacher, counselor, or school office.
The STAR Student Reports are provided to parents and guardians in accordance with the following guidelines:

- **STAR Student Report for the California Standards Tests (CSTs)**
  This report provides results for students who took the CSTs, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners.

- **STAR Student Report for the California Modified Assessment (CMA)**
  This report provides results for students who took the CMA. The CMA is taken by students with an individualized education program (IEP) who meet the eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education.

- **STAR Student Report for the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)**
  This report provides results for students who took the CAPA. The CAPA is taken by students with an IEP who have significant cognitive disabilities and who are unable to take the CSTs with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications or the CMA with appropriate accommodations.

- **STAR Student Report for the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)**
  This report provides results for students who are Spanish-speaking English learners and took the STS in addition to the CST and/or CMA tests, which are given in English. The STS report is provided in addition to the CST report or CMA report.