

**Office of Educational Programs
and Services**

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Greetings Arcadia Families,

Within the coming weeks, the State of California will be sending *Smarter Balanced* assessment results out to parents and school districts statewide for tests taken in grades 3-8 and 11. I am sure that students and parents are probably anxious about what those results might show and so I want to make sure that you are aware of what will be sent to you and how to interpret what you see. How these results are calculated, scored and communicated is very different from past results. The California Department of Education (CDE) has stated that, "The new tests are too fundamentally different from the old exams to make any reliable comparisons between old scores and new. This year's results will establish a new baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time."

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbcommonqa.asp>

When assessment results arrive in your mailbox, you will notice that students will receive a summative score as well as placement in one of four tiers: "standard exceeded," "standard met," "standard nearly met," and "standard not met." Again, the CDE has provided guidance on how to react to these new test scores. "Parents will receive a report of their child's scores. But no student, parent or teacher should be discouraged by these scores, which will not be used to determine whether a student moves on to the next grade. Rather, the scores will represent an opportunity to focus on the needs of students and support teachers and schools in their work to achieve college and career readiness."

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbcommonqa.asp>

The *Smarter Balanced* summative assessments are aligned to a much higher level of rigor in Math and English-Language Arts than were the previous STAR assessments, which were aligned to the 1997 standards. While I have been thrilled to see our students step-up to the challenges associated with the new standards and content these past two years, I am fairly confident that due to the increased rigor, fewer of our students will score in the top tiers than have done so in the past. It should be pointed out that the old system placed students in one of five tiers while the new structure offers only four tiers. It is the belief of educators all over the state that as students are immersed in the new standards and instruction over multiple years, student results will correspondingly show marked improvement.

As you receive your child's assessment report and review it with them, remember that the State of California does not believe that you can make a reliable comparison between your student's last standardized scores and the new *Smarter Balanced* scores -- it's like comparing an apple to an orange. These new scores will establish a new baseline for future comparisons as your child makes progress towards graduation and college and career readiness. Remember also that these test results are only one marker we use in monitoring student progress. We are most interested in the development and progress of the whole child and will continue to use multiple measures to determine student success and progress.

If you would like to study additional information related to the *Smarter Balanced* assessment system, be sure to visit the California Department of Education's website at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey D. Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey D. Wilson
Assistant Superintendent - Educational Programs and Services