



## MEASURING STUDENT LEARNING IN 2021: What will be Different in California?

Since COVID-19 first led to sudden school closures in 2020, families have stepped up in unprecedented ways to support learning at home as students began learning remotely. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to put plans in place to ensure students are safe, offering students across California different learning models—remote, hybrid and in-person, with some school districts transitioning between them as circumstances demanded. But the unprecedented changes in learning have impacted students in many ways, from their relationships with peers and social emotional growth to academics.

This year, it is more important than ever to measure student learning to understand the impact that COVID-19 and different learning models have had on students. This is especially important for families, who need objective information about how well their child learned grade-level skills so they can better support learning at home. To measure learning, students will take the standardized tests this spring. While these tests are only one of many ways to measure student learning, families, schools and leaders need the objective and actionable information standardized tests provide to identify any learning gaps to best support students and fully recover from the pandemic.

### How will State Tests be Different in 2021?

Knowing that the pandemic has deeply affected students, teachers and schools, the standardized tests will be different than in the past. The results will be used for learning purposes only in 2021. As of March 2021, the following changes have been made:

- To reduce stress for teachers and students in an already challenging year, the results from the CAASPP will not be used to rate schools or districts as they have in the past.
- Districts have the option to give the Smarter Balanced test or to give a standardized test that matches the state standards instead.
- The Smarter Balanced math and English language arts tests are shorter. The total length will depend on the grade and subject, but on average the tests will be about 45-60 minutes shorter than before.
- Since so many students across California are still learning remotely, districts will have the option for students to take the test remotely.
- Districts have a longer window for students to take the test, and will have until July 15th. This will allow teachers additional time to cover content. For students taking the test in-person, this allows for schools to test students in smaller groups with social distancing.