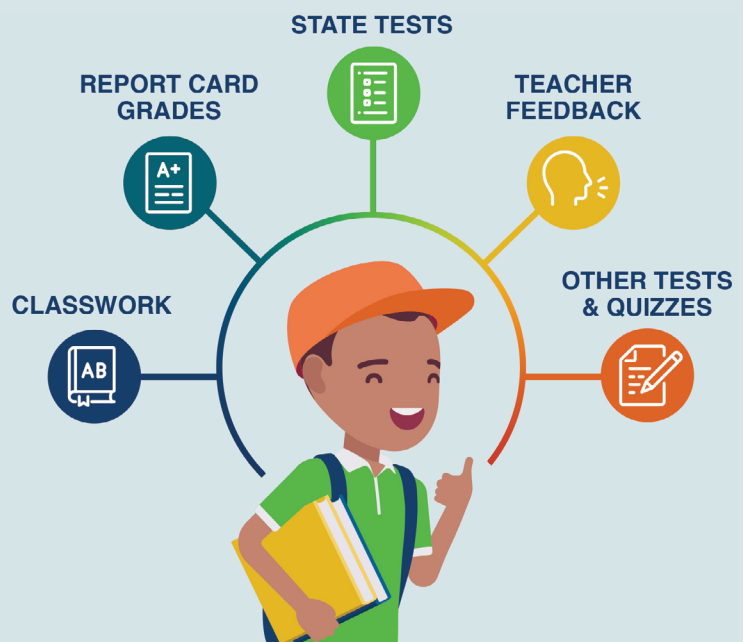




A FAMILY GUIDE TO ANNUAL STATE TESTS IN OREGON: One of Many Measures of Student Learning

There are many ways to measure academic performance, and annual state tests are only one of them. These tests are not meant to tell the whole story. They are meant to be combined with other measures, including teacher feedback, classwork and projects, and report card grades. Together, these measures can give families a more complete picture of a student's performance so they can better support learning at home and advocate for their child.



State Assessments 101

The Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA, requires students to take state tests in reading and math every year in third through eighth grade and once in high school. In Oregon, students in third through eighth grade take the Smarter Balanced test in English language arts and math. Students in fifth and eighth grade also take the Oregon Science Assessment. High school students take Smarter Balanced and the Oregon Science Assessment in 11th grade.

A Focus on Grade Level Skills

Unlike other tests, Smarter Balanced is focused on grade level material and is aligned to the state standards. The test questions match what students do and learn in the classroom every day throughout the year, which are the grade level skills that are most important for students to learn in order to move on to more challenging content.

The Smarter Balanced test is taken online and is computer adaptive, which means it adjusts the difficulty of the questions based on the student's responses. The test includes a variety of different types of questions, including traditional multiple choice as well as questions that ask students to show their work, explain their answers and write well-developed essays. Oregon teachers have worked closely with the state to write and review test questions.

Grade 6: Math

Consider this expression: $7(10a + 3b)$

Enter an expression that shows the **sum of exactly two terms** that is equivalent to $7(10a + 3b)$.

Grade 3: ELA

A student is writing an opinion article for her teacher about her favorite field trip. The student wants to revise the draft so that it has a logical conclusion. Read the draft of the opinion article and complete the task that follows.

My favorite third-grade field trip is the trip to the zoo. There are many reasons that the zoo is the best field trip. First, when we go to the zoo, we get to ride on big buses that have televisions and bathrooms. As you can see, the best third-grade trip by far is the zoo field trip. Second, we get to eat lunch at a really great rest area with picnic tables. Also, we get to spend the whole day walking around looking at interesting animals.

Click on the sentence in the draft that is in the wrong place.



Useful Information for All

FAMILIES: Understanding Grade Level Performance

The Smarter Balanced report gives families information on how well their child performed on different sets of skills in each subject. Families can use this information to identify where their child is doing well and where they may need support or practice. This helps families better support learning at home. It can also help them start meaningful conversations with teachers, set goals for each student's areas of improvement and identify resources and strategies that can be used at home and in school to help students make progress.

Questions to Ask the Teacher about Your Child's Smarter Balanced Report:

- What does this mean about my child's learning?
- Is my child on grade level?
- Where does my child need more support or improvement?
- What short-term learning goals should my child meet to show progress?
- How can I support learning at home?



TEACHERS: Informing Instruction

Students take different types of tests throughout the school year. Some students take benchmark or diagnostic tests, such as MAP Growth, i-Ready or Smarter Balanced interims. These are taken several times a year and measure mastery of important concepts and skills in reading and math. Students take a test at the beginning of the year to identify their “starting point” and again throughout the year to measure their progress. Benchmark tests help teachers identify and address learning gaps early on so students can stay on track to meet grade level expectations. While Smarter Balanced is only given at the end of the school year, it is one way of showing how much progress students made from the beginning of the year and how well they met grade level expectations.

While teachers use Smarter Balanced results to understand each student's unique strengths and needs and support them in the areas where they need extra help, they also help teachers to improve their instruction. Teachers can use the results to look for trends in their students' learning to see what skills or concepts students learned and what content they struggled with. This helps teachers identify what they taught effectively and where they need to improve or change their instructional strategies.

SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEADERS: Informing Decisions

Smarter Balanced results are critical for school and district leaders to make informed decisions about schools and students. School and district level test scores show leaders how students across a school or district are performing, whether academic programs are working and if a school or district needs more support in a particular area. This allows them to target additional support or resources to help those schools improve.



STATE LEADERS: Helping Schools Improve

Smarter Balanced results are one of several measures state leaders use to identify schools and districts that need more support and resources to help students succeed. These schools or districts receive additional funding and resources from the state to support students and teachers. For example, they may hire more teachers or tutors or purchase additional instructional materials and programs, depending on the needs of their students.

Where Can I Go for More Information?

- For more information visit Oregon.gov/ode/Educator-Resources/Assessment/Pages/Statewide-Assessments.aspx
- For more details on the score report and what it means for your child, visit OR.StartingSmarter.org/
- To see a practice test, visit SmarterBalancedportal.org/users/students-and-families.shtml
- For ideas on how to support your child's learning at home, visit PTA.org/FamilyGuides
- For more information about the Oregon PTA visit OregonPTA.org/

