



## **Understanding California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)**

### **Overview of the STAR**

Based on 1997 legislation to establish a statewide school accountability system, California implemented the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. The program is composed of 4 standardized tests-the California Standards Tests (CST), California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), California Modified Assessment (CMA) and Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS). Students in grades 2-11 take these criterion referenced tests including assessment in mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), history-social science, and science. From 2008-2011, legislation required the test to be given only to grades 3-11, but in 2011 this decision was reversed. As of current legislation in 2012, the test will remain in effect through 2014.

### **Purpose of the STAR**

The STAR program measures the performance of both students and schools in the California public education system. Test material is aligned directly to California standards to assess student achievement levels according to state level standards. The tool also serves to inform schools and districts of their progress. The California Standards Test (CST) serves to inform the Annual Performance Index (API) for state and federal accountability purposes.

### **Who Takes the STAR?**

Students in California schools take one of four versions of the STAR program tests. The CST is the basic standardized test program for students in grades 2 through 11. The test administers writing assessments once each in elementary and junior high school. The CMA is an alternate assessment for students with disabilities and an individualized education plan (IEP). Students who take the CMA must meet certain criteria set by the California State Board of Education. The CAPA is an alternate form of the assessment for students with cognitive disabilities that the CMA cannot accommodate. The CAPA and CMA do not include testing in history-social science. English learners who receive instruction in Spanish or who have received instruction in English for less than 12 months take the STS. Other English language learners make take the STS at the school's discretion.

### **What is a Passing Score?**

Scores on the STAR test are divided into five easy to understand performance indicators-advanced, proficient, basic, below basic and far below basic. Scores are reported as scale scores on a 150 to 600 scale. A scale score of 350 indicates proficient level.

### **Understanding the STAR**

Reports examine independent groups according to ethnicity, school, district, county, gender, economic status and English fluency. STAR test results are made available online by August 15 of each year. Individual students and parents receive their results within 20 days of the school receiving them. Beginning in 2012, the timeframe to

administer to the test is 12 days before to 12 days after 85% of the instructional curriculum has taken place for the given academic year. The STAR is viewed primarily as a tool in measuring the school's ability to successfully teach California standards, rather than an individual measurement of performance.

### **Get Your Child Ready for the STAR**

STAR Tutoring Programs start with a free academic assessment with an Academic Director. Our flagship STAR Tutoring Program is available for \$179.99/month which includes regular one-on-one tutoring, academic mentorship, bi-monthly progress reports, learning profiles, and parental conference calls. To learn more visit [SchoolTutoring.com](http://SchoolTutoring.com).