

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

CALIFORNIA

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The California State Assessment System

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program was put in place as a result of state legislation in 1997. In the same year, the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition (Stanford 9 or SAT9) was designated as the STAR test.

• ***Grade Levels and Subjects Tested***

The SAT9 is used to test grades 2-11:

1. Students in grades 2-8 are tested in reading, mathematics, written expression and spelling.
2. Students in grades 9-11 are tested in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history/social science.
3. For 1999, the SAT9 was augmented to more closely address the state content standards in English/language arts and mathematics. All students took 35 additional English/language arts questions in grades 2-11 and 35 additional math questions in grades 2-7. Students in grades 8-10 answered math questions by enrollment in specific courses:
 - Grade 8: Algebra I or 1st-yr integrated math
 - Grade 9: Geometry or 2nd-yr integrated math
 - Grade 10: Algebra II or 3rd-yr integrated math
4. In the spring of 2000 additional items will be used to test students in science and social science in grades 9-11 for the same purpose.
5. Kindergarten and 1st grade testing is optional.

• ***Norm or Criterion referenced***

The SAT9 is a nationally normed test. However, the augmented test along with the original test format is geared to address state standards.

• ***Matrix or Census Testing*** – Census

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- ***Item Types***

Both the original SAT9 and the augmented version of the test are multiple choice.

- ***Student Performance Levels***

There are three cut points used to create school, district, county and state scores: the 25th, 50th and 75th national percentiles. No other performance levels have been developed for the test, and so no definitions of performance have been established.

- ***Inclusion Policies***

Students with individual education plans (IEP) that explicitly exempt them from testing and students with a parent or guardian who submits a written request are excused; all others must be tested with accommodations as needed. Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) are required to demonstrate mastery of the core curriculum through assessments in English or their primary language, without exemptions.

- ***Other Assessments***

- SABE/2 is the primary language test for LEP students in Spanish. This must be taken in addition to the SAT9 if a student has been in the California public school system for less than 12 month; SABE/2 testing is a district option after 12 months.
- The Golden State Examinations can be taken by students to achieve high school endorsement with honors. This is not a part of the state accountability system.
- The California Assessment of Applied Academic Skills (CAAAS) is being developed as a **matrix** test for students in grades 4, 5, 8 & 10 in reading, math, writing, history/social science and science.
- The development of a high school exit examination has also been authorized for the 2003-2004 school year.

- ***State Requirements for Local Assessment***

The SAT9 is to be used locally.

Performance Data

- ***What data are reported?***

SAT9 and SABE/2 test results for 1999 will include individual student, school and district scores for the subjects tested. The national percentile ranking of the average student, the mean scaled score and the breakdown of student scores by quartiles will be reported on the Internet for both the SAT9 and SABE/2. STAR Augmentation results will report the mean number correct/number possible.

The governing boards of the state's school districts must prepare and issue annually a **School Accountability Report Card** for each elementary and secondary school under its jurisdiction. Each School Accountability Report Card must include, but is not limited to:

1. The most recent three years of data for these areas of assessment: Pupil achievement (using percentiles) by grade level in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other academic goals

2. Secondary schools with seniors will list the average SAT scores and the percent of seniors taking the SAT
3. Dropout rates
4. Progress toward reducing class sizes
5. Number of credentialed teachers, teachers with emergency credentials, teachers working without credentials and teachers working outside their subject areas of competence
6. Number of days of staff development
7. Suspension and expulsion rates.

- ***How are the data distributed?***

Individual student, school and district reports are sent to districts as results are completed. Districts must provide individual student scores to parents within twenty days of receiving the reports. Schools must also notify parents of the purpose of the school accountability report cards and ensure that all parents receive a copy of the report card. The press will have access to SAT9 and SABE/2 scores only through the Internet site designed by the state department of education. On the Internet, results will be listed by grade level for schools, districts, counties and the state.

- ***How are the data disaggregated?***

Stanford 9 and STAR augmentation results are reported for seven groups:

- For all students
- For students who are LEP
- For non-LEP students
- For males
- For females
- For students who are economically disadvantaged
- For students who are not economically disadvantaged.

SABE/2 results are reported:

- For all Spanish-speaking students who are LEP
 - For Spanish-speaking LEP students who first enrolled fewer than 12 months prior to testing.
- Groups of fewer than ten students are not reported as disaggregated.

The California State Accountability System

With the enactment of the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999, California developed the new Academic Performance Index (API) and growth targets as the basis for the accountability system.

- ***Student Accountability***

Student performance on the SAT9 or SABE/2 assessments is reported to parents.

- ***School Accountability***

The Academic Performance Index (API) was designed to provide a single “index” to rate the performance of all schools on the academic performance of their students. The API will be a composite score of multiple school indicators. The 1999-2000 API only included results for the 1999 Stanford 9 portion of the STAR test. Other indicators will be phased in and may include additional assessments, a primary language test for ESL students, a high school exit exam,

attendance and graduation rates. 60% of the API must be based on test results, while the other 40% will include non-cognitive measures. Schools are required to report test scores of their English-language learners as part of the API as well, except for students who have been in the district for less than one year. The index will be used to measure growth over time and “demonstrate comparable improvement in academic achievement by all numerically significant ethnic and socio-economically disadvantaged subgroups within schools.” (PSAA Section 525052(a)) Schools will also be compared to all other schools as well as schools with similar characteristics and then ranked according to their API and placed into a *decile*.

The PSAA Advisory Committee decided schools should be assigned API scores based on a scale of 200-1000, with five bands of performance:

- Band 5: Very High Performing School
80th-99th NPR: Weights- 1000
- Band 4: 60th-79th NPR: Weights- 875
- Band 3: 40th-59th NPR: Weights- 700
- Band 2: 20th-39th NPR: Weights- 500
- Band 1: Low-Performing School
1st-19th NPR: Weights- 200

California has defined adequate yearly progress as meeting the school's Annual Growth Target (AGT). The state assigns each school an annual growth target based on the difference between its API score and the Statewide Performance Target - an API score that represents a high standard of achievement and toward which all schools are expected to move. The minimum growth target must be 5%. The AGT for all schools was based on the API baseline score from July 1999. The SBE may set differential AGTs based on grade level or a school's history of performance.

Until the state adopts performance standards based on recently adopted content standards, the interim statewide performance target for all schools is 800. Content weights are based on state priorities set by the SBE. At the Elementary and Middle School levels: reading (30%) language (15%) and spelling (15%) are weighted at 60% collectively while math is at 40%. All subject areas tested at the high school level are weighted at 20%.

Sanctions and Rewards

- *Failure to meet AGT in 12 months:*

Such a school will hold a public hearing to announce the lack of progress and the LBE will choose from the following interventions: 1) reassign staff, 2) negotiate site-specific amendments or 3) other measures appropriate.

- *Failure to meet performance goals but evidence of significant growth:*

Such a school will continue in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) and continue to receive funding (*see Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools: Assistance*).

- *Failure to meet performance goals and show significant growth in 24 months:*

Such a school shall be deemed a low-performing school and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) in California will assume all governing powers for the school. The principal of the school shall be reassigned, and the SPI will do one of the following:

- 1) allow students to attend other schools
- 2) allow a charter school to be developed
- 3) assign the management of the school to another educational institution
- 4) reassign other certified employees
- 5) renegotiate a new collective bargaining agreement
- 6) reorganize the school, or
- 7) close the school.

The ***Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP)*** will provide monetary and non-monetary awards to schools that meet or exceed the API growth targets and demonstrate comparable improvement in academic achievement by all *numerically significant ethnic and socio-economically disadvantaged subgroups*.

- ***District Accountability***

Accountability is focused at the school level and formal accountability processes, sanctions and rewards have not been developed for districts.

- ***Subgroup Performance as an Indicator***

Schools must demonstrate that they are making a concerted effort to ensure certain subgroups of students improve their performance “comparably” to that of other students. Students who fall into this special category belong to what the PSAA defines as “numerically-significant” ethnic or socio-economically disadvantaged subgroups.

A *numerically significant subgroup* represents: 1) at least 15% of the total school student population and at least 30 students; or

2) at least 100 students (a criterion added by the PSAA Advisory Committee and approved by the SBE).

Once numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups of students are identified, an API for each is calculated.

The same schoolwide API formula is applied to determine the subgroup API. Growth targets for subgroups, however, are determined differently from the schoolwide growth targets. Subgroups are expected to meet a performance target that is 80% of the schoolwide target—“comparable,” but not equal growth. To be eligible for a PSAA award, this school must show that all of its numerically significant subgroups show at least a 10-point improvement in their API index.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools

- ***Identification***

In the past 2 years, local accountability systems have identified schools for program improvement (PI). Districts may remove schools from PI if they have demonstrated adequate yearly progress for two of three consecutive years. The criteria for adequate yearly progress for schools already identified may be either 1) > 40% of students performing at or above grade-level standards or 2) the school meets or exceeds growth targets.

Schools are given a “statewide rank” based on the value of the API score. There are separate ranks for each school type: elementary, middle and high school. Schools that fall into the lowest

decile (bottom 10%) of performance area given a rank of 1 and are considered to be the lowest performing. Schools in the 10th decile (top 10%) are assigned a rank of 10 and are considered to be the highest performing. In addition, schools are assigned “a similar schools rank” based on a comparison of API scores across similar schools demographically.

The PSAA calls for schools to show 5% growth in performance each year, and a school’s growth target is calculated by taking 5% of the distance between a school’s 1999 API and the statewide interim performance target of 800. Schools that already have an API of 800 or more must maintain such a score in future years.

To be eligible for the PSAA awards, the law requires schools to show either a 5% improvement annually or meet the statewide performance target. Schools participating in the PSAA interventions program must also show progress toward meeting this 5% growth target to avoid interventions and eventually sanctions.

During the 1999-2000 cycle for identifying Program Improvement schools, Title I schools ranked in the lowest decile on the API will be in PI, notwithstanding other assessment data. Title I Schools in the second decile on the API will be candidates for PI and may be subject to further review based on local accountability data. If local staff believe that such a school should not be identified for Program Improvement, they will have the opportunity to appeal to CDE. They will be required to demonstrate that achievement data from a local accountability system, with multiple measures and meeting CDE criteria, show at least 40 percent of students performing at or above rigorous grade-level standards.

- ***Assistance***

A total of 3,144 schools were designated as under-performing in 1999-2000. \$96 million was available to support an initial group of 430 schools that volunteered or were selected for the **Immediate Intervention/ Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)**. This program provides resources for underperforming schools to support the development of school action plans. For 1999-2000, schools scoring in the lower half of the statewide distribution of the STAR test in 1998 and 1999 were invited to participate. In August 2000, schools that fail to meet growth targets may volunteer or be selected (randomly) to participate. Planning grants of \$50,000 are provided to develop action plans, and 430 schools will receive a grant for the first year. Schools must hire external evaluators to coordinate the plan's development. A school that scores in the lowest decile on the 1999 API may not be removed from PI.

- ***Who provides assistance?***

External evaluators from the state department of education shall assist a school in the II/USP in the following manner:

1. Inform parents and guardians that the school has been selected for the program;
2. Hold a public meeting at the school, in cooperation with the principal, to which all parents and legal guardians will be invited;
3. Solicit recommendations and opinions at the meeting regarding actions that should be taken to improve school performance;
4. Notify all parents and guardians of their opportunity to provide recommendations;

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5. Complete a review that identifies weaknesses in the school that may contribute to the school's low performance; and
6. Develop an action plan with the school-site and community team.

Action plans should focus on:

- Improving academic performance
- Improving the involvement of parents
- Improving the allocation of resources and the management of the school, and
- Identifying and developing solutions that take into account the causes of low student performance.

Action plans also act as funding applications and must be submitted to the state after being reviewed by the LEA by March 2000. Implementation grants are given to the school's with action plans that are accepted by the state, with a minimum allocation of \$50,000 from the state and as much as \$168 per student for the 2000-01 school year. School districts will be required to match the state grant with local funds.

- ***Does assistance differ for Title I schools?***

The Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program applies to all schools.

Alignment of the State Accountability System and Title I

According to the State Superintendent for Public Instruction in a letter dated August 9, 1999, a transition to the PSAA accountability system as the basis for Title I accountability will begin immediately. Program Improvement schools will be Title I schools that are low-performing on the API. By the year 2000-2001, it is expected that the API will include multiple measures of performance aligned with California performance standards. In the interim, low performance on the API will serve as a filter for schools to become candidates for Title I Program Improvement, with an opportunity for districts to appeal based on local accountability data.

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