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## Manhattan Beach Unified School District

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, or CAASPP is the state academic testing program. CAASPP is a system intended to provide information that can be used to monitor student progress on an annual basis and ensure that all students leave high school ready for college and career. CAASPP assessments include computer adaptive tests in English–language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics for students in grades 3 – 8 and 11 and a new pilot science for students in grades 5, 8, 11, and 12. This school year, students will take the CAASPP tests in the within the following testing windows:

Dates	Assessment	School	Grades Testing
April 16 – April 27	ELA, Math	Manhattan Beach MS	6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup>
April 30 – May 4	ELA, Math	Elementary Schools	3 <sup>rd</sup>
May 7 – May 11	ELA, Math	Elementary Schools	4 <sup>th</sup>
May 14 – May 18	ELA, Math	Elementary Schools	5 <sup>th</sup>
May 21 – May 25	ELA, Math	Mira Costa HS	11 <sup>th</sup>
April 16 – June 1	Science (pilot)	All schools	5 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup>
April 16 – June 1	Make-up tests	All schools	As needed

To learn about the types of questions on the computer-based test, you and your child can view the practice test online at the California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Practice Test Web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>. Additional testing information and resources are available on the MBUSD CAASPP webpage at <http://goo.gl/uT4hCD>. #

Individual student score reports will be sent home to parents at the beginning of the following school year. Student score reports will include an overall score and a description of the student’s achievement level for ELA and mathematics. Early Assessment Program (EAP) results will be included on the score reports for students in grade 11, providing an early indication of readiness for college-level coursework.

With CAASPP, the purpose of statewide annual assessments shifted from producing annual accountability reports to assisting teachers, administrators, and pupils and their parents to improve teaching and learning throughout the school year. [Education Code 60602. (a)] Results from the CAASPP assessments will be used, along with other available data, to determine the impact of selected curriculum/programs, and to make other instructional plans. Some parents and students have expressed concerns about taking the CAASPP tests. Students will encounter many tests in life: driving tests, SATs or ACTs, possibly Advanced Placement exams and other tests for placement in college or entrance to graduate school if they choose to pursue that path. Will any of these tests tell us everything we should know about students? Of course not. But they do **provide valuable information** that helps determine how well students are learning across grade levels, subject areas, schools, and districts. This important measure of learning also help schools provide additional challenge high-achieving students and support struggling students.

For the state of California, students are tested in English-language arts, math, and science. Depending on the grade level, students test for zero to ten hours annually. This amount of time is equivalent to **less than 1 percent of the school year**. The vast majority of tests administered in K-12 schools are intended to assess how well students have learned academic knowledge and skills in a particular area. The results of these achievement tests can help determine whether students are on track to master the academic standards for their grade and, eventually, to graduate from high school with adequate preparation for higher education or careers. Listed below are ten ways the CAASPP can provide valuable information.

1. Standardized testing gives teachers guidance to help them determine *what to teach students and when to teach it*. The net result is less wasted instructional time and a simplified way of timeline management.
2. Gives parents a good idea of how their children are doing as *compared to students across the country and locally*. This can also indicate how your local area is doing compared against the national landscape.
3. Allows *assessment of student progress over the years*. When students take the same type of test yearly (adjusted for grade level) it is easy to see if a student is improving, losing ground academically, or staying about the same. (For example, if a child is taking a norm-referenced test and scores in the 75th percentile in the sixth grade and the 80th percentile in the seventh grade, you can see that the child is gaining ground in school.) This helps determine how a child is doing academically.
4. Since all students in a school are taking the same test (with respect to grade level) standardized tests *provide an accurate comparison across groups*. (For example, this makes it easy to see how boys are performing as compared to girls in a particular school or district.) Over the years great improvements have been made with regards to test bias, which has led to more accurate assessments and comparisons.
5. Standardized tests results help *measure consistency across grade levels, subject areas, schools, and schools*. They are an efficient and relatively inexpensive way to collect and report large amounts of achievement data. Although standardized tests have limitations, they yield information that is likely to be more consistent across large numbers of students than alternatives such as teacher grades.

6. Annual tests help *hold states, districts, and schools accountable* to improve achievement for students in general and for groups that are the target of special programs.
7. *Provide data necessary to track and analyze “gaps” in achievement among student groups* in order to encourage attention to the needs of historically underserved groups, such students who are economically disadvantaged, come from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds, have disabilities, or are English language learners.
8. *Diagnose the learning strengths and weaknesses* of individual students; identifying which students need extra help to succeed; or identifying which students are eligible for special services (remedial, gifted, language proficiency, or special education programs).
9. *Evaluate the impact of a specific program, curriculum, or instructional strategy* on participating students (such as a college readiness program or new approach to teaching math).
10. *Inform decisions about admitting students to colleges and universities.* Currently, students that achieve a Standards Exceeded status in grade 11 are “ready” to enroll directly into college level English and/or math courses upon enrolling at all **California State Universities** and most **Community Colleges** and do not have to take college placement tests. Students that receive a Standards Met status receive are “conditionally ready” for CSUs and most Community Colleges. These students receive the same benefits as “ready” status students as long as they complete an approved Senior year-long English and/or math courses with a grade of “C” or better. Conversely, test results can help inform parent and student decisions about choosing a best fit for academics challenge with colleges and universities.

As the parent or guardian, you have the option of excusing your child from any part of the CAASPP. If you would like to excuse your child from the test, you must submit your request in writing to your school principal. [Education Code 60615.] Please let the school know as soon as possible so alternative arrangements can be made for your student.

Additional information on CAASPP is also available on the Parent/Student tab of the California Department of Education (CDE) Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/>. If you have any questions regarding CAASPP, please contact If you have any questions regarding your child’s participation, please contact Dr. Chad Mabery, Director of Data, Assessment, and Professional Development at 310-318-7345 x5980/email [cmabery@mbusd.org](mailto:cmabery@mbusd.org) or Dr. Katherine Whittaker-Stopp, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services at 310-318-7345 x5989/email at [kstopp@mbusd.org](mailto:kstopp@mbusd.org).

Sincerely,

*Dr. Chad Mabery & Dr. Katherine Whittaker Stopp*