



FAQs >

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

How is Smarter Assessment better than previous tests?

Smarter Assessment replaces the traditional multiple choice format with more thoughtful questions that provide opportunities for students to come up with their own answers and explain their thinking. The assessments include real-life performance tasks requiring students to apply knowledge and skills across multiple content standards to increase critical thinking abilities. For English language arts (ELA), students are asked to read more complex literary and informational texts, use evidence from the texts to answer questions, make inferences and, depending on the grade, present argumentative essays. In mathematics, students perform more multi-step problems with application to real-world situations and explain how they achieved their answers.

How much time does the testing take?

Unlike the state's previous testing, which was given as often as three times each year, the Smarter assessments are given just once each spring for grades 3 to 8. The assessments are taken online, are customized to each student, are not timed, and your child may take breaks so he or she can do his or her very best. We estimate that for elementary school students, the ELA assessment will take 3.5 hours, the mathematics assessment 2.5 hours. That is far less than the time spent on state tests in the past.

Will these assessments accommodate my child's special needs?

Absolutely. If your child is an English language learner or has any special needs, such as visual, auditory or physical access requirements, you will appreciate the Smarter Assessment suite of accessibility tools and accommodation resources. Through resources such as Braille, closed captioning, and embedded glossaries in 10 languages and 4 dialects, your child will be able to capably demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills. Teachers who work with English language learners and students with disabilities were included in the development of Smarter Assessments to make sure that every child has the chance to show what he or she knows. For a small number of students who aren't able to meaningfully take the Smarter Assessment because they have significant intellectual disabilities, there is an alternate assessment available. For more information, ask your child's Individualized Education Program team to discuss this option.

When will we get the results from the test? And what kind of report will we receive?

Educators receive scores of their students within three weeks. The portions of the tests that call for written responses are hand-scored individually. Families will receive a report in July. The report you receive comprises several scores: an overall composite score for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, results for particular topics such as reading and writing, and an "achievement level" for each subject. Students who achieve a level of 3 or 4 appear to be making appropriate progress toward college and career readiness.