

New Reporting Achievement Level Descriptors for Educators

Summative assessments are important tools that provide valuable information about student learning. In 2025, California adopted new reporting achievement level descriptors (ALDs) and labels.

Starting this year, you will see new reporting labels on the Student Score Reports. These new reporting labels make the results easier to understand.

What Has Changed?

California has adopted new reporting ALDs and labels. The full descriptions can be found on the [Reporting Achievement Level Descriptors web page](#).

Level	Old Reporting Label	New Reporting Label
4	Standard Exceeded	Advanced
3	Standard Met	Proficient
2	Standard Nearly Met	Developing
1	Standard Not Met	Minimal

What Has Not Changed?

The standards and performance expectations have not changed. The test questions, format, scale scores, and cut scores for each level remain the same.

Because nothing else about the assessment has changed, year-over-year results can still be compared.

Why Was the Change Made?

The new reporting labels and their descriptions are meant to help students, their families, and the public better understand student performance on the summative English language arts/literacy, mathematics, and science assessments.

These new reporting labels and descriptions address an inaccurate perception that Level 3 represents a grade-level cutoff and that students who score below Level 3 are “below grade level.” All of the items on the assessment measure grade-level standards, just at different levels of understanding.

All four reporting levels represent grade-level learning, just at different points along the path toward increasing degrees of complexity and sophisticated understanding.

Where Can Students and Families Get Support?

Additional support for students and families is available on the [California Starting Smarter website](#).

