

# New Reporting Achievement Level Descriptors for District and School Staff

Summative assessments are important tools that provide valuable information about student learning. California has adopted new reporting achievement level descriptors (ALDs) and labels for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) English language arts/literacy (ELA), mathematics, and science assessments. The new ALDs will launch with the reporting of the 2025–26 summative assessment results.

## What Has Changed?

The reporting ALDs have been updated to help students, their families, and the public better understand student performance on the CAASPP. 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?

This change helps address the inaccurate perception that Level 3 represents a grade-level cutoff and students scoring below Level 3 are “below grade level.” This is not an accurate representation of the assessment or student performance.

All of the items on the assessment measure grade-level standards. Student performance at various levels demonstrates grade-level knowledge and skills at increasing degrees of complexity and sophistication across the four levels.

## Where Can Students and Families Get Support?

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

