

New Reporting Achievement Level Descriptors for Students and Families

In the spring, your child takes state tests in English language arts/literacy (ELA), math, and science. These tests help families and educators understand how students are learning. In 2025, California adopted new reporting achievement level descriptors and labels.

Starting with the 2025–26 school year, you will see new reporting labels on your child’s score reports. These new reporting labels make the results easier to understand.

What Has Changed?

California has adopted new labels and descriptions of student achievement levels. 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?

Only the reporting labels and descriptions are changing. The test questions, format, and scoring stay the same. Because nothing else has changed, you can still look back at your child’s test history to see their progress.

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 ELA, math, and science assessments.

These new reporting labels and their descriptions address an inaccurate perception that Level 3 represents a grade-level cutoff and 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?

Visit the [California Starting Smarter website](#) for more information, sample test questions, and resources for how to support your child.

