

## **Pacific Trails Middle School**

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**Principal**

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## **Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments English Language Arts/Literacy, Mathematics and California Science Test**

### **Dear Parents/Guardians of 8th Grade Students:**

California’s academic standards—the things we want students to know and be able to do—are designed so students graduate ready for college and a career. One way we measure their progress is through the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments. Students across California in grades 3–8 and high school take these assessments each spring. These tests were created specifically to gauge each student’s performance in English language arts/literacy (ELA), mathematics, and science. These tests measure the skills called for by the academic standards, including the ability to write clearly, think critically, and solve problems. Because CAASPP tests are given statewide, they provide an opportunity to measure the skills of all students against the same academic standards. Given online, the tests are computer-adaptive, allowing more precise measurement of individual skills.

This year, your child will take the following tests:

- **Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and Mathematics (April 25th - May 10th)**
- **The California Science Test – Pilot Test (May 11th-12th)**

### **Smarter Balanced Assessments**

The Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics tests reflect California’s rigorous academic standards and allow students to demonstrate analytical writing and critical thinking skills as well as their knowledge of facts. In 2017, parents will be able to compare results across **three years** (2014–15, 2015–16, and 2016–17) to determine their child’s progress in meeting the standards. To learn more about these tests, please visit CDE’s Test Score Guide Web site at <http://www.testscoreguide.org/ca>, which provides informative guides and test score descriptions as well as sample test items at different levels of difficulty.

Another great resource is the Practice and Training Tests, which can be found on the CDE’s Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>. Here, parents can experience the kinds of questions that students will encounter on the tests.

### **California Science Test – Pilot Test**

California’s new state standards for science call for students to think and work like scientists and engineers – asking questions and learning through hands-on investigation and discovery. Working with science teachers, California is developing a new assessment that emphasizes scientific thinking and reasoning. This year your child will participate in the tryout of test items for this future assessment. While

this tryout will not provide scores for your child, it is an important first step in developing an assessment that will fairly and accurately measure how students are achieving on the new science standards. For additional information about the new science tests and sample questions, please visit the CDE's CAASPP Science Assessment Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caasppscience.asp>.

If you have any questions regarding your child's participation in statewide assessments, please contact the Assistant Principal's Secretary, **Lisa Graciano** at [lisa.graciano@sduhsd.net](mailto:lisa.graciano@sduhsd.net) .

**Mary Anne Nuskin**  
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