

Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area Community Advisory Committee (CAC)



Information Alert for Parents of Special Education Students

How will my child with Special Needs Participate in Statewide Standardized Achievement Testing

State and federal laws require that **all** children participate in statewide tests that measure how children are progressing in learning the state's Core Curricular Standards. These tests are designed to assess how well **the school system** is doing, and to ensure that all children are being held to the same high standards. In California all children grades 2nd- 11th participate. However, as a parent of a child who is participating in the Special Education program for all or part of the school day, you may wonder how your child may participate in a way that is fair and assesses what he or she knows. The IEP team may not **exempt** a child from participating, but needs to specify on the IEP **which test and with what supports** your child will participate.

There are three different versions of Statewide Achievement tests in California. They are all part of the Statewide Testing and Reporting Program, known as "STAR Testing" by many.

The first version is the **California Standards Test (CST)** which assesses in math and English language arts for grades 2-11, writing in 4th and 8th and science and social studies in the 5th and 8th grades. Students with IEPs may take these tests just as any other student, or they may be allowed to have **accommodations or modifications**. *Accommodations* are supports that do not change the concepts being assessed, and the student's scores are reported as any other student's in standardized, or percentile form. *Modifications* substantially alter or lower the concepts of the assessment, and the scores are reported to parents in raw form. A student may take some subjects with no accommodations or modifications, and other subjects with them, according to the IEP.

Some students may participate in the **California Modified Assessment (CMA)**. This is designed for students with IEPs who have taken the CST at least once and scored "basic" or "far below basic" in one or more subjects. The CMA covers the California Core Curricular Standards, and is a modified assessment, which means that there are no modifications necessary, although accommodations are allowed. Students may take the CMA in one or more academic subjects with or without accommodations, as specified in their IEP. The student must also have a grade-appropriate goal in the IEP that addresses each of the academic areas in which he or she is participating in the CMA. The CMA is given in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts, grades 3-7 in mathematics, grades 4 and 7 in writing, and grades 5 and 8 in science. The state anticipates that no more than 2% of a school population will participate in the CMA.

The last assessment is the **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)**. It is designed for students with IEPs who are in a functional skills curriculum who are performing substantially below grade level. It covers California Core Curricular Standards at a very basic level. There are five levels of CAPA. CAPA I is designed for students performing at below 2nd grade level, regardless of age. The rest of the CAPA versions correlate with the student's grade:

❖ **CAPA II** - 2nd- 3rd grades ❖ **CAPA III** - 4th- 5th grades ❖ **CAPA IV** - 6th - 7th grades ❖ **CAPA V** - 9th - 11th grades

The state anticipates that no more than 1% of the school population will participate in the CAPA.

Be sure to talk with your child's Special Education teacher or Case Manager to discuss the most appropriate way for your child to participate in Statewide Testing. The goal is for your child to participate in a way that is not frustrating to him or her and accurately reflects progress that he or she has made.

[Click here to see a matrix](#) from the California Department of Education for allowable accommodations and modifications on statewide testing.