

**LAUSD**  
**2017-2018**  
**GUIDELINES ON ACADEMIC PREPARATION**  
**FOR STATE ASSESSMENTS**

As we begin the third year of California using the Smarter Balanced Summative tests, the Los Angeles Unified School District is providing to its schools and staff these Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments.

The California Department of Education last provided its own “Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments” in 2009, before the advent of the Smarter Balanced Summative tests. As that 2009 document stipulated, “The best academic preparation for state assessments is good instruction.” Beyond that, there are issues to consider and steps to take to insure all LAUSD schools prepare our students adequately, while remaining within the bounds of what is appropriate and approved for academic preparation. Therefore, this document delineates LAUSD district policy for 2017-2018 regarding such academic preparation for state assessments.

**EDUCATION CODE SECTION 60611**

The applicable state education code remains 60611 as follows:

*A local educational agency, district superintendent of schools, or principal or teacher of any elementary or secondary school,*

*including a charter school, shall not carry on any program for the sole purpose of test preparation of pupils for the statewide pupil assessment system or a particular test used in the statewide pupil assessment system. Nothing in this section prohibits the use of materials to familiarize pupils with item types or the computer-based testing environment used in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress.*

For LAUSD, this Education Code section provides guidance that our academic preparation must never be solely intended to raise scores, but that all our students need and deserve effective instruction that will prepare our students for success on the state assessments.

**Determining Appropriate Academic Preparation for State Assessments**

The following table contains 5 questions designed to elicit answers that support LAUSD policy regarding academic preparation for state assessments. Schools and staff considering materials and instructional plans to support student success on state assessments are recommended to review and discuss these questions and the responses they prompt.

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| Are instructional plans and materials designed to increase mastery of standard claims and domains, but not strictly intended to raise scores on specific state assessments?                            | YES | NO |
| Are any lessons built around test-taking strategies generic enough to apply to multiple types of assessments, but not specifically aimed at success on one specific state assessment?                  | YES | NO |
| Are school/teacher-developed preparation materials designed to help students be comfortable with state assessment item structure and format, and not clearly based on actual state assessment content? | YES | NO |
| Are related state assessment materials, such as the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments, integrated into the school's instructional planning?   | YES | NO |
| Does the school's instructional program support student success on state assessments by focusing on the principals and practices inherent in the state's standards framework?                          | YES | NO |

By reviewing and discussing the above 5 questions, then determining that the answer to all five should be "YES," LAUSD staff and schools can help ascertain if the school's efforts at preparing students for state assessments is in line with approved and appropriate practice.

**SPECIFIC GUIDELINES ON USING SMARTER BALANCED INTERIM ASSESSMENTS AS ACADEMIC PREPARATION**

Per MEM-6700.1, "Comprehensive Assessment Program: District Assessments 2017-2018," LAUSD is requiring all students in Grades 3-11 to take two Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (SB IABs) each in ELA and Math. For specific details, please reference MEM-6700.1.

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments share the same formatting and item types as the Smarter Balanced Summative. Administering the SB IABs to our students serves as a foundation for academic preparation for the Summative.

Besides the minimum requirements outlined in MEM-6700.1, schools and staff can employ the SB IABs as often as they wish, and can choose any SB IAB from any grade level.

Furthermore, the Smarter Balanced Test Operation Management System (or TOMS) allows for viewing the SB IABs, and also offers Practice versions.

Among the options available to schools and staff in designing academic preparation using the SB IAs are:

- Using a single IAB as a pre- and post-test
- Projecting an IAB on a screen using the Viewing System and conducting a lesson around the IAB, item by item
- Accessing the optional Interim Comprehensive Assessment, an alternate version of the Summative in length and coverage, and administering it to select students/grade levels.

**NOTE: The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments are considered not secure, but not public.**

What that means in practice is that only trained, authorized school staff with a professional interest in the state tests can access the SB IABs, and they are only to be used within the school setting. No one outside the

school setting should have access to the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Furthermore, copying as handouts/homework to be sent home is not allowed, even if items have been altered or edited to disguise their origin (eg: changing the numbers in a math item but otherwise retaining item format).

### **OTHER ACADEMIC PREPARATION MATERIALS**

CAASPP also provides access to the Digital Library. School staff that have completed the necessary requirements will have access to the Digital Library for the purpose of accessing the Smarter Balanced Reporting System. This also provides access to the Digital Library itself, a compendium of lessons and other resources tied to specific claims/domains. These materials can be used as part of an academic preparation plan, but the Digital Library resources must be used as intended.

Certain assigned LAUSD textbooks also make available assessment tools and materials that can serve as academic preparation.

### **APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC PREPARATION STRATEGIES**

Instilling commonly utilized test taking strategies can assist LAUSD students in finding success on state assessments. Such strategies, some specific to the Smarter Balanced system, include:

- Using “mark for review” to allow students to return to a skipped item
- Scheduling assessment sessions to enable student success. One example: never schedule the performance task section just before an extended break such as Spring break, as the window for resumption is limited.
- Make sure all staff and students understand the “pause” rules in the Smarter balanced system, to prevent closing a session and being unable to

return to a section to complete it when the session resumes.

- Familiarize students with item language and formatting (exposure to the SM IABs will be key to this for the Summative).

The following link leads to a CAASPP page with training videos related to academic preparation:

<http://www.caaspp.org/training/caaspp/uaag.html>

### **APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR THE CELDT AND ELPAC**

2017-2018 is the last year for the CELDT, and in spring 2018 the new ELPAC will be administered to all eligible English Learner students for the purpose of reclassification.

For both these state assessments, the strategies promoted in the past should remain effective.

These include:

- Students having multiple opportunities to write in all content domains
- Students employing their knowledge of English language conventions to edit their own and other students’ work
- Provide and review scoring rubrics and sample papers and have students evaluate and compare their own writing efforts to them
- Review and discuss writing prompts, providing students with tools to identify key words in prompts to ensure effective responses
- Have students reread the prompt and/or direction for their written responses after composition and evaluate whether their response is on target with the prompt and directions’ intention.

## **BLUEPRINTS FOR STATE ASSESSMENTS**

Documents detailing the standards and claims covered by state assessments are available at the following sites:

*Smarter Balanced Summative and Interim Assessments Blueprints:*

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/>

ELPAC:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/documents/elpacblueprts.pdf>