



April 28, 2016

<p>SUBJECT</p> <p>CALIFORNIA THIRD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY AND THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP</p> <p>Strategic Priority Area 2. System and Network Provide leadership to the First 5 movement and the development of a support system serving children prenatal through age 5, their families, and communities that results in sustainable and collective impact.</p> <p>Goal: 2.1. Leadership as a Convener and Partner Work with First 5 county commissions, state agencies, and other stakeholders to convene, align, collaborate on, support, and strengthen statewide efforts and initiatives to facilitate the creation of a seamless system of integrated and comprehensive programs and services to improve the status and outcomes for children prenatal through age 5 and their families.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information</p>
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SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Research shows students who are “ready for school” at the start of kindergarten are ten times more likely to meet expectations of California state standards by third grade. Children ready at grade level at third grade are more likely to complete high school prepared for college, career, and life. As First 5 advocates for building a stronger bridge with our K–12 partners, understanding how children are performing in the third grade will help us define our work better in the future.

Glen Price, Chief Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction, will present to the Commission on the latest California State assessment of third grade reading. His overview will address California public schools' new approach to accountability and continuous improvement, and the third grade achievement gap for English-language learners, children of color, and children living in poverty. Mr. Price is one of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's lead representatives on these issues statewide and nationally.

Superintendent Torlakson has been committed throughout his career to addressing the achievement gap through addressing the health, education, and welfare of children, commonly known as the “whole child” approach. He has personally been a leader in California’s transition to the new assessment, accountability, and continuous improvement system. Mr. Price will address the relevancy of the achievement gap and the state’s assessment and accountability changes to the work of First 5s statewide.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an information-only item. First 5 California staff is not requesting action at this time.

BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES

In September 2015, Superintendent Torlakson released the results of the state’s new online assessment program, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), administered to approximately 3.2 million public school students in the previous school year to gauge their progress in learning new, more rigorous academic standards.

2015 was the first year of the new assessments and because they are substantially different from the previous state assessments. The CAASPP results will serve as a baseline from which to measure future progress and should not be compared to results from the state’s previous assessment program, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR).

CAASPP includes a number of assessments, but the most widely given are the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, which evaluate student progress on the California standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy, often referred to as Common Core.

The CAASPP assessments for English language arts/literacy and mathematics were given to students in grades three through eight and grade eleven. They consist of two parts. First, is an adaptive test taken on a computer that gives students different follow-up questions based on their answers, thereby providing a more refined picture of a student’s abilities. Second, is a performance task that challenges students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. The two parts measure depth of understanding, writing, research, and problem-solving skills.

In contrast, the STAR, the state’s previous assessment system, was a multiple-choice, paper-based test in which students, for the most part, filled in bubbles on paper.

On CAASPP, students’ scores fall into one of four achievement levels: standard exceeded, standard met, standard nearly met, and standard not met.

Statewide in all grades, 44 percent of students met or exceeded the English language arts/literacy standard and 33 percent met or exceeded the mathematics standard. (See Attachment A – Table 1.)

For English language arts/literacy statewide in the third grade, 18 percent exceeded the standard, 20 percent met the standard, 26 percent nearly met the standard, and 36 percent did not meet the standard.

The [CAASPP Results](#) website contains the results for all counties, districts, and schools across the state, broken down by grade, gender, ethnic groups, and demographics. In addition, the website allows users to download results and search individual categories. [The California Local Control Funding Formula \(LCFF\) State Priorities Snapshot](#) makes data available on districts and schools in three state priority areas: student achievement, student engagement, and school climate.

According to the California Department of Education, the baseline scores reflect, in part, the rigor of the state's new academic standards. CAASPP focuses on assessing crucial abilities, such as analyzing problems, thinking independently, and writing clearly with evidence. Those skills take time and effort to master but are essential to succeed in today's world.

State Superintendent Torlakson also highlighted that the results indicate the state has a persistent achievement gap—significant differences in scores—among students from low-income families, English learners, and some ethnic groups when compared to other students. Overall, 31 percent of students in all grades from low-income families met or exceeded the standard in English language arts/literacy and 21 percent met or exceeded the standard in math, compared with 64 percent and 53 percent for the subjects, respectively, among other students. (See Attachment A – Tables 3 and 4.) Overall, 11 percent of English learners in all grades met or exceeded the standard in English language arts/literacy and 11 percent in math, compared with 69 percent and 55 percent for those subjects, respectively, for students proficient in English.

As for scores among all grades for ethnic groups, 72 percent of Asians met or exceeded standard in English language arts/literacy and 69 percent in math, while 28 percent of African Americans met or exceeded the standard in English language arts/literacy and 16 percent in math. Other ethnic groups fell between these two. (See Attachment A – Tables 3 and 4.)

In light of the pressing need for all students to meet or exceed California standards, the State Superintendent is implementing a bold plan, *A Blueprint for Great Schools 2.0*, that involves development of a statewide continuous improvement system for districts and schools and the recognition that students and educators need more time, training and resources to improve student outcomes. The Blueprint also calls for the adoption of key policies in the California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan. Superintendent Torlakson recognizes the power of early learning and the benefit to children before and after they enter kindergarten.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Commission has not previously discussed or taken action on this subject.

ATTACHMENTS

A. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Results for 2015

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Results for 2015

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF ALL CALIFORNIA STUDENTS BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS

Content Area	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
English Language Arts/Literacy	16	28	25	31
Mathematics	14	19	29	38

TABLE 2: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY GRADE AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY (ELA)

Grade	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
Grade 3	18	20	26	36
Grade 4	19	21	21	39
Grade 5	17	27	21	34
Grade 6	13	30	29	28
Grade 7	12	32	25	31
Grade 8	12	33	29	26

Grade 11	23	33	24	20
All California Students	16	28	25	31

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 3: STATEWIDE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY GROUP AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

Student Groups	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
All Students	16	28	25	31
Male	13	25	25	36
Female	19	30	25	25
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	9	23	27	41
Asian	40	32	16	12
Black or African American	7	21	26	46
Filipino	26	37	22	15
Hispanic or Latino	8	24	29	39
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	11	27	29	33
White	26	35	22	18
Two or More Races	23	30	23	24

English Learner (EL)	2	9	24	65
English Only (EO)	20	31	24	26
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	15	37	32	16
Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)	34	35	19	12
Migrant	4	17	27	52
Economically Disadvantaged ¹	8	23	28	41
Not Economically Disadvantaged	29	35	21	15
Students with Disability	3	9	18	70
Students with No Reported Disability	18	30	26	26

¹ Economically Disadvantaged Students include students eligible for the free and reduced priced meal program (FRPM), foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students for whom neither parent is a high school graduate.

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 4: STATEWIDE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY GROUP AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL FOR MATHEMATICS

Student Groups	Percent of Students who Exceeded Standards	Percent of Students who Met Standards	Percent of Students who Nearly Met Standards	Percent of Students who Did Not Meet Standards
All Students	14	19	29	38
Male	15	19	27	39

Female	14	20	30	36
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	7	15	29	49
Asian	44	25	19	12
Black or African American	4	12	27	56
Filipino	23	29	29	20
Hispanic or Latino	6	15	31	48
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	9	18	33	40
White	22	27	28	23
Two or More Races	20	23	28	30
English Learner (EL)	3	8	24	65
English Only (EO)	17	22	29	32
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	14	22	35	29
Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)	31	24	25	20
Migrant	3	11	29	57
Economically Disadvantaged ¹	6	15	30	49
Not Economically Disadvantaged	27	26	26	21
Students with Disability	3	6	16	75

Students with No Reported Disability	15	21	30	33
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¹ Economically Disadvantaged Students include students eligible for the free and reduced priced meal program (FRPM), foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students for whom neither parent is a high school graduate.

NOTE: Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.