

Science Indicator



On the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), districts and schools that serve students in grades five, eight, and high school will receive a Science Indicator for the first time. Student performance on the California Science Test (CAST) and the California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science are used to determine the results for this indicator. The Science Indicator is calculated using two components: Distance from Standard (DFS) and participation rate. The sections below describe these in detail.

Distance from Standard

The DFS is the distance between a student's score on the CAST and the Standard Met Achievement Level threshold (i.e., the lowest threshold scale score for Level 3). The lowest threshold scale scores for Level 3 are 214 in grade five, 415 in grade eight, and 615 in high school.

For the CAA for Science, the California Department of Education (CDE) has created a crosswalk to convert levels of the assessment to correspond with levels on the CAST. Students who obtain a score that places them in Level 1 on the CAA for Science will be assigned the highest Level 1 score for the CAST. Those who obtain a CAA score that places them in Level 2 will be assigned the highest Level 2 score for the CAST. Students who obtain a CAA score that places them in Level 3 will be assigned the highest Level 3 score for the CAST. This new CAST score will be used to calculate the DFS.

Participation Rate

The California State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a participation rate requirement within the Science Indicator to hold local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and student groups accountable for testing a minimum of 95 percent of their students. The participation rate will not be incorporated within the Science Indicator until the 2025 Dashboard.

No Performance Colors on the 2024 Dashboard

The Science Indicator will not be used for accountability purposes on the 2024 Dashboard and will therefore be displayed for informational purposes only. The SBE will make decisions on the inclusion of the Science Indicator in the accountability system in 2025.

Calculating Current Year Data

Status for the 2024 Science Indicator will be calculated using a two-step process:

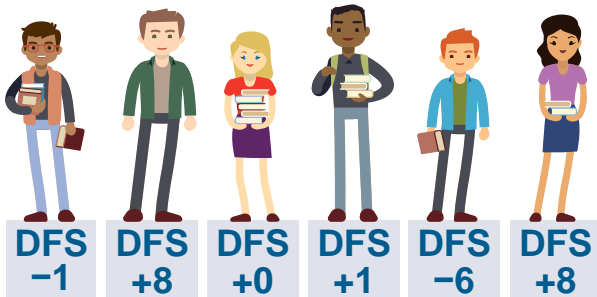
- **Step 1:** Calculate the DFS for each student.

Examples:

A grade five student receives a CAST score of 201. The student has a DFS of -13 because their score is 13 points below the lowest possible score for the Standard Met level (Level 3), which is 214.



- **Step 2:** Calculate the average DFS for a school or district using all students' DFS values.*



$$\frac{-1 + 8 + 0 + 1 - 6 + 8}{6} = 1.7^* \text{ points}$$

*The average DFS (e.g., 1.7 points) for each indicator is used to determine the Status.

Comparing Current and Prior Year Data

We compare current and prior year data to determine whether a school or district made improvement (i.e., had a higher DFS in 2024 than it did in 2023) or did worse (i.e., had a lower DFS in 2024).

Current year Status
(2023–24)

Minus

Prior year Status
(2022–23)

For more information, visit the [CDE California School Dashboard and System of Support web page](#).

Contact the Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division by email at dashboard@cde.ca.gov.

