

**California Department of Education Assessment Development & Administration Division**



# California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment 2020–2021 Technical Report

**Submitted May 15, 2023**

**By ETS**



**Contract No. CN150012**

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Acronyms and Initialisms Used in the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Technical Report

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| 2PL | two-parameter logistic |
| ADEL | adult English learner |
| AERA | American Educational Research Association |
| AI | artificial intelligence |
| AIR | American Institutes for Research |
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| ASL | American Sign Language |
| CAA | California Alternate Assessment |
| CAASPP | California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress |
| CAI | Cambium Assessment, Inc. |
| CALPADS | California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System |
| CalTAC | California Technical Assistance Center |
| CAT | computer adaptive test |
| *CCR* | *California Code of Regulations* |
| CCSS | Common Core State Standards |
| CDE | California Department of Education |
| CDS | county/district/school |
| CERS | California Educator Reporting System |
| CI | confidence interval |
| COVID-19 | novel coronavirus disease 2019 |
| CR | constructed response |
| CRESST | Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, & Student Testing |
| CSEM | conditional standard error of measurement |
| DEI | Data Entry Interface |
| *DFA* | *Directions for Administration* |
| DIF | differential item functioning |
| EAP | Early Assessment Program |
| *EC* | *Education Code* |
| EL | English learner |
| ELA | English language arts/literacy |
| ELPAC | English Language Proficiency Assessments for California |
| eSKM | Enterprise Score Key Management |
| ESSA | Every Student Succeeds Act |
| GPCM | generalized partial credit model |
| HAT | hybrid adaptive test |
| HOSS | highest obtainable scale score |
| HOT | highest obtainable theta |
| ICC | intraclass correlation |

Table of Acronyms and Initialisms *(continuation one)*

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| IEP | individualized education program |
| IFEP | initial fluent English proficient |
| IRT | item response theory |
| ISAAP | Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile |
| JAWS® | Job Access With Speech |
| LEA | local educational agency |
| LOSS | lowest obtainable scale score |
| LOT | lowest obtainable theta |
| MC | multiple choice |
| MI | Measurement Incorporated |
| MLE | maximum likelihood estimation |
| NAEP | National Assessment of Educational Progress |
| NCME | National Council on Measurement in Education |
| NEL | not tested English learner |
| OTI | Office of Testing Integrity |
| PAR | Psychometric Analysis & Research |
| PIN | problem item notification |
| PISA | Program for International Student Assessment |
| PPT | paper–pencil test |
| PT | performance task |
| QWK | quadratic weighted kappa |
| RFEP | reclassified fluent English proficient |
| SBE | State Board of Education |
| SCOE | Sacramento County Office of Education |
| SD | standard deviation |
| SEM | standard error of measurement |
| SFTP | secure file transfer protocol |
| SS | scale score |
| SSID | Statewide Student Identifier |
| SSR | Student Score Report |
| STAIRS | Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System |
| TBD | to be determined |
| TCC | test characteristic curve |
| TDS | test delivery system |
| TIF | test information function |
| TIPS | Technology and Information Processing Services |
| TOMS | Test Operations Management System |
| UEB | Unified English Braille |

Table of Acronyms and Initialisms *(continuation two)*

| **Term** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| USC | United States Code |
| US ED | US Education Department |
| wABC | weighted Area Between the Curves |
| WER | writing extended response |

## Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced testing program, including background information, the purpose of the test, the intended population, and organizations and systems involved. Additionally, this chapter provides a summary of the impact of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on the CAASPP Smarter Balanced test administration (refer to section [*1.7 Impact of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic*](#_Impact_of_the_1)).

### Background

In October 2013, Assembly Bill 484 established the CAASPP as the new student assessment system that replaced the Standardized Testing and Reporting program. The primary purpose of the CAASPP System of assessments is to assist teachers, administrators, and students and their parents/‌guardians by promoting high-quality teaching and learning through the use of a variety of item types and assessment approaches. These tests provide the foundation for the state’s school accountability system.

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics were administered during the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration as a result of California’s participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. This technical report describes the results of that administration.

In 2020–2021, the CAASPP System comprised the following assessments:

* Smarter Balanced assessments and tools:
* Summative Assessments—Computer-based assessments for ELA and mathematics in grades three through eight and grade eleven
* Interim Assessments—Optional resources developed for grades three through eight and grade eleven designed to inform and promote teaching and learning by providing information that can be used to monitor student progress toward mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that may be administered to students at any grade level
* Tools for Teachers—Professional development materials and instructional resources designed to help teachers use formative assessment processes for improved teaching and learning in all grades
* California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) for ELA and mathematics in grades three through eight and grade eleven for students with significant cognitive disabilities
* Science assessments in grades five and eight and high school (grade ten, eleven, or twelve; these are the California Science Test and the CAA for Science)
* The California Spanish Assessment, optional for eligible students in grades three through eight and high school and designed to measure a student’s Spanish competency in reading, writing mechanics, and listening, as well as to serve as a high school measure suitable to be used in part for the California Seal of Biliteracy

The CAASPP Smarter Balanced tests are presented as computer-based assessments. Braille, large-print, and standard paper–pencil test (PPT) versions of the Smarter Balanced assessments are made available to individual students within a local educational agency (LEA) whose need to take a PPT is documented in a student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. Students who repeatedly experience difficulty accessing the computer-based assessments because of technical issues that cannot be resolved within two weeks may be allowed to take a standard PPT, upon approval by the California Department of Education (CDE). The PPT versions are fixed forms (i.e., a test where students are given a fixed set of questions irrespective of the student’s responses or ability) that also include the components of the computer-based assessment such as constructed-response (CR) items and performance tasks (PTs).

More background information about the CAASPP System can be found on the CAASPP Description – *CalEdFacts* web page on the CDE website.

### Test Purposes

The purposes of the Smarter Balanced assessment system are to provide teachers with information and the tools they need to improve teaching and learning and to prepare students for college and career readiness. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, which are aligned with the California CCSS for ELA and mathematics, form one component of the Smarter Balanced assessment system. The summative assessments are comprehensive, end-of-year tests of grade-level learning that measure students’ progress toward college and career readiness.

### Test Content

Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are composed of two required components: a computer adaptive test (CAT) and a PT. A student’s final scale score is calculated by combining the student’s responses to both components.

#### Computer Adaptive Test

The computer-adaptive portion of the test is designed to present items of difficulty to match the ability of each student, as indicated by the responses the student provided to previous test items. By adapting to the student’s ability as the assessment is being taken, the CAT presents an individually tailored set of questions that is appropriate for each student. As a result, it provides more accurate scores for all students across the full range of the achievement continuum. Compared with a fixed-form assessment—that is, a test where all students are given the same questions, regardless of their responses or ability—a CAT requires fewer questions to obtain an equally precise estimate of a student’s ability.

At the beginning of the test, the test delivery system (TDS) assumes that the student is of average ability and presents an item that is appropriate for an average student. During the test, if a student gives an incorrect answer, the TDS will follow up with an easier question or a group of questions; if the student answers correctly, the next question or next group of questions will be slightly more difficult. As the adaptive test continues, the next question or group of questions are based on the student’s answers to all previous questions—the student’s responses to the current item and previous items determine the pathway to a subsequent item.

Because the answers on items used to estimate the student’s ability are machine-scored, the student’s performance on the items already administered is known immediately, and the successive items are selected to adapt to the estimated ability of the student. The CAT selects questions based on a student’s responses, scores the responses, and revises its estimate of the student’s ability. This process continues until the test content outlined in the test’s blueprint is covered.

The CAT requires a large pool of test questions statistically calibrated on a common scale to cover the ability range. For the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, the test question statistics were obtained mainly from the spring 2013–2014 field test. Each year, new items are field-tested and added to the Smarter Balanced item pools. Note that no field test items were administered during the 2020–2021 administration.

#### Performance Tasks

The PT is a nonadaptive portion of a Smarter Balanced content-area assessment designed to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and higher-order thinking skills to explore and analyze a complex, real-world scenario. PTs are assigned to students randomly. (Refer to section [*4.1 Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm*](#_Smarter_Balanced_Adaptive) for additional information about how items are assigned to students.)

Some PT responses are machine-scored, others are human scored. Scores are combined with CAT results for the student’s final score.

### Intended Population

All students enrolled in grades three through eight and grade eleven are required to take part in the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments unless they are eligible to participate in the alternate assessments (*California Code of Regulations*, Title 5 [5*CCR*] Education, Division 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter 3.75, Article 1*,* Section 851.5). English learner (EL) students who are in their first 12 months of attending school in the United States are exempt from taking the ELA portion of the assessment. EL students are defined as follows:

“English learner students are those students for whom there is a report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey **and** who, on the basis of the state approved oral language (grades kindergarten through grade twelve) assessment procedures and literacy (grades three through twelve only), have been determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary to succeed in the school’s regular instructional programs.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

EL students within their first 12 months of enrollment in a US school who choose to participate in taking the ELA assessment are included in the calculation of the percent of students tested, but their scores are excluded from all aggregated calculations so long as the student record has an include indicator of “E” and the condition code “NEL” (not tested English learner). The condition code “NEL” is automatically assigned based on the following criteria when the student’s English language acquisition status is “EL,” the student has been enrolled in a US school for less than twelve months, and one of the following criteria is true:

* Student was enrolled and did not test.
* *or* Student tested but did not meet attemptedness/‌completion status.
* *or* Test is a force-complete.

For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the decision to administer the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments or the CAAs is made by their IEP team. Parents/‌Guardians may submit a written request to have their child exempted from taking any or all parts of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments or CAAs.

Students whose parents/guardians submit a written request are exempted from taking the tests (*Education Code [EC]* Section 60615). Additionally, students who were not tested because of a medical emergency are also exempt.

### Intended Use and Purpose of Test Scores

The results of tests within the CAASPP System are used for two primary purposes as described in *EC* sections 60602.5(a) and (a)(4). (This was excerpted from the *EC* Section 60602 web page.)

“60602.5(a) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this chapter to provide a system of assessments of pupils that has the primary purposes of assisting teachers, administrators, and pupils and their parents; improving teaching and learning; and promoting high-quality teaching and learning using a variety of assessment approaches and item types. The assessments, where applicable and valid, will produce scores that can be aggregated and disaggregated for the purpose of holding schools and local educational agencies accountable for the achievement of all their pupils in learning the California academic content standards.”

“60602.5(a)(4) Provide information to pupils, parents and guardians, teachers, schools, and local educational agencies on a timely basis so that the information can be used to further the development of the pupil and to improve the educational program.”

In other words, results for tests within the CAASPP System are used for two primary purposes:

1. To communicate students’ progress in achieving the state’s academic standards to students, parents/guardians, and teachers
2. To inform decisions that teachers and administrators make about improving the educational program

Sections 60602.5(c) and (d) provide additional information regarding use and purpose of test scores for the system of assessments:

“60602.5(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that parents, classroom teachers, other educators, pupil representatives, institutions of higher education, business community members, and the public be involved, in an active and ongoing basis, in the design and implementation of the statewide pupil assessment system and the development of assessment instruments.”

“60602.5(d) It is the intent of the Legislature, insofar as is practically feasible and following the completion of annual testing, that the content, test structure, and test items in the assessments that are part of the statewide pupil assessment system become open and transparent to teachers, parents, and pupils, to assist stakeholders in working together to demonstrate improvement in pupil academic achievement. A planned change in annual test content, format, or design should be made available to educators and the public well before the beginning of the school year in which the change will be implemented.”

### Testing Window

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for grades three through eight and grade eleven are administered within a testing window pursuant to 5 *CCR,* sections 855(a)(1), 855(a)(2), 855(b), and 855(c). The typical testing window starts in the middle of January and ends in the middle of July. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts to schools, the state testing window for the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments started on February 22 and ended on July 30. The July 30, 2021, date was an approved extension to the legislated testing window and offered LEAs more flexibility in testing, allowing schools more time for students to test, and giving more time to implement an adjusted, shortened-form blueprint.

A student could take the CAASPP Smarter Balanced within the testing window over as many days as required to meet the student’s needs (*5 CCR,* Section 855[a]). Similar to other CAASPP assessments, the Smarter Balanced assessments were untimed for test takers. Refer to subsection [*2.2.1 Test Length*](#_Test_Length) for more information about test length.

### Impact of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

#### Remote Testing Flexibility

When the 2020–2021 school year began, LEAs were offering varying instructional options, with a substantial percentage offering only distance learning options. When the US Department of Education (US ED) notified states that they should not expect waivers of the 2020–2021 annual state assessments, the CDE began exploring options for delivering its annual summative assessments. The approach taken by the CDE was to “allow flexibility for LEAs to utilize multiple test administration options to best meet the needs of students in response to the local context and to ensure the safety and health of students and LEA staff” (CDE, 2021c, p. 4). That flexibility offered LEAs two options for testing students using the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments:

1. Test in person, with both students and test administrators co-located in the same room at a school or other secure location and following physical distancing guidelines.
2. Test remotely, with students and test administrators located at different physical locations. The test administrator would monitor students’ progress throughout the test by using remote monitoring tools connected to the TDS.

Note that remote testing was not available for students taking alternate assessments.

In addition, the flexibility included a local assessment option for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments; if it was not viable for an LEA to administer the Smarter Balanced for ELA and mathematics in person or remotely, an LEA could use a locally administered assessment (CDE, 2021a). In April 2021, the US ED granted a waiver to the CDE for specific accountability and school identification requirements for the 2020–2021 school year, including removing the 95 percent participation rate penalty for the academic indicator (CDE, 2021d).

ETS investigated test score validity and, in particular, whether the test options used in the 2020–2021 administration impacted student testing performance and whether the test options used in the 2020–2021 administration impacted student testing experience that, in turn, impacted the test score interpretation. Refer to subsection [*5.1.2 Remote and In-Person Testing*](#_Remote_and_In-Person), section [*8.7 Test Location—Remote Versus In-Person Analysis*](#_Test__Location), and section [*12.4 Summary of Location Analysis*](#_Summary_of_Location) for additional information.

#### Adjusted, Shortened-Form Blueprints

To lessen the testing burden for educators and students and to reduce the likelihood of remote students experiencing a technology-related test disruption, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium revised the blueprints for the computer-based assessments to minimize the testing time. The adjusted, shortened-form blueprints, which are described in subsections [*2.2.2 Test Blueprints*](#_Test_Blueprints) and [*4.1.1 Content Match*](#_Content_Match) and available in appendix 2.A, were used for the ELA and mathematics assessments in the 2020–2021 administration.

However, in the adjusted blueprint, the number of items in each claim was not reliable enough to report claim level information at the individual student level. As a result, individual claim level information was not available for Student Score Reports.

#### Test-Taking Rates in the 2020–2021 Administration

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the school year, and whether students returned to in-person learning, varied greatly across the state. The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted how students were tested, as remote administration was introduced and widely used.

Table 1.1 lists the total number of students who completed the CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments in the 2020–2021 administration, as well as the totals by test location and the total percentage of students who completed testing. In-person testing involves arranging both students and test administrators to be co-located in the same room at a school or other secure location while following physical distancing guidelines. Remote testing involves students and test administrators being present at different physical locations; the test administrator would monitor students’ progress throughout the test by using remote monitoring tools connected to the TDS.

Table 1.1 Total Number of Students Taking the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Assessments in the 2020–2021 Administration

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Content Area | Grade | Registered | Total Started | Total Completed | Completed Remotely | Completed in Person | Completed Mixed | Percent Total Completed |
| ELA | Grade 3 | 432,977 | 81,843 | 80,029 | 30,525 | 45,886 | 3,618 | 18% |
| ELA | Grade 4 | 440,253 | 84,262 | 82,494 | 31,883 | 46,666 | 3,945 | 19% |
| ELA | Grade 5 | 442,326 | 86,043 | 84,164 | 33,794 | 46,349 | 4,021 | 19% |
| ELA | Grade 6 | 433,521 | 90,783 | 87,259 | 39,228 | 41,841 | 6,190 | 20% |
| ELA | Grade 7 | 452,841 | 103,702 | 96,798 | 49,071 | 39,846 | 7,881 | 21% |
| ELA | Grade 8 | 460,657 | 105,140 | 98,297 | 50,452 | 39,331 | 8,514 | 21% |
| ELA | Grade 11 | 471,255 | 225,289 | 207,139 | 140,173 | 56,308 | 10,658 | 44% |

Table 1.1 *(continuation)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Content Area | Grade | Registered | Total Started | Total Completed | Completed Remotely | Completed in Person | Completed Mixed | Percent Total Completed |
| Mathematics | Grade 3 | 432,977 | 87,102 | 85,277 | 32,457 | 50,553 | 2,267 | 20% |
| Mathematics | Grade 4 | 440,252 | 89,601 | 87,802 | 34,153 | 50,938 | 2,711 | 20% |
| Mathematics | Grade 5 | 442,325 | 91,222 | 89,402 | 36,076 | 50,705 | 2,621 | 20% |
| Mathematics | Grade 6 | 433,519 | 90,722 | 87,368 | 40,334 | 43,524 | 3,510 | 20% |
| Mathematics | Grade 7 | 452,840 | 102,764 | 96,828 | 50,804 | 41,050 | 4,974 | 21% |
| Mathematics | Grade 8 | 460,657 | 104,220 | 97,837 | 52,321 | 40,788 | 4,728 | 21% |
| Mathematics | Grade 11 | 471,254 | 216,317 | 199,959 | 137,661 | 55,351 | 6,947 | 42% |

The total percent completed was derived from the total completed divided by registered. Results show about 24 percent of students, on average, completed the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in ELA and mathematics. In ELA, the testing rate was about 23 percent, with a low percentage of 18 in grade three and a high percentage of 44 in high school. In mathematics, the testing rate was about 24 percent, with a low percentage of 20 in grades three through six and a high percentage of 42 in high school. “Completion” means that a student answered at least 10 CAT questions, at least one PT question, and was eligible to receive test scores.

Note that, in table 1.1, the *Completed Mixed* column includes students who tested in a combination of remote and in-person locations.

### Significant CAASPP Developments in 2020–2021

#### Remote Testing

LEAs were heavily impacted by the school and business shutdowns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts carried over into the beginning of the 2020–2021 CAASPP test administration. The CDE and ETS worked together to develop a way to allow schools to administer the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments to students remotely that included the following updates:

* The Student Testing Interface was enhanced to enable students to access the interim assessments when the student could not be tested at the school or LEA in person. This web-based interface was not available for summative assessments, so all students used the secure browser.
* The secure browser and web-based browser were updated with the following new features:
* One-on-one chatting or voice or video calls with the test administrator
* A raise-hand feature to signal the test administrator for attention
* Ability to approve a request from the test administrator to share a screen
* The Test Administrator Interface was updated with the following new features:
* Selection of an option to indicate whether the test session was in person or remote (for tracking and analysis purposes)
* One-on-one chatting or voice or video calls with a student
* One-way broadcast of messages to the students in the test session
* Multiple monitoring options (gallery or list views of testing students)
* Ability to request the student to share a screen
* Remote testing instructions and scripts were developed for test administrators, providing remote logon instructions.
* Remote testing administration videos were created to show test administrators how to give a remote test; how to monitor a remote test session; and how to schedule, start, and stop a remote test session.
* A video was created for students and parents/guardians to introduce them to remote testing.

#### Accessibility Resources

The following accessibility resource–related updates were made:

* CAASPP Matrix One was combined with the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California Matrix Four to create the California Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix that serves both testing programs.
* An increased number of prefetched items for braille embossing were sent to the embosser prior to the student’s reaching the item when the auto emboss feature was enabled for tests presented in braille. This feature enhancement allowed for items in fixed-form tests to be printed or embossed prior to the student’s reaching the item in the test, thus speeding up the testing time for students with the braille accommodation.
* A break was considered both an embedded and a non-embedded universal tool.
* Students in grade three could use the non-embedded 100s number table accommodation; the non-embedded 100s number table for grade three was no longer considered an unlisted resource.
* Students in grade three could use the non-embedded multiplication table accommodation; the multiplication table for grade three was no longer considered an unlisted resource.
* The multiplication table accessibility resource was expanded to a 12 × 12 table.
* The description of the scratch paper resource indicated that students could create graphic organizers.
* Text-to-speech could be established independently of assigned tests, which means that a student could be assigned text-to-speech in ELA but not mathematics, or vice versa. It remained a designated support for all but ELA passages, where it was an accommodation.

#### Updated Lowest Obtainable Scale Score and Highest Obtainable Scale Score

In the 2020–2021 administration, revised lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS) and highest obtainable scale score (HOSS) values provided by the CDE were implemented for student scale score reporting. These new LOSS and HOSS values were a modification of the initial LOSS and HOSS values the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium provided based on the 2014–2015 field test administration. The revisions of the LOSS and HOSS values were based on California student test results from the 2015–2016 through 2018–‍2019 administrations and resulted in fewer students falling below the LOSS or above the HOSS. Therefore, students’ growth over years can be measured more effectively. Note that the updates of LOSS and HOSS occurred before the blueprint for the computer-based assessment was adjusted and also apply to the results of the PPTs that use the full-form blueprint.

#### Lexile and Quantile Scores

Lexile scores, Lexile reader measure, and Quantile scores were reported on the SSRs in the 2020–2021 administration. Lexile scores and Quantile scores are derived from students’ Smarter Balanced scale scores by MetaMetrics®. A Lexile score describes a student’s reading ability and connects students with useful materials that are at the appropriate difficulty level to challenge students’ reading and promote reading improvement (MetaMetrics, 2020a). A Quantile score indicates how well a student understands mathematical concepts and skills at the student’s grade level and connects targeted mathematical resources that appropriately match to students for further learning (MetaMetrics, 2020b).

### Groups and Organizations Involved with the CAASPP System

#### California State Board of Education

The California State Board of Education (SBE) is the state agency that establishes educational policy for kindergarten through grade twelve in the areas of standards, instructional materials, assessment, and accountability. The SBE adopts textbooks for kindergarten through grade eight, adopts regulations to implement legislation, and has the authority to grant waivers of the *EC*.

In addition to adopting the rules and regulations for itself, its appointees, and California’s public schools, the SBE is also the state educational agency responsible for overseeing California’s compliance with programs that meet the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act as well as the state’s Public School Accountability Act that measures the academic performance and progress of schools on a variety of academic metrics (CDE, 2021f).

#### California Department of Education

The CDE oversees California’s public school system, which is responsible for the education of more than 6,000,000 children and young adults in more than 10,500 schools.[[2]](#footnote-3) California aims to provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood. The CDE serves the state by innovating and collaborating with educators, school staff, parents/guardians, and community partners which together, as a team, prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a highly connected world.

Within the CDE, it is the Instruction, Measurement, & Administration Branch that oversees programs promoting improved student achievement. Programs include oversight of statewide assessments and the collection and reporting of educational data (CDE, 2021e).

#### California Educators

A variety of California educators, including teachers and school administrators—who were selected based on their qualifications, experiences, demographics, and geographic locations—were invited to participate in various aspects of the assessment process prior to the current administration. This included defining the purpose and scope, test design, item development, and standard setting. In 2020–2021, California educators were involved in scoring of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment CR items.

#### Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a public agency governed by a consortium of states, of which California is a member. The Consortium created a computer-based assessment system aligned to the CCSS that is comprised of year-end summative assessments and optional interim assessments (Smarter Balanced, n.d.). Smarter Balanced provided the collection of test items in the item bank as well as provided access to Tools for Teachers. Tools for Teachers is a tool offered by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. It provides an online collection of resources to help teachers improve classroom-based assessment practices.

Finally, Smarter Balanced developed and hosts the California Educator Reporting System (CERS), which was used to report summative test results for the first time in 2020–2021.

#### Contractors

##### Primary Testing Contractor—ETS

The CDE and the SBE contract with ETS to administer and report the CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments. As the primary testing contractor, ETS has overall responsibility for working with the CDE to implement and maintain an effective assessment system and coordinating ETS’ work with its subcontractors.

Activities conducted directly by ETS include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Providing management of the program activities
* Supporting and training county offices of education, LEAs, and direct funded charter schools
* Providing a tiered help desk support system for LEAs
* Constructing, producing, and controlling the quality of PPT booklets and related test materials
* Developing processes and scripts associated with remote testing
* Hosting and maintaining a website with resources for LEA CAASPP coordinators
* Developing, hosting, and providing support for the Test Operations Management System (TOMS)
* Supporting CERS
* Processing student test assignments
* Processing orders and shipment of test materials
* Servicing all aspects of CR scoring for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments
* Producing and distributing score reports electronically
* Developing a summary score reporting website that can be viewed by the public
* Completing all psychometric procedures

##### Subcontractor—Cambium Assessment, Inc.

ETS also monitors and manages the work of Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI), subcontractor to ETS for the CAASPP System of computer-based assessments. Activities conducted by CAI include

* providing the CAI proprietary TDS, including the Student Testing Interface, Test Administrator Interface, secure browser, and practice and training tests;
* hosting and providing support for its TDS, a component of the overall CAASPP Assessment Delivery System;
* scoring machine-scorable items; and
* providing high-level technology help desk support to LEAs for technology issues directly related to the TDS.

##### Subcontractor—Measurement Incorporated

ETS monitors and manages the work of Measurement Incorporated (MI), a subcontractor to ETS for the CAASPP System. MI uses its artificial intelligence (AI) scoring system to score some of the CR items for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments.

##### Subcontractor—Sacramento County Office of Education

ETS contracted with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) to manage all activities associated with educator recruitment, training, and outreach, including the following:

* Supporting and training county offices of education, LEAs, and charter schools
* Developing informational materials
* Recruiting and providing logistics for educator meetings

### Systems Overview and Functionality

#### Test Operations Management System

TOMS is the password-protected, web-based system used by LEAs to manage all aspects of CAASPP testing. TOMS serves various functions, including, but not limited to, the following:

* Managing test administration windows
* Assigning and managing CAASPP online user roles
* Managing student test assignments and accessibility resources
* Ordering test materials
* Viewing and downloading reports
* Reporting security incidents
* Providing a platform for authorized user access to secure materials, such as CAA *Directions for Administration,* student data and results, CAASPP user information, and access to the CAASPP Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System/Appeals process

TOMS receives student enrollment data and LEA and school hierarchy data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) via a daily feed. CALPADS is “a longitudinal data system used to maintain individual-level data including student demographics, course data, discipline, assessments, staff assignments, and other data for state and federal reporting.”[[3]](#footnote-4) LEA staff involved in the administration of the CAASPP assessments—such as LEA CAASPP coordinators, CAASPP test site coordinators, test administrators, and test examiners—are assigned varying levels of access to TOMS. For example, only an LEA CAASPP coordinator is given permission to set up the LEA’s test administration window; a test administrator cannot download student reports. A description of user roles is explained more extensively in the *2020–2021 CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021b).

#### Test Delivery System

The TDS is the means by which the statewide computer-based assessments are delivered to students. CAT items are selected in the TDS according to an adaptive algorithm (American Institutes for Research, 2014). Components of the TDS include

* the Test Administrator Interface, the web browser–based application that allows test administrators to activate student tests and monitor student testing;
* the Student Testing Interface, on which students take the test using the secure browser; and
* the secure browser, the computer-based application through which the Student Testing Interface may be accessed. The secure browser prevents students from accessing other applications during testing.

#### Practice and Training Tests

The practice and training tests were provided to LEAs to prepare students and LEA staff for administration of the summative assessment. These tests simulated the experience of the Smarter Balanced computer-based assessments. Unlike the summative assessments, the practice and training tests did not assess standards, gauge student success on the operational test, or produce scores. Students, teachers, and the public could access them using a web browser, although accessing them through the secure browser permitted students to take the tests using the text-to-speech embedded accommodation and to test assistive technology. As remote testing was added for the 2020–2021 administration, the practice and training tests permitted test administrators and students to practice using the remote monitoring and communication features.

The purposes of the training tests are to

* allow students and administrators to quickly become familiar with the user interface and components of the TDS as well as with the process of starting and completing a testing session;
* allow students and administrators to experience a grade-level assessment, grade-specific items and difficulty levels, PTs, and the format and structure of an operational assessment; and
* provide an opportunity for educators to assign embedded designated supports and accommodations and determine how they worked for their students prior to using the resources in an operational test setting.

#### California Educator Reporting System

CERS is the system used by LEAs to view preliminary student results from the CAASPP assessments. The primary purpose of CERS is to provide educators and administrators with access to timely test results data for individual students and groups of students.

CERS allows educators to view their students’ assessment results at the individual student level and at the aggregated level using grouping and other features. For example, educators can create customized groups from assigned student groups based on demographic information, achievement level, or other characteristics of their choosing. The student results sent to CERS are appropriate for analysis of assessment results for use in planning instruction.

#### Constructed-Response Scoring Systems for ETS and Measurement Incorporated

CR items from the TDS were routed to either ETS’ or MI’s CR scoring systems based on the division of work between ETS and MI. CR items were scored by certified raters. A small percentage of CR items were deemed appropriate to be scored by the AI system and were routed for both AI scoring and human scoring for the purpose of producing agreement samples. More information regarding scoring of CR items is available in [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1).

Targeted efforts were made to hire California educators for human scoring opportunities. Hired raters were provided in-depth training and certified before starting the human scoring process. Human raters were organized under a scoring leader and provided Smarter Balanced scoring materials such as anchor sets, scoring rubrics, validity samples, qualifying sets, and condition codes for unscorable responses within the interface. The quality control processes for CR scoring are explained further in [*Chapter 9: Quality Control Procedures*](#_Quality_Control_Procedures).

### Overview of the Technical Report

This technical report addresses the characteristics of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment administered in spring 2021. The technical report contains 11 additional chapters as follows:

* [Chapter 2](#_Overview_of_CAASPP_1) presents an overview of the processes involved in a testing cycle for a Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment. This includes test administration, generation of test scores, and dissemination of score reports. It also includes information about the assignment of designated supports and accommodations.
* [Chapter 3](#_Item_Development_1) discusses the procedures followed during the development of Smarter Balanced items to help ensure valid interpretation of test scores.
* [Chapter 4](#_Test_Assembly_1) discusses the content and psychometric criteria that guide the construction of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.
* [Chapter 5](#_Chapter_5:_Test) details the processes involved in the administration of the 2020–2021 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. It also describes the procedures followed by ETS to maintain test security throughout the test administration process.
* [Chapter 6](#_Standard_Setting_1) discusses the standard setting process outlined by Smarter Balanced.
* [Chapter 7](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1) summarizes the types of scores and score reports that are produced at the end of each administration of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.
* [Chapter 8](#_Analyses) summarizes the results of the analyses performed on the data resulting from the 2020–2021 administration. These include
* item response theory parameters,
* omission and completion analyses,
* conditional exposure analyses,
* reliability analyses that include assessments of the reliability of test scores and claim scores for the population as a whole and for selected student groups,
* consistency and accuracy of the performance-level classifications,
* interrater reliability statistics for the human-scored items and statistics showing the agreement of AI scoring with human scoring, and
* procedures designed to ensure the validity of score uses and interpretations.
* [Chapter 9](#_Quality_Control_Procedures) highlights the quality control processes used at various stages of administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments.
* [Chapter 10](#_Historical_Comparisons) presents cross-sectional and longitudinal historical comparisons of the overall tests for all students and selected student groups. Descriptions and data are provided on the basis of student performance and test characteristics.
* [Chapter 11](#_Paper–Pencil_Version_of) provides a summary of test assembly, test administration, calibration, and scaling procedures that are specifically applied to the PPTs; and the number of students who took PPTs instead of the computer-based assessments. However, note that psychometric analyses were not conducted because of the small sample size (only 25 students across grades).
* [Chapter 12](#_Continuous_Improvement) discusses the various procedures used to gather information to improve the Smarter Balanced assessments as well as strategies to implement possible improvements.

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## Overview of CAASPP Smarter Balanced Processes

This chapter provides an overview of the processes involved in a testing cycle for a Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment. This includes test administration, generation of test scores, and dissemination of score reports. It also includes information about the distributions of scores aggregated by student groups based on demographics and the assignment of designated supports and accommodations.

### Item Development

All items in the Smarter Balanced operational item bank for the first year of testing were developed and revised during the pilot and field test periods. Thereafter, Smarter Balanced items are developed dynamically. New items are developed and field-tested by being embedded in the operational tests. Each year, some new items are added into the Smarter Balanced operational item banks, and some poorly performing items are removed from the item banks.

During item development, item and performance task (PT) specifications provide guidance on how to translate the Smarter Balanced content specifications into actual assessment items (Smarter Balanced, 2016, 2017, and 2018b). Guidelines for bias and sensitivity, accessibility and accommodations, and style help item developers and reviewers ensure consistency and fairness across the item development process. These specifications and guidelines from Smarter Balanced were reviewed by member states, local educational agencies (LEAs), higher education professionals, and other stakeholders (Smarter Balanced, 2016). For more information regarding the item response theory (IRT) methodology used by Smarter Balanced to form the basis for new item development, test equating, and computer adaptive testing, refer to chapter 8 of the *2018–19 Smarter Balanced Summative Technical Report (Smarter Balanced, 2020).*

#### Item Format

The Smarter Balanced assessments include the following computer-based item formats:

* Selected response
* Constructed response
* Technology enhanced

Formats for these item types are described in more detail in subsection [*7.1.3 Types of Item Responses*](#_Types_of_Item)*.*

#### Item Specifications

The item specifications describe the characteristics of the items that should be written to measure each content standard. Items of the same type should consistently measure the content standards in the same way. The *Smarter Balanced Item and Task Specifications* were given to item developers to help ensure that the tests are measuring the intended constructs without influence from extraneous factors. These documents contain item specification tables and provide item writers with definitions of the constructs that are intended to support the claims of measurement and clear direction regarding the types of evidence needed for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills (Smarter Balanced, 2016, 2017, and 2018b); note that because these specifications were reorganized following the initial development, their publication dates were updated.

### Test Assembly

#### Test Length

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) computer-based summative assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics are composed of two portions: the computer adaptive test (CAT) and the PT.

##### Operational Testing

The number of PT items that a student is administered depends on the particular PT a student is assigned randomly at the student level. Refer to table 5.A.1 in appendix 5.A for the number of items in each PT. Refer to table 5.B.1 through table 5.B.3 in appendix 5.B for the distributions of the number of items presented to students in the total test, CAT, and PT components, respectively.

The number of CAT items encountered in an individual testing session may vary from student to student. The length of the CAT portion is determined by the termination rule of the CAT engine, which includes the following conditions:

1. Administer at least a specified minimum number of items in each reporting category and overall
2. Achieve a target level of precision on the overall test score
3. Achieve a target level of precision on all reporting categories

The termination rule of CAASPP assessments is discussed in more detail in the *Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm Design Report* (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2014).

##### Field Testing

Field test PTs have been embedded into the Smarter Balanced operational tests since the 2016–2017 administration. Students who were assigned an embedded field test PT were not assigned an operational PT. Instead, they were assigned a CAT version with additional items for the purpose of reporting aggregated claim results. For ELA, these students received three additional items. For mathematics, these students received two additional items. Refer to *Enhanced Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) Blueprints for Students Participating in the 2019–2020 Smarter Balanced Embedded Field Test of Performance Tasks (PTs)* in *Appendix 2.A: Smarter Balanced Test Blueprints* for the number of CAT items with embedded field test PTs in the blueprints (Smarter Balanced, 2018a). No embedded field test PTs were administered during the 2020–2021 administration.

#### Test Blueprints

##### Operational Items

Blueprints represent a set of constraints and specifications to which each test form must conform. Each grade band—grades three through five, grades six through eight, and grade eleven—of the Smarter Balanced assessments includes a separate blueprint (appendix 2.A) with criteria including, but not limited to,

* whether the test is adaptive or fixed form,
* termination conditions for the segment,
* content constraints such as minimum or maximum number of items administered in each content category, and
* nonnested content constraints such as priority weights for a group of items.

In the 2020–2021 administration, the California Department of Education (CDE) adopted the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment adjusted, shortened-form blueprints for ELA and mathematics computer-based assessments. The paper–pencil test (PPT) and the braille hybrid adaptive test used the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment full-form blueprint. The adjusted blueprint reduced the number of items in the CAT. Both the adjusted-form blueprint and the full-form blueprint are included in appendix 2.A.

##### Field Test Items

Because there were no embedded field test PTs administered in 2020–2021, the blueprints for the field test are not provided. In a typical administration with embedded field test PTs, the field test PTs do not contribute to score reporting. Instead, the additional operational CAT items as shown in the field test blueprints are counted into score reporting.

#### Item Selection

In the CAT portion of each assessment, items are presented to a student according to the adaptive algorithm mapped onto the test blueprint (AIR, 2015). Use of the adaptive algorithm in 2015–2016 testing and simulation studies in the following years are discussed in the report *Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments Testing Procedures for Adaptive Item-Selection Algorithm* (AIR, 2015; Smarter Balanced, 2019).

For more information regarding test length, refer to [*Chapter 5: Test Administration*](#_Chapter_5:_Test); the test blueprints (including adjusted, shortened-form blueprints for regular computer-based testing and full blueprints for braille HAT forms and the PPTs) are provided in appendix 2.A. Refer also to the *ELA/Literacy Adjusted Form Summative Assessment Blueprint* and the *Mathematics Adjusted Form Summative Assessment Blueprint* on the Smarter Balanced website (Smarter Balanced, 2021a and 2021b).

### Test Administration

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments were administered using the secure browser and test delivery system (TDS), ensuring a secure, confidential, standardized, consistent, and appropriate administration for students. Additional information about the administration of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced can be found in [*Chapter 5: Test Administration*](#_Chapter_5:_Test).

#### Test Security and Confidentiality

All operational tests within the CAASPP System are secure. For the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment administration, every person having access to test materials maintained the security and confidentiality of the tests. ETS’ internal Code of Ethics requires that all test information, including tangible materials (such as test booklets, test questions, and test results), confidential files, processes, and activities were kept secure. To ensure security for all tests that ETS develops or handles, ETS maintains an Office of Testing Integrity (OTI). A detailed description of the OTI and its mission is presented in subsection [*5.2.1 ETS’ Office of Testing Integrity*](#_ETS’_Office_of) in [*Chapter 5: Test Administration*](#_Chapter_5:_Test).

In the pursuit of enforcing secure practices, ETS strives to safeguard the various processes involved in a test development and administration cycle. Those processes are listed next. The practices related to each of the following security processes are discussed in detail in section [*5.2 Test Security and Confidentiality*](#_Test_Security_and):

* [Procedures to maintain standardization of test security](#_Procedures_to_Maintain_1)
* [Test security monitoring](#_Test_Security_Monitoring)
* [Security of electronic files using a firewall](#_Security_of_Electronic_1)
* [Transfer of scores via secure data exchange](#_Transfer_of_Scores)
* [Data management in the secure database](#_Data_Management_in)
* [Statistical analysis on secure servers](#_Statistical_Analysis_on)
* [Student confidentiality](#_Student_Confidentiality)
* [Student test results](#_Student_Test_Results)

#### Procedures to Maintain Standardization

ETS takes all necessary measures to ensure the standardization of administration of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. The measures for standardization include, but are not limited to, the aspects described in the following subsections.

##### Test Administrators

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are administered in conjunction with the other assessments that compose the CAASPP System. ETS employs processes to ensure the standardization of an administration cycle; these processes are discussed in more detail in section [*5.4 Procedures to Maintain Standardization*](#_Procedures_to_Maintain_2).

Staff at LEAs involved in the CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration include LEA CAASPP coordinators, CAASPP test site coordinators, and test administrators. The responsibilities of each of the staff members are described in the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021c).

##### Test Directions

Several series of instructions regarding the CAASPP administration are compiled in detailed manuals and provided to the LEA staff. Such documents include, but are not limited to, the following:

* ***CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual*—**This is a web-based manual that provides test administration procedures and guidelines for LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators, as well as the script and *Directions for Administration* to be followed exactly by test administrators during a testing session (CDE, 2021c). (Refer to [*5.4.4.2 CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual*](#_5.4.4.2_CAASPP_Online) in [chapter 5](#_Chapter_5:_Test) for more information.)
* ***Spring Administration Information for Educators—***This is a web-based manual that was developed in response to the need to test students remotely. It supplements the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021d). (Refer to [*5.4.4.3 Spring Administration Information for Educators*](#_Spring_Administration_Information) in [chapter 5](#_Chapter_5:_Test) for more information.)
* ***CAASPP and ELPAC Test Operations Management System (TOMS) User Guide*—**This is a web-based manual that provides instructions for TOMS, allowing LEA staff, including LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators, to perform a number of tasks including setting up test administrations, adding and managing users, assigning tests, and configuring computer-based student test settings (CDE, 2021b). (Refer to [*5.4.4.4 CAASPP and ELPAC Test Operations Management System User Guide*](#_CAASPP_and_ELPAC) in [chapter 5](#_Chapter_5:_Test) for more information.)

### Fairness and Accessibility

All students enrolled in grades three through eight and grade eleven are required to participate in the Smarter Balanced mathematics assessment, except for the following:

* Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for the CAA for ELA alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (approximately 1 percent or less of the student population) take the CAA for ELA. The decision to assign a student to take an alternate assessment is made by the student’s IEP team.
* English learner (EL) students who are within their first 12 months of enrollment in a US school as determined after April 15 of the previous school year have a one-time exemption from the Smarter Balanced for ELA assessment. These students may instead participate in the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California.

#### Overview

There are several procedures in place to ensure that the CAASPP Smarter Balanced is fair and accessible to all test takers. This section provides information on the available accessibility resources.

All public school students participate in the CAASPP System of assessments, including students with disabilities and EL students. Additional resources are sometimes needed for these students. The CDE provides a full range of assessment resources for all students, including those who are EL students and students with disabilities.

#### Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

There are four different categories of student accessibility resources in the California assessment accessibility system, including universal tools, designated supports, accommodations, and unlisted resources that are permitted for use in CAASPP computer-based assessments. These are listed in the CDE California Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix (Accessibility Matrix) (CDE, 2020).

**Universal tools** are available to all students. These resources may be turned on and off when embedded as part of the technology platform for the computer-based CAASPP assessments on the basis of student preference and selection.

**Designated supports** are available to all students when determined as needed by an educator or team of educators, with parent/guardian and student input as appropriate, or when specified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan.

**Accommodations** must be permitted on CAASPP assessments for all eligible students when specified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan.

**Unlisted resources** are non-embedded and made available if specified in the eligible student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and only on approval by the CDE.

Appendix 2.B presents counts and percentages of students assigned designated supports, accommodations, and unlisted resources for PTs and CAT, respectively, during the 2020–‍2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration. The tables in appendix 2.B were created using student demographic data in version 2 of the production data file (“P2”) updated on September 27, 2021.

The majority of students did not use any designated supports, accommodations, or unlisted resources.

##### Selection

The full list of the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations used in CAASPP computer-based assessments, including Smarter Balanced assessments, is documented in the Accessibility Matrix (CDE, 2020). Most embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations listed in parts 1, 2, and 3 of the Accessibility Matrix are available for the Smarter Balanced assessments through the computer-based testing interface or, in the case of non-embedded resources, from the school or LEA. Part 5 of the Accessibility Matrix includes approved unlisted resources. School-level personnel, IEP teams, and Section 504 teams used the Accessibility Matrix when deciding how best to support the student’s test-taking experience.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* (“*Guidelines*”) (Smarter Balanced, 2020) aids in the selection of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations deemed necessary for individual students.[[4]](#footnote-5) The *Guidelines* apply to all students and promote an individualized approach to the implementation of assessment practices. The *Guidelines* are intended to provide Smarter Balanced policy regarding universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. Another manual, the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Implementation Guide* (Smarter Balanced, 2014),provides suggestions for implementation of these resources.

##### Assignment

Designated supports and accommodations are assigned to individual students on the basis of identified student need. Such assignments are implemented in TOMS by the LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator, either through individual assignment through the student’s profile in TOMS or in a batch upload for multiple students. When the batch upload process was used, settings were uploaded into TOMS using a spreadsheet with data that had either been entered into a template downloaded from TOMS; or created by selecting and entering information into the web-based Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) Tool. The ISAAP Tool could be used by LEAs in conjunction with the *Guidelines* and the 2020–2021 CAASPP and ELPAC Accessibility Guide for Online Testing (CDE, 2021a), as well as with state regulations and policies (such as the Accessibility Matrix) related to assessment accessibility*.*

The embedded designated supports and accommodations were delivered to the student through the TDS at the time of testing; the non-embedded designated supports and accommodations were provided at the time of testing to the student by the LEA. Refer to section [*1.10 Systems Overview and Functionality*](#_Systems_Overview_and_1) in [*Chapter 1: Introduction*](#_Introduction) for more details regarding the TDS.

##### Delivery

Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations can be delivered as either embedded or non-embedded resources. Embedded resources are digitally delivered features or settings available as part of the technology platform for the computer-based CAASPP assessments. Examples of embedded resources include the braille language resource, color contrast, and closed-captioning for ELA listening items.

Non-embedded resources are available, when provided by the LEA, for both computer-based and PPT CAASPP assessments. These resources are not part of the technology platform for the computer-administered CAASPP tests. Examples of non-embedded resources include magnification, noise buffers, and the use of a scribe.

Refer to subsection [*5.6.1 Accessibility Resource Categories*](#_Universal_Tools,_Designated_1) for a detailed description of the accessibility resources available to students taking the Smarter Balanced assessments.

### Scores

Individual student scores were reported for the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration. For information regarding score specifications and score reports, refer to [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1).

#### Score Reporting

TOMS is a secure website hosted by ETS that permits LEA users to manage aspects of CAASPP test administration such as test assignment and the assignment of test settings. TOMS also provides a secure means for LEA CAASPP coordinators to download SSRs as PDF files.

CAASPP scores can also be viewed through the California Educator Reporting System (CERS), a secure website that provided authorized users with interactive and cumulative online reports for ELA and mathematics at the student, school, and LEA levels. CERS also provided an individual score report. Refer to subsection [*7.6.1 Online Reporting*](#_Online_Reporting) for details about TOMS and CERS and subsection [*7.6.3 Types of Score Reports*](#_Types_of_Score) for the content of each type of score report.

#### Aggregation Procedures

To provide meaningful results to the stakeholders, CAASPP scores for a given grade were aggregated at the school, LEA or direct funded charter school, county, and state levels. State-level results are available on the Test Results for California’s Assessments website. The aggregated scores were presented for all students or selected demographic student groups.

Aggregated scores were generated by combining student scores. They could be created by combining results at the state, LEA or direct funded charter school, or school level; combining for all students; or by combining results for students who represent selected demographic student groups.

Aggregation procedures used to present CAASPP Smarter Balanced results are described in section [*7.5 Overview of Score Aggregation Procedures*](#_Overview_of_Score) of this report. Aggregated scores that summarize student performance by grade for selected groups of students are provided in table 7.E.1 through table 7.E.28 in appendix 7.E. The tables show the numbers of students with valid scores in each group, scale score means and standard deviations, and percentage in an achievement level. Students are grouped by demographic characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, English-language fluency, primary disability, economic status, migrant status, military status, and homeless status. Definitions for the demographic student groups included in these tables are provided in table 7.17.

### Calibration and Scaling

IRT methods are ideally suited to the assessments and measurement goals of Smarter Balanced in both establishing a common scale and ongoing maintenance of the program. The purpose of calibration, equating, and scaling using IRT methods is to place item difficulty and student ability estimates at all grade levels in each content area onto a common theta scale. As a result, scores on different versions of the same test are statistically adjusted to compensate for any differences in difficulty between the test versions.

The Common Core State Standards were developed with the intent of supporting inferences concerning a student’s change in achievement (i.e., progress) as demonstrated by performance on the corresponding assessments. *Vertical scaling* is an approach that places test scores across grades onto a common scale. A vertical scale is a single scale for scores on tests at different grade levels of the same content area. Reporting scores on a vertical scale allows student progress to be tracked for a particular content area across grade levels; it is expected that students’ proficiency increases across different levels of the assessment. An advantage of vertical scaling is that progress expectations concerning the establishment of achievement levels across grades can be inspected and ordered by standard setting panelists.

All items used on the Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments were calibrated within grade and vertically scaled during the 2013–2014 Smarter Balanced field test phase (Smarter Balanced, 2016). These activities supported the creation of scale scores.

The basic steps in the process of scaling the scores in each content area—ELA or mathematics—are as follows:

1. Calibrate the items at each grade level
2. Transform the ability scales at the different grade levels onto a common ability scale
3. Transform the common ability scale onto the reported score scale by applying a single linear transformation for all grade levels

The reported test scores for the 2020–2021 administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments were expressed on the baseline scale. The baseline scale was defined following the 2013–2014 Smarter Balanced field test administration first. Items developed in later years were linked to the baseline scale after being field tested.

#### Calibration

Unidimensional IRT models were used for calibration. Based on the psychometric research conducted during the pilot and field test phases by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, the two-parameter logistic (2PL) model (Birnbaum,1968) and the generalized partial credit model (GPCM) (Muraki, 1992) were chosen for calibration. Refer to equation 7.1 in subsection [*7.4.1.1 Theta Scores*](#_Theta_Scores) for the 2PL model and GPCM formulas.

Item parameter calibration software, model-to-data fit, and evaluation of vertical scale anchor items are described in more detail in chapter 6 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016). The summary statistics describing the distribution of item difficulty and discrimination parameter estimates at each grade level for the 2020–2021 administration item pool are available in appendix 8.A.

#### Horizontal Scaling

Item parameters derived for the Smarter Balanced assessments were linked during the Smarter Balanced field test administration by concurrently calibrating items within each grade for each content area. The calibration approach relied on a hybrid of the “common items” approach and the “randomly equivalent groups” linking approach. The common items approach requires that items and tasks partially overlap and be administered to different student samples. For the randomly equivalent groups approach, the test items presented to different student samples are considered as comparably “on scale” by virtue of the random equivalence of the groups. The horizontal linking design incorporated both types of approaches and was accomplished by assembling test versions with partially overlapping test content and randomly assigning the test versions to students.

#### Vertical Scaling

After the grade-specific horizontal scaling was conducted for a content area, a separate, cross-grade, vertical scaling was conducted by Smarter Balanced consortium using common items (vertical linking items). To implement the vertical scaling, representative sets of off-grade items were administered to some students in the next lower adjacent grade—for example, a set of grade five items was administered to some students in grade four.

Vertical linking item sets were intended to sample the construct that included both the CAT and PT components and associated item types as well as claims that conformed to the test blueprint. Linking items from the lower grade were administered to the upper-adjacent-grade–level students. Content experts designated a target grade for each item and a minimum and maximum grade designation. A set of PTs was given on-grade; the same set was administered off-grade for vertical linking.

The vertical scaling was undertaken separately for ELA and for mathematics, using grade six as the base grade. Grade seven was linked to grade six, and then grade eight was linked to grade seven, and so forth, until grade eleven was placed onto the vertical scale. Likewise, grade five was linked to grade six, grade four was linked to grade five, and so forth, until grade three was placed onto the vertical scale (refer to figure 2.1).

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 11

Figure 2.1 Vertical scaling

Once the Smarter Balanced horizontal and vertical scales were established, the remaining items (i.e., the entire calibration item pool including the noncommon items) were linked onto this final scale in each grade and content area.

#### Vertical Scale Evaluation

The results of vertical scaling were evaluated using a number of methods. Refer to the section *Vertical Scale Evaluation* in *Chapter 9 Field Test Design, Sampling, and* *Administration* in the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016). This source includes the following information:

* Correlation of difficulties of common items across grade levels
* Changes in test difficulty across grades
* Comparison of mean scale scores across grades
* Comparison of scale scores associated with achievement levels across grades
* Comparison of overlap and separation of scale score distributions across grades
* Comparison of variability in scale scores within and across grades

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### Appendix 2.A: Smarter Balanced Test Blueprints

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 2.B: Special Services Summaries

This content is located in a separate file.

## Item Development

This chapter discusses the procedures followed during the development of Smarter Balanced items to help ensure valid interpretation of test scores.

### Background

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, in coordination with its member states, developed innovative item types and authored items based on the Common Core State Standards. The Consortium used an iterative process involving higher education and kindergarten through grade twelve educators who were trained in item development, as well as state partners, professional item writers, and assessment vendors at various stages in the item development process.

### Additional Information

More information regarding the item development process (including the qualifications of those involved), item development specifications, and content alignment studies undertaken by Smarter Balanced to produce item types and items for the assessment can be found in chapter 3 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016).

### Reference

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2016). *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: 2013–14 technical report.* Los Angeles, CA: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

## Test Assembly

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments were administered operationally as part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress for the first time during the 2014–2015 school year. The summative assessments each consist of two parts: a computer adaptive test (CAT) and performance tasks (PTs). The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are constructed to measure students’ performance relative to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The assessments also are constructed to produce scores that meet professional standards for reliability and validity of test score interpretation. The content standards and desired psychometric attributes are used as the basis for assembling the test forms. This chapter discusses the content and psychometric criteria that guide the construction of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

### Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm

This section describes the algorithm and the design for implementation of adaptive item selection of CAT items by the Smarter Balanced test delivery system (TDS). The implementation builds extensively on the algorithm implemented in Cambium Assessment, Inc.’s (CAI’s) TDS. It should be noted that a student is assigned PTs randomly at the student level, regardless of performance on the CAT portion of a content-area assessment.

The general item selection approach is that the next item to be administered to a specific student is chosen on the basis of a function of three variables. The first variable is an index of the importance of the item for meeting the content requirements of the test. The other two variables are values of the item response theory item information functions in the region of the student’s current ability estimate. One of these information functions is for the student’s total score; the other is for the student’s claim score.

More information about how each of these three measures is defined can be found in the *Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item-Selection Algorithm Design Report* (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2015).

Values for these three measures are calculated to guide and support item selection. A value is computed for whether the item or group of items will be selected based on how well that item matches the target content, contributes to overall score information, and contributes to claim score information. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 4.1*](#_Alternative_Text_for) *for a description of equation 4.1.*

 (4.1)

This objective function is used to measure an item’s contribution to each of these objectives. A higher value for “Content Match” means that an item is more important for meeting the content requirements. A higher value for “Overall Information” means that an item contributes more information to the estimation of the student’s current overall ability. A higher value for “Claim Information” means that an item contributes more information for estimating the student’s current claim ability. Weights of these objectives can be adjusted to achieve the desired balance and optimize performance for a given item pool. This algorithm enables users to maximize information subject to the constraint that the blueprint is almost always met, with minimal exceptions.

#### Content Match

Each item or item group is characterized by its contribution to meeting the blueprint, given the items that have already been administered at any point. The contribution is based on the presence or absence of features specified in the blueprint.

The Smarter Balanced summative test blueprints describe the content of the English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics summative assessments for all grades tested and the means by which that content is assessed. The summative computer-based test blueprints reflect the depth and breadth of the performance expectations of the CCSS.

The test blueprints have information about the number of items and depth of knowledge for items associated with each claim and assessment target. Each test is described by a blueprint for both the overall test and each claim within the test.

Each blueprint has features referred to as *constraints*. Constraints define features such as the minimum and maximum number of items required in a specific content area. For example, a constraint might require a minimum of four and a maximum of six algebra items. The value of content match is highest for items with content that has not met its minimum constraint, decreases for items representing content for which the minimum number of items has been reached but the maximum has not, and becomes negative for items representing content that has met the maximum.

Refer to the blueprints for the Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics assessments provided in appendix 2.A for additional details.

#### Information

Every item has an overall information value within the CAT algorithm and an information value for each claim. Details on how information is calculated are provided in equation 7.8 through equation 7.12 in [*7.4.3 Theta Scores Standard Error*](#_Theta_Scores_Standard).

Items with higher discrimination parameters offer more information and therefore are generally given preference in item selection. Because the overexposure of highly discriminating items is a test security risk, the item selection algorithm includes additional rules to control the exposure of the items that provide the highest measurement information (AIR, 2014).

### Simulation Study

For the CAT, prior to opening the 2020–2021 operational testing window, CAI conducts simulations to evaluate and ensure the appropriate implementation and quality of the adaptive item selection algorithm and the scoring algorithm. The simulation tool allows manipulation of key blueprint and configuration settings to match the blueprint of the test and minimize measurement error. In this simulation study, the adaptive tests are administered in one segment (section) in ELA for all grade levels tested, and mathematics grades three through five and in two segments in mathematics grades six through eight and grade eleven, including calculator and no-calculator segments. Each segment is simulated separately.

The *Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments Testing Procedures for Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm,* (AIR, 2015) presents the results of an examination of the robustness of the item-selection algorithm of the Smarter Balanced CAT administrations in ELA and mathematics for grades three through eight and grade eleven. The information provided by the simulations includes

* evaluation of the simulation step,
* the percentage of tests aligned with the test blueprints (blueprint match rates),
* the number of targets covered in the simulated forms,
* accuracy of ability estimates indicated by bias and precision of ability estimates indicated by standard error,
* item exposure rates, and
* selection of off-grade items and corresponding psychometric properties.

The results of CAI’s simulation study show the following:

* Across content areas and grade levels, 98 percent or more of the simulated tests covered the test blueprint.
* Scale scores were estimated precisely across the entire scale with the exception of scores near the highest obtainable scale score and the lowest obtainable scale score.
* The vast majority of items were exposed to students less than 20 percent of the time.

Table 4.1 contains characteristics of items students received particular to the content area tests.

Table 4.1 Item Distribution Characteristics from the CAI Simulation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **ELA** | **Mathematics** |
| Received off-grade items | 11–55% of students in grades 3–8 only | 16–54% of students in grades 4–‍8 and grade 11 |
| Scored above standard, received above-grade items | 4–18% of the students for grades 3–8 only | N/A |
| Scored as not meeting the standard, received below-grade items | 38–50% of students in grades 4, 6, and 7 only | 19–54% of students in grades 4–‍8 and grade 11 |

CAI concluded that content domain scores were comparable across the grades within the content area with respect to a certain content domain and that scores at various ranges of the score distribution were measured with good precision. The results also demonstrated that global item exposure was controlled to the extent that no items were used too often, off-grade items were administered according to criteria in the test specifications to students who were performing very well or very poorly on the test, and the field test items were distributed equally across multiple blocks within a test as intended for that grade and content area.

### References

American Institutes for Research. (2014). *Smarter Balanced adaptive item selection algorithm design report*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

American Institutes for Research. (2015). *Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments testing procedures for adaptive item-selection algorithm.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

### Accessibility Information

#### Alternative Text for Equation 4.1

Item Selection equal w sub 1 multiplied by Content Match plus w sub 2 multiplied by Overall Information plus w sub 3 multiplied by Claim Information.

## Test Administration

This chapter details the processes involved in the administration of the 2020–2021 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. It also describes the procedures followed by ETS to maintain test security throughout the test administration process. In particular, because of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, remote and in-person testing options are discussed.

### Overview

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments were administered to students in grades three through eight and grade eleven in spring 2021 in conjunction with the other tests that comprise the CAASPP System.

In accordance with the procedures for all computer-based CAASPP assessments, local educational agencies (LEAs) identified test administrators and entered the test administrators as users into the Test Operations Management System (TOMS). ETS provided LEA staff with the appropriate training materials, such as test administration manuals, videos, and webcasts, to ensure that the LEA staff and test administrators understood how to administer the computer-based Smarter Balanced content-area assessments.

The testing window for the 2020–2021 administration of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments was planned for February 22 through July 30, 2021. Specific test administration schedules within that window were determined locally pursuant to the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5 (5 *CCR),* sections 855(a)(1), 855(a)(2), 855(b), and 855(c).

#### Test-Taking Rates

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, about 24 percent of students, on average, completed the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. In ELA, the testing rate was about 23.7 percent, with a low percentage of 18.5 in grade three and a high percentage of 44.5 in high school. In mathematics, the testing rate was about 24 percent, with a low percentage of 20 in grades three through six and a high percentage of 43 in high school. Refer to table 1.1 for the number and percentage of students who completed the Smarter Balanced for ELA and mathematics in the 2020–2021 administration.

#### Remote and In-Person Testing

When the 2020–2021 school year began, LEAs offered varying instructional options because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a substantial percentage providing only distance learning options. This resulted in the need for the California Department of Education (CDE) to explore different options for delivering its annual summative assessments. Two means of testing students were offered to LEAs for all CAASPP assessments (with the exception of the alternate assessments):

1. Test in person, with both students and test administrators co-located in the same room at a school or other secure location and following physical distancing guidelines.
2. Test remotely, with students and test administrators located at different physical locations. The test administrator would monitor students’ progress throughout the test by using remote monitoring tools connected to the test delivery system (TDS).

After 2020–2021 testing, ETS conducted internal studies on the potential impact of the options provided for the 2020–2021 administration. The results of the analyses support the suggestion that the remote test can be viewed as reasonably comparable to in-person testing for the Smarter Balanced for ELA assessments and for the lower grades (i.e., grade three through grade six) of the mathematics assessments.

#### Test Sections

The test delivery sections correspond to the computer adaptive tests (CATs) and performance task (PT) portions of the assessments.

The distributions of the number of items presented to students for the total test, as well as the CAT and the PT components, are presented in table 5.B.1 through table 5.B.3 in appendix 5.B. Table 5.B.4 presents the count and percentage of students administered items who meet the criteria specified in the operational blueprints, students who do not meet the criteria, and students who exceed the criteria. Results show that more than 99 percent of the individual tests delivered to students met the requirements of the blueprints for overall test and claims across grades and content areas.

Table 5.A.1 in appendix 5.A lists the number of ELA PTs given to students and the number of items in each PT by genre. Appendix 5.B presents item distributions, including a summary of items presented for the total test—in the CAT portion and in the PT portion—as well as the percentage of students meeting the Smarter Balanced adjusted, shortened-form blueprint.

##### Computer Adaptive Testing Administration

CAT assessments are assembled and delivered dynamically to obtain a unique test for each student from a defined item pool so that each student is given a unique, content-conforming test form. CAT items are delivered on the basis of the student’s performance on the previous items; students typically are presented with many different items, and items presented to any two students may appear in different locations within the test.

Item statistics based on item response theory are used to determine the administration and adaptation of test items based on student responses and ability; this information is incorporated into the delivery algorithm. The item selection algorithm is described in more detail in [*4.1 Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm*](#_Smarter_Balanced_Adaptive), along with item exposure rates.

Item exposure control (e.g., Sympson & Hetter, 1985) can be used to ensure that uniform rates of item administration are achieved because it is not desirable to have some items presented to many students while other items are presented to relatively few students.

##### Performance Task Administration

For a given PT, students are presented with the same items in the same order of presentation and associated test length (refer to table 5.A.1 in appendix 5.A for the number of items in each operational PT). During the 2020–2021 administration, PTs were assigned randomly at the student level.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium item and task specifications assume computer-based delivery of the items and tasks. Most tasks are long enough to warrant several administration sessions. Such sessions could be same-day, back-to-back sessions with short breaks between sessions. In the in-person testing setting, tasks are administered in controlled classroom settings. However, in the remote testing setting, breaks between sessions are not arranged at the group or classroom level.

Estimated testing times for completing PTs and administration time are provided in the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021e).

Student directions for all tasks begin with an overview of the entire task that briefly describes the necessary steps. The overview gives students advanced knowledge of the scorable products or performances to be created (Khattri, Reeve, & Kane, 1998). Allowable teacher–student interactions for a task are standardized (i.e., carefully scripted or described in task directions for purposes of comparability, fairness, and security). Teachers are directed not to assist students in the production of their scorable products or presentations.

### Test Security and Confidentiality

For the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment administration, every person who worked with the assessments, communicated test results, or received testing information was responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of the tests, including CDE staff, ETS staff, ETS subcontractors, LEA assessment coordinators, school assessment coordinators, students, parents/guardians, teachers, and cooperative educational service agency staff. ETS’ Code of Ethics required that all test information, including tangible materials (such as test items), confidential files (such as those containing personally identifiable student information), processes related to test administration (such as the configurations of secure servers), and activities, were kept secure. To ensure security for all the tests that ETS develops or handles, ETS maintains an Office of Testing Integrity (OTI), which is described in the next subsection.

All tests within the CAASPP System, as well as the confidentiality of student information, should be protected to ensure the validity, reliability, and fairness of the results. As stated in *Standard 7.9* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014), “The documentation should explain the steps necessary to protect test materials and to prevent inappropriate exchange of information during the test administration session” (p. 128).

This section of the *CAASPP Smarter Balanced Technical Report* describes the measures intended to prevent potential test security incidents prior to testing and the actions that were taken to handle actual security incidents during or after testing using the Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) process.

#### ETS’ Office of Testing Integrity

The OTI is a division of ETS that provides quality-assurance services for all testing programs managed by ETS; this division resides in the ETS legal department. The Office of Professional Standards Compliance at ETS publishes and maintains *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness* (ETS, 2014)*,* which supports the OTI’s goals and activities. The *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness* provides guidelines to help ETS staff design, develop, and deliver technically sound, fair, and beneficial products and services and help the public and auditors evaluate those products and services.

The OTI’s mission is to

* minimize any testing security violations that can impact the fairness of testing,
* minimize and investigate any security breach that threatens the validity of the interpretation of test scores, and
* report on security activities.

The OTI helps prevent misconduct on the part of students and administrators, detects potential misconduct through empirically established indicators, and resolves situations involving misconduct in a fair and balanced way that reflects the laws and professional standards governing the integrity of testing.

In an effort to enforce secure testing practices, the OTI strives to safeguard the various processes involved in a test development and administration cycle. For the Smarter Balanced assessments, those processes included the following:

* Security of electronic files using a firewall
* Printing and publishing
* Test administration
* Test delivery
* Processing and scoring
* Data management
* Statistical analysis
* Student confidentiality

#### Procedures to Maintain Standardization of Test Security

Test security requires accounting for all secure materials—including computer-based summative test items, paper–pencil tests (PPTs), and student data—before, during, and after each test administration. The LEA CAASPP coordinator is responsible for keeping all electronic and PPT materials secure, keeping student information confidential, and making sure the CAASPP test site coordinators and test administrators are properly trained regarding security policies and procedures.

The CAASPP test site coordinator is responsible for mitigating test security incidents at the test site and for reporting incidents to the LEA CAASPP coordinator. If the test site administered PPTs, the CAASPP test site coordinator is also responsible for the return of any secure materials to the LEA CAASPP coordinator, who, in turn, is responsible for returning any materials to the Scoring and Processing Center.

The test administrator is responsible for reporting testing incidents to the CAASPP test site coordinator and securely destroying printed and digital media for items and passages generated by the print-on-demand feature of the TDS (CDE, 2021b and 2021e).

The following measures ensured the security of CAASPP System assessments administered in 2020–2021:

* LEA CAASPP coordinators and test site coordinators must have electronically signed and submitted a “CAASPP Test Security Agreement for LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators” form in TOMS before ETS granted the coordinators access to TOMS (5*CCR*, Section 859[a]).
* Anyone having access to the testing materials must have electronically signed and submitted a “Test Security Affidavit for Test Examiners, Test Administrators, Proctors, Translators, Scribes, and Any Other Person Having Access to CAASPP Tests” form in TOMS before receiving access to any testing materials (5*CCR*, Section 859[c]).

In addition, it was the responsibility of every participant in the CAASPP System to report immediately any violation or suspected violation of test security or confidentiality. The test administrator reported to the CAASPP test site coordinator or LEA CAASPP coordinator, who then submitted the incident using the STAIRS/Appeals process. Breach incidents were to be reported by the LEA CAASPP coordinator to the California Technical Assistance Center (CalTAC) and entered into STAIRS within 24 hours of the incident (5 *CCR*, Section 859[e]).

#### Test Security Monitoring

The LEA and school testing staff were responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of testing materials and devices during the testing window and reporting any irregularities or breaches that occurred. Typically, ETS would perform site visits and testing procedure audits during the testing window; however, these visits were not made during the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration because many schools and LEAs were not open for in‑person instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that these visits will resume in future administrations per state health and safety guidelines. However, selected LEAs were audited remotely, with LEA CAASPP coordinators or other LEA staff responding to a series of questions about test administration.

#### Security of Electronic Files Using a Firewall

A firewall is software that prevents unauthorized entry to files, email, and other organization-specific information. All ETS data exchanges and internal email remain within the ETS firewall at all ETS locations, ranging from Princeton, New Jersey, to San Antonio, Texas, to Sacramento, California.

All electronic applications that are included in TOMS remain protected by the ETS firewall software at all times. Because of the sensitive nature of the student information processed by TOMS, the firewall plays a significant role in maintaining assurance of confidentiality among the users of this information.

Refer to section [*1.10 Systems Overview and Functionality*](#_Systems_Overview_and_1) in [*Chapter 1: Introduction*](#_Introduction) for more information on TOMS.

#### Transfer of Scores via Secure Data Exchange

Because of the confidential nature of test results, ETS currently uses secure file transfer protocol (SFTP) and encryption for all data file transfers; test data is never sent via email. SFTP is a method for reliable and exclusive routing of files. Files reside on a password-protected server that only authorized users can access. ETS shares an SFTP server with the CDE. On that site, ETS posts Microsoft Word and Excel files, Adobe Acrobat PDFs, or other document files for the CDE to review; the CDE returns reviewed materials in the same manner. Files are deleted upon retrieval.

The SFTP server is used as a conduit for the transfer of files; secure test data is stored only temporarily on the shared SFTP server. Industry-standard secure protocols are used to transfer test content and student data from the ETS internal data center to any external systems.

For the 2020–2021 CAASPP, ETS entered information about the deliverable into a web form on a SharePoint website when a file was posted. A CDE staff member monitored this log throughout the day for updates to the status of deliverables and downloaded and deleted the file from the SFTP server when its status showed it had been posted.

#### Data Management in the Secure Database

ETS currently maintains a secure database to house all student demographic data and assessment results. Information associated with each student has a database relationship to the LEA, school, and grade codes as data is collected during operational testing. Only individuals with the appropriate credentials can access the data. ETS builds all interfaces with the most stringent security considerations, including interfaces with data encryption for databases that store test items and student data. ETS applies best and up-to-date security practices, including system-to-system authentication and authorization, in all solution designs.

All stored test content and student data is encrypted. Industry-standard secure protocols are used to transfer test content and student data from the ETS internal data center to any external systems. ETS complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 *United States Code [USC]* § 1232g; 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 99) and the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (15 *USC* §§ 6501–6506, P.L. No. 105–277, 112 Stat. 2681–1728).

In TOMS, staff at LEAs and test sites have different levels of access appropriate to the role assigned to them (CDE, 2021d).

#### Statistical Analysis on Secure Servers

During CAASPP testing, ETS information technology staff members retrieve data files from Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) and load those files into a database. The ETS Data Quality Services staff extract the data from the database and perform quality control procedures (e.g., the values of all variables are as expected) before passing files to the ETS statistical analysis group (refer to section [*9.5 Quality Control of Psychometric Processes*](#_Quality_Control_of_3) for data validation processes undertaken by ETS Data Quality Services). The statistical analysis staff store the files on secure servers. All staff involved with the data adhere to the ETS Code of Ethics and the ETS Information Protection Policies to prevent any unauthorized access to the data.

#### Student Confidentiality

To meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as well as state requirements, LEAs must collect demographic data about students’ ethnicity, disabilities, parent/guardian education, and so forth during the school year. ETS takes every precaution to prevent any of this information from becoming public or being used for anything other than testing and score-reporting purposes. These procedures are applied to all documents in which student demographic data appears, including reports.

#### Student Test Results

##### Types of Results

The following deliverables are produced for reporting of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments:

* Preliminary individual student reports for computer-based assessments in the California Educator Reporting System (CERS)
* Preliminary individual student reports for PPTs in CERS
* Individual Student Score Reports (SSRs) (electronic)
* Internet reports—available on a public web reporting site—aggregated by content area and state, county, LEA, or test site

##### Security of Results Files

ETS takes measures to protect files and reports that show students’ scores and achievement levels. ETS is committed to safeguarding all secure information in its possession from unauthorized access, disclosure, modification, or destruction. ETS has strict information security policies in place to protect the confidentiality of both student and client data. ETS staff access to production databases is limited to personnel with a business need to access the data. User IDs for production systems must be person-specific or for systems use only.

ETS has implemented network controls for routers, gateways, switches, firewalls, network tier management, and network connectivity. Routers, gateways, and switches represent points of access between networks. However, these do not contain mass storage or represent points of vulnerability, particularly for unauthorized access or denial of service.

ETS has many facilities, policies, and procedures to protect computer files. Software and procedures such as firewalls, intrusion detection, and virus control are in place to provide for physical security, data security, and disaster recovery. ETS is certified in the BS 25999-2 standard for business continuity and conducts disaster recovery exercises annually. ETS routinely backs up all data to either disks through deduplication or to tapes, all of which are stored off site.

Access to the ETS Computer Processing Center is controlled by employee and visitor identification badges. The Center is secured by doors that can be unlocked only by the badges of personnel who have functional responsibilities within its secure perimeter. Authorized personnel accompany visitors to the ETS Computer Processing Center at all times. Extensive smoke detection and alarm systems, as well as a preaction fire-control system, are installed in the Center.

##### Security of Individual Results

ETS protects individual students’ results during the following events:

* Scoring
* Transfer of scores by means of secure data exchange
* Reporting
* Posting of aggregated data
* Storage

In addition to protecting the confidentiality of testing materials, ETS’ Code of Ethics further prohibits ETS employees from financial misuse, conflicts of interest, and unauthorized appropriation of ETS property and resources. Specific rules are also given to ETS employees and their immediate families who may take a test developed by ETS (e.g., a CAASPP assessment). The ETS OTI verifies that these standards are followed throughout ETS. This verification is conducted, in part, by periodic on-site security audits of departments, with follow-up reports containing recommendations for improvement.

#### Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System Process

Test security incidents, such as improprieties, irregularities, and breaches, are prohibited behaviors that give a student an unfair advantage or compromise the secure administration of the tests, which, in turn, compromises the reliability and validity of test results (CDE, 2021b). Whether intentional or unintentional, failure by staff or students to comply with security rules constitutes a test security incident. Test security incidents have impacts on scoring and affect students’ performance on the test.

LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators were to ensure that all test security and summative administration incidents were documented by following the prompts in TOMS that guided coordinators in their submittal. An Appeal is a request to reset, restore, reopen, invalidate, or grant a grace period extension to a student’s test. If an Appeal to a student’s test was warranted, TOMS provided additional prompts to file the Appeal.

After a case was submitted, an email containing a case number and next steps was sent to the submitter (and to the LEA CAASPP coordinator, if the case was submitted by the CAASPP test site coordinator). The STAIRS case in TOMS provided the LEA CAASPP coordinator, the CDE, and CalTAC with the opportunity to interact and communicate regarding the STAIRS process (CDE, 2021b).

Prior to the assessment administration, ETS and the CDE agreed that the following types of STAIRS cases were also forwarded to the CDE:

* Student cheating or accessing unauthorized devices
* Security breach (where a student exposed secure materials)
* Student unable to review previous answers (20-minute pause rule for the CAT was exceeded)

Appeals requests were reviewed by the CDE. When a request to submit an Appeal was approved, the coordinator received a system-generated email with the Appeal type that was approved (CDE, 2021b).

Types of Appeals available during the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration are described in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Types of Appeals

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Appeal** | **Description** |
| Reset | Resetting a student’s summative assessment removed that assessment from the system and enabled the student to start a new assessment from the beginning. |
| Invalidate | Invalidated summative assessments were scored, and scores were provided on the SSR with a note that an irregularity occurred. The student(s) was counted as participating in the calculation of the school’s participation rate for accountability purposes. The score was counted as “not proficient” for aggregation into the CAASPP results. |
| Re-open | Reopening a summative assessment allowed a student to access an assessment that had already been submitted or had expired. |
| Restore | Restoring a summative assessment returned an assessment from the Reset status to its prior status. This action could be performed only on tests that were reset previously. |
| Grace Period Extension | Permitting a grace period extension allowed the student to review previously answered questions upon logging back on to the assessment after expiration of the pause rule. Note that for a PT, having the test administrator open a new testing session may be all that was needed to continue testing.A grace period extension was granted only in cases where there was a disruption to a test session, such as a technical difficulty, fire drill, schoolwide power outage, earthquake, or other act beyond the control of the test administrator. |

##### Impropriety

A testing impropriety is an unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. An impropriety can be corrected and contained at a local level. An impropriety should be reported to the LEA CAASPP coordinator and CAASPP test site coordinator immediately. The coordinator should report the incident within 24 hours, using the STAIRS/Appeals process in TOMS.

##### Irregularity

A testing irregularity is an unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or a group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test or impact test security or test validity. These circumstances can be corrected and contained at the local level and submitted using the STAIRS/Appeals process in TOMS. An irregularity must be reported to the LEA CAASPP coordinator and CAASPP test site coordinator immediately. The coordinator must report the irregularity within 24 hours, using the online STAIRS/Appeals process in TOMS.

##### Breach

A testing breach is an event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require immediate attention; a breach that was due to social media exposure on the part of a student or adult or due to media coverage of an administration was to be escalated to CalTAC via telephone. Following the call, the CAASPP test site coordinator or LEA CAASPP coordinator must report the incident using the online STAIRS/Appeals process in TOMS within 24 hours. All other breaches were to be entered into STAIRS directly.

Examples may include such situations as a release of secure materials or a security or system risk. These circumstances have external implications for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and may result in a Consortium decision to remove the test item(s) from the available secure bank.

#### Appeals

For test security incidents reported in STAIRS that resulted in a need to invalidate, restore, or provide a grace period extension for individual computer-based student assessments, the request had to be approved by the CDE. Requests to reset and reopen assessments were processed by CalTAC.

In most instances, an Appeal was submitted to address a test security breach or irregularity. The LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator submitted Appeals in TOMS. All submitted Appeals were available for retrieval and review by the appropriate credentialed users within a given organization. However, the view of Appeals was restricted according to the user role as established in TOMS. An Appeal could be requested only by the LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator if prompted while filing a STAIRS case in TOMS (CDE, 2021b). Types of Appeals available during the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration are described in table 5.1.

Table 5.2 and table 5.3 present the number of Appeals in STAIRS in the 2020–2021 administration for ELA and mathematics, respectively, as well as the number of Statewide Student Identifiers (SSIDs) submitted and approved.

Table 5.2 Number and Types of Incidents Submitted in STAIRS for the 2020–2021 Administration—ELA

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Appeal Type** | **Number of Incidents** | **Total Number of SSIDs Submitted** | **Appeals SSIDs Approved** |
| Accessibility Issue | Reset | 161 | 244 | 205 |
| Administered Incorrect Assessment | Reset or Re-open or No Appeal | 61 | 207 | 114 |
| Administration Error | No Appeal | 53 | 0 | 0 |
| Data Entry Issue | Reset or Re-open or Invalidate or No Appeal | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Expired or Accidentally Submitted Test | Re-open | 3,007 | 11,072 | 10,959 |
| Exposing Secure Materials | Invalidate or No Appeal | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Incorrect SSID Used | Reset or No Appeal | 49 | 53 | 24 |
| Restore from Reset | Restore | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Student Cheating or Accessing Unauthorized Devices | Invalidate | 71 | 75 | 63 |
| Student Disruption | No Appeal | 37 | 0 | 0 |
| Technical Issues | Grace Period Extension or No Appeal | 77 | 123 | 95 |
| Validity Issue | Invalidate or Reset | 77 | 131 | 123 |

Table 5.3 Number and Types of Incidents Submitted in STAIRS for the 2020–2021 Administration—Mathematics

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Appeal Type** | **Number of Incidents** | **Total Number of SSIDs Submitted** | **Appeals SSIDs Approved** |
| Accessibility Issue | Reset | 104 | 142 | 125 |
| Administered Incorrect Assessment | Reset or Re-open or No Appeal | 63 | 161 | 137 |
| Administration Error | No Appeal | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Data Entry Issue | Reset or Re-open or Invalidate or No Appeal | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Expired or Accidentally Submitted Test | Re-open | 1,425 | 4,668 | 4,628 |
| Exposing Secure Materials | Invalidate or No Appeal | 11 | 9 | 8 |
| Incorrect SSID Used | Reset or No Appeal | 33 | 37 | 16 |
| Restore from Reset | Restore | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Student Cheating or Accessing Unauthorized Devices | Invalidate | 55 | 64 | 58 |
| Student Disruption | No Appeal | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Technical Issues | Grace Period Extension or No Appeal | 41 | 37 | 21 |
| Validity Issue | Invalidate or Reset | 53 | 76 | 63 |

Table 5.4 and table 5.5 present the number of Appeals approved and rejected in ELA and mathematics, respectively, by Appeal type in STAIRS.

Table 5.4 Number of Appeals Approved in STAIRS for the 2020–2021 Administration

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Appeal Type** | **Number of Appeals Approved in ELA** | **Number of Appeals Approved in Mathematics** |
| Reset | 341 | 202 |
| Re-open | 10,965 | 4,726 |
| Invalidate | 183 | 107 |
| Grace Period Extension | 95 | 21 |
| Restore | 0 | 1 |

Table 5.5 Number of Appeals Rejected in STAIRS for the 2020–2021 Administration

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Appeal Type** | **Number of Appeals Rejected in ELA** | **Number of Appeals Rejected in Mathematics** |
| Reset | 108 | 41 |
| Re-open | 84 | 35 |
| Invalidate | 19 | 14 |
| Grace Period Extension | 28 | 15 |
| Restore | 0 | 0 |

### Processing and Scoring

The constructed-response (CR) data and the TDS-scored data for tests completed by students in a given day flow from the TDS to ETS. The TDS is capable of scoring a variety of item types, referred to as “machine-scored” items, which are described in section [*7.1 Approach to Scoring Item Responses*](#_Approach_to_Scoring). Outcomes of CR items are scored by artificial intelligence or by human scoring.

Targeted efforts are made to recruit California educators for participation as raters in the human scoring portion of the Smarter Balanced assessments. Raters are certified on the basis of their ability to use a rubric and accurately score sample responses. Once approved, raters are trained to access the Measurement Incorporated and ETS scoring interfaces and Smarter Balanced–specific scoring policies and procedures and are provided interactive training to practice scoring sample responses with feedback from the scoring leader.

Raters work in shifts and are supervised by a scoring leader who has received special training in scoring and monitoring. Raters are provided Smarter Balanced materials to aid scoring; these materials include anchor sets, scoring rubrics, validity samples, qualifying sets, and condition codes. (Refer to section [*7.3 Rater Training*](#_Rater_Training) for the definitions of these materials.) A scoring leader gives direct feedback to raters for additional content support. Scoring of California student responses is given priority routing to raters who are California-based educators.

### Procedures to Maintain Standardization

The test administration procedures are designed so that the tests were administered in a standardized manner. ETS takes all necessary measures to ensure the standardization of test administration, as described in this section.

#### Local Educational Agency CAASPP Coordinator

An LEA CAASPP coordinator was designated by the district superintendent at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year. LEAs include public school districts, State Board of Education (SBE)–authorized charter schools, county office of education programs, and direct funded charter schools.

LEA CAASPP coordinators were responsible for ensuring the proper and consistent administration of the CAASPP assessments. In addition to the responsibilities set forth in 5*CCR* Section 857, their responsibilities included

* adding CAASPP test site coordinators and test administrators into TOMS;
* training CAASPP test site coordinators and test administrators regarding the state requirements and Smarter Balanced assessment administration, as well as security policies and procedures;
* reporting test security incidents (including testing irregularities) to the CDE using the online STAIRS/Appeals process;
* overseeing test administration activities;
* providing checklists for CAASPP test site coordinators and test administrators to review in preparation for administering the summative assessments;
* distributing and collecting scorable and nonscorable materials for students who take PPTs; and
* requesting an Appeal (if indicated by TOMS prompts while reporting an incident using the STAIRS/Appeal process).

#### CAASPP Test Site Coordinator

A CAASPP test site coordinator was trained by the LEA CAASPP coordinator for each test site (5 *CCR* Section 857[f]). A test site coordinator must be an employee of the LEA and must sign a security agreement (5 *CCR* Section 859[a]).

A test site coordinator was responsible for identifying test administrators and ensuring that they have signed CAASPP Test Security Affidavits (5 *CCR* Section 859[d]). CAASPP test site coordinators’ duties may have included

* adding test administrators into TOMS;
* entering test settings for students;
* creating testing schedules and procedures for a school consistent with state and LEA policies;
* working with technology staff to ensure secure browsers are installed and any technical issues are resolved;
* monitoring testing progress during the testing window and ensuring all students take the test, as appropriate;
* coordinating and verifying the correction of student data errors in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System;
* ensuring a student’s test session is rescheduled, if necessary;
* addressing testing problems;
* reporting security incidents;
* overseeing administration activities at a school site;
* filing a report of a testing incident in STAIRS; and
* requesting an Appeal (if indicated by TOMS prompts while reporting an incident using the STAIRS/Appeals process).

#### Test Administrators

Test administrators were identified by CAASPP test site coordinators as individuals who would administer the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

A test administrator must sign a security affidavit (5 *CCR* Section 850[ae]). A test administrator’s duties may have included

* ensuring the physical conditions of the testing room meet the criteria for a secure test environment;
* administering the CAASPP assessments;
* reporting all test security incidents to the test site coordinator and LEA CAASPP coordinator in a manner consistent with Smarter Balanced, state, and LEA policies;
* viewing student information prior to testing to ensure that the correct student receives the proper test with appropriate resources and reporting potential data errors to test site coordinators and LEA CAASPP coordinators;
* monitoring student progress throughout the test session using the Test Administrator Interface; and
* fully complying with all directions provided in the *Directions for Administration (DFAs)* for the Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments (CDE, 2021e).

#### Instructions for Test Administrators

##### Test Administrator *Directions for Administration*

The *DFAs* of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessmentsused by test administrators to administer the Smarter Balanced assessments to students are included in the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021e). Test administrators must follow all directions and guidelines and read, word-for-word, the instructions to students in the “SAY” boxes to ensure standardization of test administration. Additionally, the *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* provided information to test administrators regarding the systems involved in testing, including sections describing the TDS, so they could become familiar with the testing application used by their students (CDE, 2021e).

##### *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual*

The *CAASPP Online Test Administration Manual* (CDE, 2021e) contained information and instructions on overall procedures and guidelines for all LEA and test site staff involved in the administration of computer-based assessments. Sections included the following topics:

* Roles and responsibilities of those involved with CAASPP testing
* Test administration resources
* Test security
* Administration preparation and planning
* General test administration
* Test administration directions and scripts
* Overview of the student testing application
* Instructions for steps to take before, during, and after testing

Appendices included definitions of common terms and descriptions of different aspects of the test and systems associated with the test.

##### *Spring Administration Information for Educators*

The *Spring Administration Information for Educators* (CDE, 2021f),which was developed in response to the need for remote administration of both the CAASPP and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), provided instructions and resources that coordinators and test administrators could use to prepare for testing and during test administration. Sections included the following topics:

* Administration options
* Requirements
* Test security
* Instructions for remote testing, including test administration directions and scripts
* Videos and quick reference guides
* Helpful links (including to the Parent/Guardian Information website)

##### *CAASPP and ELPAC Test Operations Management System User Guide*

TOMS is a web-based application accessed by those with the identified LEA user roles to sign the appropriate test security agreements and affidavits, set up test administrations, add and manage users, view and update computer-based student test settings, and order PPTs.

TOMS modules described in the *TOMS User Guide* included the following (CDE, 2021d):

* **Test Administration Setup—**This module allowed LEAs to determine and calculate dates for the LEA’s 2020–2021 administration of the CAASPP, including the Smarter Balanced assessments.
* **Adding and Managing Users—**This module allowed LEA CAASPP coordinators to add CAASPP test site coordinators and test administrators to TOMS so that the designated user could administer, monitor, and manage the CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments.
* **Reports—**This module allowed LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators access to the various reports in TOMS.
* **STAIRS/Appeals—**This module allowed LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site access to create new STAIRS cases or search for STAIRS/Appeals cases.
* **Student Profile—**This module allowed LEA CAASPP coordinators, CAASPP test site coordinators, and test administrators and test examiners to view and manage student test assignments and test settings.

##### Other System Manuals

Other manuals were created to assist LEA CAASPP coordinators and others with the technological components of the CAASPP System and are listed next:

* ***CAASPP and ELPAC Technical Specifications and Configuration Guide for Online Testing*—**This manual provided information, tools, and recommended configuration details to help technology staff prepare computers and install the secure browser to be used for the computer-based CAASPP assessments (CDE, 2021c).
* ***CAASPP and ELPAC Security Incidents and Appeals Procedure Guide*—**This manual provided information on how to report a testing incident and submit an Appeal to reset, reopen, invalidate, or restore individual computer-based student assessments (CDE, 2021b).
* ***CAASPP and ELPAC Accessibility Guide for Online Testing*—**This manual provided descriptions of the accessibility resources for computer-based tests as well as information about supported hardware and software requirements for administering tests to students using accessibility resources, including those with a braille accommodation using Job Access With Speech (JAWS®) (software) or a braille embosser (hardware). Students with a braille accommodation were able to take advantage of the adaptive algorithm using the TDS’s Enhanced Accessibility Mode and JAWS (CDE, 2021a).

### Local Educational Agency Training

Each year, ETS, in collaboration with the CDE and its Assessment Validity and Outreach contractor, the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), establishes and implements a comprehensive training plan for LEA assessment staff and educators on all aspects of the assessment program. The ETS and SCOE annual training plans are developed with educator feedback and specify the audience, topics, frequency, and mode (in person, virtual, videos, self-paced modules, etc.) of the training, including such elements as format, participants, and logistics.

In 2020–2021, ETS and SCOE adapted training plans to meet the needs of educators deciding how to complete testing during the COVID-19 pandemic while adhering to local health guidance. All in-person trainings were converted to a virtual format, and the longer trainings were separated into shorter segments to avoid learner fatigue.

Knowing that educators were confronted with new challenges daily that put additional demands on their time, ETS and SCOE made every effort to make the information available in a variety of ways that allowed educators access to training at a time that was responsive to their varying circumstances. This included offering training events on multiple days and times, livestreaming events, recording and archiving trainings, and converting trainings to self-paced modules that could be taken any time, at the learner’s convenience.

All training opportunities were posted in one centralized location on the CAASPP website. LEA staff were able to register for training opportunities, across both CDE contractors’ offerings, in one place, on the Upcoming Training Opportunities web page. A Past Training Opportunities web page was also created, making it easier for educators to find missed training opportunities and providing easier access to recorded trainings.

#### Workshops, Virtual Training, and Webcasts

All offered virtual trainings were recorded and made available for on-demand viewing. Most trainings were offered via Zoom, a platform that educators quickly became familiar with and comfortable using during the COVID-19 pandemic. Zoom provided an opportunity for educators to ask questions and get answers in real time. Virtual trainings were also livestreamed on YouTube so that educators still had access if a particular training reached registration capacity.

In response to an environment where educators had competing priorities to juggle, ETS and SCOE employed a variety of strategies to increase engagement during virtual trainings. Live polls were presented to solicit real-time feedback about attendees’ knowledge of a particular topic, allowing presenters to tailor presentations to the audience’s level of understanding. The chat functionality was enabled to give participants an opportunity to interact with each other or provide open-ended feedback, or it was disabled to minimize distraction and drive attendees’ focus to the information being presented. Breakout groups were used in smaller group trainings, as appropriate. Breaks and processing time were incorporated into presentations to give attendees opportunities to attend to other responsibilities that might result as part of their job or home environment. Registered participants received an email from SCOE with a link to the virtual trainings.

Working closely with the CDE, ETS and SCOE were able to increase support to educators during a particularly challenging year. ETS offered weekly Office Hours and Coffee Sessions. Office Hours included CDE and ETS leadership to provide quickly changing updates on policies related to testing. Guest speakers from LEAs were invited to offer solutions and strategies for dealing with the challenges happening at the local level. Coffee Sessions included technical staff who could answer questions about all aspects of testing, including the newly offered remote testing option. SCOE continued to offer assessment update meetings intended to provide LEA coordinators with regular updates about California’s assessment system. All trainings and meetings were recorded and archived for on-demand viewing on the Past Training Opportunities web page on the CAASPP website.

An unexpected benefit of the COVID-19 pandemic is that educators had greater access to CDE, ETS, and SCOE staff than they had in prior administration years. This challenging year provided an opportunity to provide more targeted support to educators that will have a lasting impact on the administrations to come.

#### Videos and Guides

To supplement the virtual trainings, ETS continued to produce videos on various aspects of administering the CAASPP. SCOE produced the accompanying quick reference guides, providing multiple avenues of support for educators administering the assessments.

In addition to the standard administration videos, ETS produced 15 additional videos and quick reference guides to support remote test administration. The videos included videos targeted to parents/guardians and students to provide instruction on how to download the secure browser on a personal device, so the assessment could be taken at home, and videos on how to take an assessment at home. Videos for parents/guardians and students were produced in both English and Spanish. SCOE produced a number of quick reference guides and guides to support remote testing, and those were made available in the 10 most common languages in California according to DataQuest.

#### Training for Proper Identification and Assignment of Designated Supports and Accommodations

ETS produced short demonstration videos for every embedded accessibility resource, demonstrating how to use the resource for educators, students, and parents/guardians. The videos were available in both English and Spanish on the Accessibility Resources Demonstration Videos web page on the CAASPP website. In addition, ETS also developed a video with LEA staff to help California educators learn more about the importance of implementing CAASPP accessibility resources and best practices used by educators in the field. The “Importance of Implementing CAASPP and ELPAC Accessibility Resources: Voices from Educators” video was available on the Quick Reference Guides and Videos web page on the CAASPP website.

Accessibility resource videos were also linked within the Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) Tool, increasing access to the demonstration videos. Educators using the ISAAP Tool to determine the student’s needs could view the corresponding demonstration video without having to navigate away from the tool.

A video on how to use the ISAAP Tool was also available to support educators in the process of creating an individual student profile and matching accessibility resources to student needs to ensure a fair and valid testing experience for all students.

For the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration, ETS introduced a new virtual training series, “Matching Accessibility Resources to Students’ Needs.” This training focused on providing participants with an understanding of the importance of accessibility resources, the categories of accessibility resources, and the process for matching students with appropriate accessibility resources for daily instruction and on assessments. The virtual training was originally intended as a one-time event but, because of overwhelming interest, the training was offered on four additional dates. The training was recorded and archived. LEA coordinators, test site coordinators, test administrators, and test examiners were notified via email when the recorded training was available, further extending its reach.

At the California Assessment Conference, SCOE offered three sessions on accessibility. A “Plenary Accessibility 101” session was available as a prerecorded session for all conference attendees and was intended to build a shared understanding of basic accessibility-related terms and considerations. The “Digging Deeper into Accessibility” breakout session focused on developing an equitable and systematic process for matching students with appropriate accessibility resources. “Universal Design for Learning and Accessibility Resources: A Pathway to Success for All Students” was another breakout session focused on providing an opportunity to practice appropriately matching student needs to the various accessibility resources.

#### Feedback for Continuous Improvement Survey

ETS annually solicits feedback from educators through a survey that allows the CDE and ETS to focus on continuous improvement. LEA and test site staff, as well as test administrators and test examiners, were invited to participate in the 2020–21 Continuous Improvement Survey. This survey gathered information and data from educators who were part of CAASPP administration. Its goal was to highlight successes and identify areas for improvement.

Because of the unique nature of the 2020–2021 administration year and the option to administer assessments remotely or administer local assessments, the survey centered on preparation, training, and test administration, including remote testing. More than 1,600 California educators provided specific, actionable insights about their testing experience; in a more typical test administration year, 8,000 or more responses are generally received.

More than half (54%) of survey respondents used both remote and in-person options to complete testing. Overall, California educators continued to express positive experiences in their preparations for CAASPP and ELPAC administrations. Although the 2020–2021 administration included the daunting task of remote testing, educators felt that the resources and training materials they were given were useful in preparing them and their students for test administration. Their feedback generally described smooth preparation, training, support, and assessment administration experiences. Also, educators provided valuable feedback for potential improvements for future administrations based upon lessons learned.

The majority of respondents (64%) felt prepared for administering remote testing. On average, LEA CAASPP and ELPAC coordinators reported feeling prepared at a higher rate than those in site-level roles, such as test administrators and test examiners. Only a small percentage of respondents (6%) reported not feeling prepared. In regard to remote testing, educators felt they could benefit from more troubleshooting resources to deal with the technical difficulties that arise during remote testing. They indicated a simplified process for logging on to the secure browser would be helpful for students, particularly English learner (EL) students. When asked about training preferences, respondents indicated that self-paced online trainings were preferable over in-person workshops and live virtual trainings. For live virtual trainings, Zoom is the preferred platform.

In 2020–2021, the SBE approved the use of an adjusted, shortened-form blueprint for the Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics assessments. When asked about the continued use of the adjusted blueprint, the majority of educators indicated they preferred future testing with the adjusted blueprint (i.e., LEA CAASPP coordinators [84%], CAASPP test site coordinators [79%], and test administrators [74%]).

The CDE and ETS use key recommendations from educators to implement positive changes in the following administration year.

### Accessibility Resources

The US ED’s peer-review process includes several critical elements that address the need to monitor testing resources for students with disabilities, EL students, and EL students with disabilities. The ESSA reaffirms the importance of ensuring that assessments are accessible to special populations, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act lays out monitoring requirements for students with disabilities. This section describes the accessibility resources used to support students in the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment, as well as the procedures to identify and assign students with designated supports and accommodations. Finally, the number of students who were assigned accessibility resources was reported based on available data.

#### Accessibility Resource Categories

The purpose of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations in testing is to allow *all* students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and what they are able to do, rather than giving students who use these resources an advantage over other students or artificially inflating their scores. Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations minimize or remove barriers that could otherwise prevent students from demonstrating their knowledge, skills, and achievement in a specific content area.

The CDE’s California Assessment Accessibility Resources Matrix (Accessibility Matrix) (CDE, 2020) is intended for school-level personnel and individualized education program (IEP) and Section 504 plan teams to select and administer the appropriate universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations as deemed necessary for individual students.

##### Universal Tools

Universal tools were available to all students by default, although they could be disabled if a student found them distracting. Each universal tool fell into one of two categories: embedded and non-embedded. Embedded universal tools were provided through the TDS (through the CAASPP secure browser), although they could be turned off by a test administrator.

The universal tools in the following subsections were available in the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration.

###### Embedded

The following embedded universal tools were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* Breaks
* Calculator (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Digital notepad
* English dictionary (writing)
* English glossary
* Expandable items
* Expandable passages
* Global notes (writing)
* Highlighter
* Keyboard navigation
* Line reader
* Mark for review
* Mathematics tools (e.g., ruler, protractor)
* Spell check
* Strikethrough
* Thesaurus
* Writing tools (e.g., bold, italic, bullets, undo/redo)
* Zoom (in/out)

###### Non-Embedded

The following non-embedded universal tools were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* Breaks
* English dictionary (writing)
* Scratch paper

The following non-embedded universal tools were available to students taking the PPT:

* Breaks
* Calculator (for calculator-allowed mathematics sessions only)
* English dictionary
* English glossary
* Highlighter
* Line reader
* Mark for review
* Scratch paper
* Strikethrough
* Thesaurus

##### Designated Supports

Designated supports are accessibility features that were available for use by any student for whom the need had been indicated by an educator or a team of educators (with parent/‌guardian and student input as appropriate). Each designated support fell into one of two categories: embedded and non-embedded. Embedded designated supports were provided through the TDS (through the CAASPP secure browser).

The designated supports in the following subsections were available in the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration.

###### Embedded

The following embedded designated supports were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* Color contrast
* Masking
* Mouse pointer (size and color)
* Permissive mode
* Print (font) size
* Stacked translations (Spanish)
* Streamline
* Text-to-speech (items and stimuli)
* Translated text directions (Spanish)
* Translations (glossary)
* Turn off any universal tool(s)

###### Non-Embedded

The following non-embedded designated supports were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* Amplification
* Bilingual dictionary
* Color contrast
* Color overlay
* Magnification
* Medical supports
* Noise buffers
* Read aloud (items)
* Read aloud (Spanish)
* Scribe (items)
* Separate setting (e.g., most beneficial time, special lighting or acoustics, adaptive furniture)
* Simplified test directions
* Translated test directions

The following non-embedded designated supports were available to students taking the PPT:

* Bilingual dictionary
* Illustration glossary
* Magnification
* Masking
* Medical supports
* Noise buffers
* Read aloud (items)
* Scribe
* Separate setting (e.g., most beneficial time, special lighting or acoustics, adaptive furniture)
* Simplified test directions
* Translated test directions
* Translations (glossary)

##### Accommodations

Accommodations were changes in procedures or materials that increased equitable access during the CAASPP assessments. Assessment accommodations for students who needed them generated valid assessment results; they allowed these students to show what they know and can do. Accommodations did not compromise the learning expectations, construct, grade-level standard, or intended outcome of the assessments.

The accommodations in the following subsections were available in the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration.

###### Embedded

The following embedded accommodations were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* American Sign Language (videos)
* Audio transcript
* Braille (embosser and refreshable)
* Closed-captioning (allowed but not currently used)
* Text-to-speech (passages)

###### Non-Embedded

The following non-embedded accommodations were available to students testing in the secure browser:

* 100s number table
* Abacus
* Alternate response options
* Calculator (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Multiplication table (grades four through eight and grade eleven)
* Print-on-demand
* Read aloud (passages)
* Scribe (writing)
* Speech-to-text
* Word prediction

The following non-embedded accommodations were available to students taking the PPT:

* 100s number table
* Abacus
* Alternate response options
* American Sign Language
* Braille
* Breaks
* Calculator (for calculator-allowed mathematics sessions only)
* Large print
* Multiplication table
* Read aloud (passages)
* Scribe

##### Unlisted Resources

An unlisted resource is an instructional resource that a student regularly uses in daily instruction, assessment, or both, that has not been previously identified as a universal tool, designated support, or accommodation. The Accessibility Matrix included an inventory of unlisted resources that were already identified and were preapproved (CDE, 2020). During the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration, an LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator would use TOMS to submit a request for use of an unlisted resource. A request for an unlisted resource that was not preidentified was sent to the CDE for approval. A preidentified, preapproved unlisted resource was automatically approved. A request for an unlisted resource that was not preidentified was sent to the CDE for review and adjudication.

Unlisted resources are non-embedded resources that are made available if specified in the eligible student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and only upon approval by the CDE. Unlisted resources that changed the construct being measured and were approved were flagged as causing a change in construct. Test results for a student using an unlisted resource that was approved but that changed the construct of what was being tested were considered invalid for reporting purposes. The student’s score status would be changed to “Invalid” and the student’s scale score would be reported but appear on the Student Score Report (SSR) with an asterisk and a footnote that the test was administered under conditions that resulted in a score that may not be an accurate representation of the student’s achievement.

The CDE preidentified the following non-embedded unlisted resources that change the construct being tested:

* Bilingual dictionary
* Calculator (for use on nonallowed mathematics items in grades six through eight or grade eleven, or on any items in grades three through five)
* English dictionary
* Math tools (mathematics only)
* Signed exact English
* Thesaurus (reading and listening items for ELA and all items for mathematics)
* Translated word lists
* Translations

The LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator was required to submit a request for the use of an unlisted resource to the CDE a minimum of 10 business days before the student’s first day of testing. The scale score in the SSR was reported with an asterisk, with a caution footnote mentioning that the scale score might not represent the student’s performance.

#### Identification

All public school students participate in the CAASPP System, including students with disabilities and EL students. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* (Smarter Balanced, 2020) and the CDE Accessibility Matrix (CDE, 2020) are intended for school-level personnel and IEP and Section 504 plan teams to select and administer the appropriate universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations as deemed necessary for individual students.

The *Guidelines* apply to all students and promote an individualized approach to the implementation of assessment practices. Another web document, the *Smarter Balanced Resources and Practices Comparison Crosswalk* (Smarter Balanced, 2018), connects the assessment resources described in the *Guidelines* with associated classroom practices.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Another manual, the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Implementation Guide* (Smarter Balanced, 2014),provides suggestions for implementation of these resources. Test administrators are given the opportunity to participate in the Smarter Balanced practice and training tests so that students have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a designated support or accommodation prior to testing.

#### Assignment

Once the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan team decided which accessibility resource(s) the student should use, LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators used TOMS to assign designated supports and accommodations to students prior to the start of a test session.

There were three ways the student’s accessibility resource(s) could be assigned:

1. Using the ISAAP Tool to identify the accessibility resource(s) and then uploading the spreadsheet it creates into TOMS (This process is discussed in more detail in subsection [*2.4.2.1 Selection*](#_Resources_for_Selection).)
2. Using the Online Student Test Settings template to enter students’ assignments and then uploading the spreadsheet into TOMS
3. Entering assignments for each student individually in TOMS

If a student’s IEP or Section 504 plan team identified and designated a resource not identified in the CDE Accessibility Matrix, the LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator needed to submit a request for an unlisted resource to be approved by the CDE. The CDE then determined whether the requested unlisted resource changed the construct being measured before the student started testing.

#### Usage of Designated Supports and Accommodations

LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators were responsible for assigning their students’ test settings in TOMS before testing occurred and providing the necessary resources during testing. If a test setting was not applied before testing, then a STAIRS incident was to be submitted to reset the test so the student could be retested with the correct accommodation or designated support. If a test setting was accidentally assigned to a student, then a STAIRS incident was also to be submitted to reset the test so the student could be retested without the accommodation or designated support.

After schools and LEAs assigned eligible students to accommodations or designated supports, CAI’s TDS provided and captured whether a certain accommodation or designated support (or multiple accommodations or designated supports) were used by a student as the student progressed through the test.

Table 5.6 and table 5.7 report the number of students who, based on the availability of data, were assigned to a certain accommodation or designated support and actually used this accommodation or designated support at least once in ELA and mathematics, respectively. Embedded accessibility resources are those that are part of the computer-based TDS, whereas non‑embedded accessibility resources are provided outside of that system.

Types of accommodations and designated supports—labeled “ACC” and “DS” in the *Resource Type* column—included in table 5.6 and table 5.7 are as follows:

* **Text-To-Speech:** Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. It includes text-to-speech passages and text-to-speech items for accommodations.
* **American Sign Language (ASL):** ASL videos are available for any item that has a listening component. The ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen.
* **Print on Demand:** Paper copies of passages and stimuli, items, or all of these are printed for students.
* **Masking:** This resource involves blocking off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student.
* **Audio Transcript:** This resource allows students to view a transcript of the audio content for the current test page. This is useful for students with visual impairment who are accustomed to accessing information presented via audio in the form of braille.

Results show that the number of students who were assigned for the accessibility resources was greater than the number of students who actually used the accessibility resources across assessments.

Table 5.6 Summary of Accommodations and Designated Supports Used by Students—ELA

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 25 | 6 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 27 | 0 |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 44 | 2 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 3,107 | 1,494 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 3,184 | 2,104 |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 29 | 6 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 29 | 11 |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 943 | 32 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 949 | 37 |
| ELA | 3 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,464 | 3,806 |
| ELA | 3 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,577 | 3,698 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 14 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 39 | 0 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 31 | 1 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 4,322 | 1,946 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 4,387 | 2,751 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 30 | 6 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 30 | 7 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,061 | 32 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,062 | 56 |
| ELA | 4 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,304 | 3,982 |
| ELA | 4 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,405 | 3,699 |

Table 5.6 *(continuation one)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 25 | 13 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 26 | 0 |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 39 | 0 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 4,752 | 2,448 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 4,812 | 2,994 |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 28 | 6 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 28 | 5 |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,305 | 63 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,319 | 53 |
| ELA | 5 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,733 | 4,122 |
| ELA | 5 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,867 | 3,551 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 33 | 8 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 35 | 0 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 37 | 2 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 5,321 | 2,749 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 5,374 | 3,230 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 23 | 2 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 23 | 4 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,377 | 60 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,387 | 70 |
| ELA | 6 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,103 | 3,867 |
| ELA | 6 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 9,155 | 3,122 |

Table 5.6 *(continuation two)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 35 | 8 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 35 | 0 |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 34 | 1 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 6,163 | 2,963 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 6,223 | 3,434 |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 2 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 4 |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,412 | 59 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,431 | 56 |
| ELA | 7 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,901 | 3,680 |
| ELA | 7 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,956 | 2,676 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 34 | 14 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 34 | 0 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 37 | 0 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 5,924 | 2,695 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 5,960 | 2,972 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 15 | 3 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 16 | 4 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,478 | 38 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,488 | 48 |
| ELA | 8 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,634 | 3,393 |
| ELA | 8 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 8,704 | 2,170 |

Table 5.6 *(continuation three)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 54 | 9 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 55 | 0 |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 95 | 2 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Embedded Audio Transcript | ACC | 0 | 0 |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 3,535 | 1,231 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Passages | ACC | 3,555 | 1,218 |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 2 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 12 | 3 |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 3,322 | 44 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 3,328 | 55 |
| ELA | 11 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 7,731 | 1,295 |
| ELA | 11 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech Items | DS | 7,755 | 755 |

Table 5.7 Summary of Accommodations and Designated Supports Used by Students—Mathematics

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| Mathematics | 3 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 26 | 7 |
| Mathematics | 3 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 27 | 7 |
| Mathematics | 3 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 28 | 5 |
| Mathematics | 3 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 28 | 4 |
| Mathematics | 3 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 949 | 16 |
| Mathematics | 3 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 954 | 12 |
| Mathematics | 3 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 8,796 | 4,078 |
| Mathematics | 3 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 8,907 | 3,898 |
| Mathematics | 4 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 17 |
| Mathematics | 4 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 38 | 14 |
| Mathematics | 4 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 27 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 4 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 26 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 4 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,083 | 21 |
| Mathematics | 4 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,083 | 15 |
| Mathematics | 4 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 9,753 | 4,199 |
| Mathematics | 4 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 9,830 | 3,942 |
| Mathematics | 5 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 29 | 19 |
| Mathematics | 5 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 29 | 16 |
| Mathematics | 5 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 27 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 5 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 27 | 4 |
| Mathematics | 5 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,321 | 47 |
| Mathematics | 5 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,322 | 33 |
| Mathematics | 5 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 10,190 | 3,849 |
| Mathematics | 5 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 10,257 | 3,910 |

Table 5.7 *(continuation one)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| Mathematics | 6 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 18 |
| Mathematics | 6 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 12 |
| Mathematics | 6 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 22 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 6 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 22 | 3 |
| Mathematics | 6 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,354 | 35 |
| Mathematics | 6 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,355 | 23 |
| Mathematics | 6 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 9,159 | 3,099 |
| Mathematics | 6 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 9,173 | 2,974 |
| Mathematics | 7 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 13 |
| Mathematics | 7 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 36 | 13 |
| Mathematics | 7 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 7 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 14 | 0 |
| Mathematics | 7 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,379 | 38 |
| Mathematics | 7 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,392 | 17 |
| Mathematics | 7 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 8,993 | 2,588 |
| Mathematics | 7 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 9,045 | 2,285 |
| Mathematics | 8 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 35 | 14 |
| Mathematics | 8 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 35 | 9 |
| Mathematics | 8 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 16 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 8 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 16 | 0 |
| Mathematics | 8 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,466 | 41 |
| Mathematics | 8 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 1,471 | 15 |
| Mathematics | 8 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 8,834 | 1,812 |
| Mathematics | 8 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 8,862 | 1,934 |

Table 5.7 *(continuation two)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Opportunity** | **Accessibility Resource** | **Resource Type** | **Students Assigned** | **Students Used** |
| Mathematics | 11 | CAT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 54 | 16 |
| Mathematics | 11 | PT | Embedded American Sign Language | ACC | 56 | 13 |
| Mathematics | 11 | CAT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 11 | PT | Non-Embedded Print on Demand | ACC | 13 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 11 | CAT | Embedded Masking | DS | 3,132 | 26 |
| Mathematics | 11 | PT | Embedded Masking | DS | 3,143 | 20 |
| Mathematics | 11 | CAT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 5,184 | 610 |
| Mathematics | 11 | PT | Embedded Text-to-Speech | DS | 5,205 | 572 |

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### Appendix 5.A: Performance Task Test Length

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 5.B: Item Distribution

This content is located in a separate file.

## Standard Setting

This chapter briefly discusses the standard setting process outlined by Smarter Balanced.

### Description

Standard setting, which also is referred to as achievement level setting, refers to a class of methodologies by which one or more thresholds are used to determine achievement levels. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium set four achievement levels—*Standard Not Met, Standard Nearly Met*, *Standard Met,* and *Standard Exceeded*—with three threshold cuts for each grade and content area.

In coordination with its member states, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium implemented an extensive achievement-level-setting process involving software development, item mapping, review panels, committees, workshops, and extensive validity research to set the final thresholds and achievement level descriptors. For detailed information regarding this process, refer to Chapter 10 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016).

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## Scoring and Reporting

To determine individual students’ scores for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, student item responses were scored, and individual student scores were calculated based on the item responses. In addition, student test scores were aggregated to produce information for schools and local educational agencies (LEAs).

This chapter describes how various types of student responses were scored, as well as the various types of scores and score reports that were produced at the end of administration of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics.

### Approach to Scoring Item Responses

#### Structure of the Assessments

To understand the basis of the scoring approach, an understanding of the structure of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced computer-based summative assessments is necessary. These assessments are designed to gather evidence that can be used to make inferences about student mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The assessments are based on claims and targets.

Claims are inferences made about a student based on the student’s test score. They are broad statements about learning outcomes. These statements require evidence that articulates the types of data and observations that support interpretations of progress toward the achievement of the claim. Claims identify the set of knowledge and skills being measured. The following is an example of a mathematics claim:

**Claim 1: Concepts and Procedures—**Students can explain and apply mathematical concepts and carry out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency.

Targets describe the evidence that can be used to support a claim about a student. Targets are specific to claims. The following is a target associated with the previous claim:

**Target C—**Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.

The items are designed based on a variety of task models that define item characteristics such as item type, allowable stimuli, prompt feature, and item interactions.

For the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration, neither assessment targets at the aggregated levels nor individual claim results were reported.

#### Certification of the Scoring System

ETS staff from the Assessment and Learning Technology Research & Development, Enterprise Score Key Management (eSKM), Psychometric Analysis & Research (PAR), Constructed Response Scoring, Systems & Capabilities, and Information Technology divisions participated in the certification of the scoring system. Each team followed procedures required by the ETS Office of Quality for operational readiness and Standard 7.8 of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014).

ETS staff reviewed operational answer keys and scoring rubrics provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. In addition, item parameter estimates for items were loaded into the ETS operational scoring system. Central aspects of the validity of the CAASPP computer-based summative test scores are the degree to which scoring rubrics are related to the appropriate assessment targets and claims based on Smarter Balanced assessments. A key facet of validity is the degree to which scoring rules are applied accurately throughout the scoring sessions.

#### Types of Item Responses

In accordance with the Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessment specifications, students were administered a computer adaptive test (CAT) component and a randomly selected performance task (PT) (Smarter Balanced, 2017a through 2017i [ELA]; and 2018a through 2018k [mathematics]). Because of its random selection at the student level, the impact of the PT on the student’s results varies, based on the difficulty of the PT when factoring in the CAT results.

The combination of the CAT and the PT components fulfilled the content requirements for the test blueprint (refer to appendix 2.A).

CAASPP Smarter Balanced computer-based summative assessments included traditional selected response items, short constructed-response (CR) items, writing extended-response (WER) items, and technology-enhanced items. Some items were machine-scored, which means that they could be scored by the test delivery system (TDS). Other items were scored with the artificial intelligence (AI) scoring engine; still others were human scored by a trained rater. The scoring approach used depended on the item type and scoring requirements provided by the Smarter Balanced item specifications. Table 7.1 lists the types of items that were machine-scored.

Table 7.1 Machine-Scored Computer-based Item Types

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item Type** | **Description** | **Content Area** |
| Equation | The student enters an equation or numeric response using an on-screen panel containing mathematical characters. | Mathematics only |
| Evidence-based selected response | This is a two-part item. The student responds to a multiple-choice item and then responds to a multiple-select item. | ELA only |
| Grid item—Drag and drop | The student responds by dragging and dropping a single choice (“source”) into the appropriate location (“target”). The scoring key is a set of numeric identifiers that specifies which source needs to be placed in which target to answer the item correctly. | Mathematics only |

Table 7.1 *(continuation)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item Type** | **Description** | **Content Area** |
| Grid item—Graphing | The student plots points, lines, and multisegmented lines on a graph. Items can be answered by looking at a graph. For some items, students must manipulate the elements in the graph to respond. | Mathematics only |
| Hot text | The student is presented with a stem that contains multiple underlined words or phrases from which the student selects sections of text or drag-and-drop sections of text. | ELA only |
| Multiple choice | Three to five answer choices are provided, and the student can select only one choice to respond. | ELA and mathematics |
| Multiple select | Five to eight answer choices are provided, and the student is instructed to select one or more choices to respond. These item types can have multiple keys; the student may be awarded partial credit for partially correct answers or may need to select all correct answers to receive credit. | ELA and mathematics |
| Table interaction | The student is required to respond by making a keyboard entry into one or more cells in a table grid. The response can be restricted to one selection of row, column, or table, or no restrictions. | Mathematics only |

Item types that required a student to provide a response by writing words or numbers are called “constructed-response” items. Both the CAT and the PT included CR items. The CAT section contained both machine-scored items worth 0–1 or 0–2 points, as well as short-text items worth 0–2 points. The PT section contained machine-scored items, short-text items worth 0–2 points, and WER items worth 0–6 points.[[6]](#footnote-7) A small number of mathematics PTs included CR items with a 0–4 point range. CR items for CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments included the following item types:

* ***Short-answer text response items*** required students to respond with words, phrases, short sentences, or mathematical expressions. These items have a value of 0–2 points, with a small number of mathematics short-answer items having values ranging from 0–4 points. These items were scored holistically based on a rubric. Holistic scoring gave students a single, overall assessment score for the response as a whole.
* ***WER items (full-write response)*** required students to write one or more paragraphs. The WER is scored for three dimensions of writing (purpose, focus, and organization; evidence and elaboration; and conventions). These items were scored analytically based on rubrics; readers assigned a score based on each dimension.

#### Scoring the Item Types

The specifications regarding which CR items were eligible for machine scoring are described in an ETS memorandum (ETS, 2015a).

ETS staff reviewed operational answer keys and scoring rubrics provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and followed scoring specifications to enter scores into the ETS operational scoring system. The target of the scoring specifications is to optimize the validity, reliability, and efficiency of scoring.

A central aspect of the validity of the test scores is the degree to which scoring rubrics are related to the appropriate assessment targets, depth of knowledge, and claims based on Smarter Balanced assessments. A key facet of validity is whether the scoring rules were applied accurately during the scoring sessions. The validity and reliability of the scoring of CR items are evaluated in [*Chapter 8: Psychometric Analyses*](#_Analyses).

The scoring specifications include details on the type of training provided to raters, the rater screening and qualification process, and the metrics used to evaluate rater accuracy that apply to the human scoring of CR items. ETS’ subcontractor, Measurement Incorporated (MI), scores the machine-scorable CR items utilizing AI scoring engines.

The scoring rubrics for the short-answer items were holistic, with the exception of the rubrics used to score the ELA PT full-write response, which were analytic. The full-write response item is also referred to as a WER item. An example of scoring rubrics of the WER items is available in the *Smarter Balanced Hand-scoring Rules* (Smarter Balanced, 2014c)*.*

### Quality Control of Scoring

#### Human Scoring

##### Quality Control in the Scoring Process

In general, the scoring model is based on scoring one item at a time (i.e., raters scored responses to a single prompt until there were no more responses to that prompt during the shift). However, some mathematics PT items had scoring dependencies, which means that students based their calculations and responses on the answers to previous items associated with the PT. When these items were human scored, all the items in the PT, along with the student responses, were provided to the rater. This allowed the rater to evaluate dependent items based on the previous items that served as the basis for the dependent item.

The three traits measured by the extended writing tasks (full-write responses)—Organization and Purpose, Evidence and Elaboration or Development and Elaboration, and Conventions—were evaluated together by a single rater. The rater assigned a separate trait score for each of the three traits.

Items were scored by a team of 5 to 10 raters under the direction of a scoring leader. Scoring leaders were supervised by chief scoring leaders. Each chief scoring leader was responsible for multiple teams in a specific content area and grade band. Responses to individual prompts were assigned to teams of no fewer than three raters. If there was not a sufficient number of responses during a shift to occupy at least three raters, the responses were held until a sufficient number to occupy at least three raters was reached. Each rater worked individually on the rater’s own device to read each student response and enter a score for each item.

##### Quality Control Related to Raters

ETS has developed a variety of procedures to control the quality of ratings and monitor the consistency of scores provided by raters. These procedures specify rater qualifications and procedures for rater certification and daily rater calibration. Raters were required to demonstrate their accuracy by passing a certification test before ETS assigned them to score a specific assessment and by passing a shorter, more focused calibration test before each scheduled scoring session. Rater certification and calibration are key components in maintaining quality and consistency.

Scoring leaders monitored raters’ performance by reading their scored responses to determine whether the rater assigned the correct rating. Some scoring leaders chose to read the response before finding out what score the rater has assigned; others chose to know what score the rater has assigned before reading the response. Refer to the [*Monitoring Raters*](#_Monitoring_Raters) subsection for more information on this process.

###### Rater Qualification

Raters should have met the following requirements prior to being hired:

* All candidates must have a bachelor’s degree and be eligible to work in the United States (and are e-verified prior to hire).
* Teaching experience is strongly preferred.
* Graduate students and substitute teachers are encouraged to apply.
* Bilingual English and Spanish speakers are encouraged to apply.
* Candidates must complete training and achieve qualifications through the certification process.

Table 7.2 through table 7.4 summarize the overall active human raters who were trained and prepared for the 2020–2021 scoring for ETS (table 7.2), MI (table 7.3), and combined (table 7.4) across both organizations.

Table 7.2 Summary of Characteristics of ETS Human Raters Scoring CAASPP Smarter Balanced Assessments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **N** | **Percent** |
| Fluent in Spanish and expressed interest in scoring assessments in Spanish | 6 | < 1%% |
| Experience teaching in a kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) school | 381 | 24% |
| Currently works in a K–12 school in California | 317 | 20% |
| Others—Not meeting any of the previous criteria | 912 | 56% |
| Total raters scoring in 2020–2021 | 1,616 | N/A |

Table 7.3 Summary of Characteristics of MI Human Raters Scoring CAASPP Smarter Balanced Assessments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **N** | **Percent** |
| Fluent in Spanish and expressed interest in scoring assessments in Spanish | N/A | N/A% |
| Experience teaching in a K–12 school | 123 | 12% |
| Currently works in a K–12 school in California | 26 | 2% |
| Others—Not meeting any of the previous criteria | 900 | 86% |
| Total raters scoring in 2020–2021 | 1,052 | N/A |

Table 7.4 Summary of Characteristics of ETS and MI Human Raters Scoring CAASPP Smarter Balanced Assessments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **N** | **Percent** |
| Fluent in Spanish and expressed interest in scoring assessments in Spanish | 6 | < 1% |
| Experience teaching in a K–12 school | 504 | 19% |
| Currently works in a K–12 school in California | 343 | 13% |
| Others—Not meeting any of the previous criteria | 1,812 | 68% |
| Total raters scoring in 2020–2021 | 2,668 | N/A |

California educators should have met the following qualifications:

* Must have a current California teaching credential (although California charter school teachers may or may not have a teaching credential for the scoring participation requirement)
* May be retired educators and other administrative staff with a teaching credential who are not current classroom teachers
* Must have achieved, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree

All team leaders and raters were required to qualify before scoring and were informed of what they were expected to achieve to qualify. Refer to [*7.3 Rater Training*](#_Rater_Training) for a more complete description of this training.

ETS makes a distinction between training sets and calibration (qualification) sets. Training sets are nonconsequential, as the sets provide the raters the opportunity to score sample papers and receive feedback, including the correct score point and rationale associated with that score point and the sample paper. Training sets are a learning tool that the raters are required to complete. Nonadjacent scores may occur in the training sets, as minimum agreement standards are not part of training sets.

Upon completion of the required training sets, raters moved on to a consequential calibration set that determined rater eligibility for operational scoring of a particular item type. Calibration (qualification) sets have minimum agreement levels that were enforced, and nonadjacent scores were not allowed. All 0–4 and 0–3 point items adhered to the Smarter Balanced recommendation of a 70 percent exact and 0 percent discrepant (nonadjacent) agreement rate to score.

The standards, provided in table 7.5, are minimum qualification expectations for the various score point ranges and the qualification standard in terms of the percent of exact agreement. This qualification set, like the validity papers discussed in the next subsection ([*Monitoring Raters*](#_Monitoring_Raters)*)*, had been scored previously by scoring experts. Raters needed to score the papers in the same manner according to the percentage of agreements listed in table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Rater Qualification Standard for Agreement with Correct Scores

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score Point Range** | **Qualification Standard (Exact Agreement)** |
| 0–1 | 90% |
| 0–2 | 80% |
| 0–3 | 70% |
| 0–4 | 60% |

The qualification process was conducted through an online system that captured the results electronically for each individual trainee.

###### Monitoring Raters

ETS staff created performance scoring reports so that scoring leaders could monitor the daily human-scoring process and plan any retraining activities, if needed. For monitoring interrater reliability, 10 percent of the student responses that already were scored by the raters were randomly selected for a second scoring and assigned to raters by the scoring system; this process is referred to as back-reading. The second rater was unaware of the first rater’s score. The evaluation of the response from the second rater was compared to that of the first rater. Scoring leaders and chief scoring leaders provided second reads during their shifts for additional quality review.

Validity papers, carefully selected and prescored by scoring experts, also were used to monitor rater performance. They were inserted randomly into each rater’s scoring queue at a rate of 9 percent of the total papers scored by a rater during a rater’s shift. Validity papers served as another real-time evaluation of rater accuracy.

Real-time management tools allowed everyone, from scoring leaders to content specialists, access to

* the overall interrater reliability rate, which measured the percentage of agreement when the scores assigned by raters were compared to the scores assigned by other raters, including scoring managers;
* the read rate, which is defined as the number of responses read per hour;
* the individual and overall percentage of agreement for validity paper ratings; and
* the projected date for completion of the scoring for a specific prompt or task.

#### Quality Control of Artificial Intelligence Scoring

The responses to some of the short-answer items on the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments were scored by MI’s AI scoring engine. MI’s AI scoring engine analyzed a training set of papers and calculated features that pertained to the content in question for each individual item. The scoring engine sent the features to dozens of different models that competed to determine which ones could best associate the features with the corresponding human-assigned scores. The strongest models then were blended automatically to create a final model that retained the best elements from the various algorithms. After the model was built, the model elements were selected to maximize scoring accuracy for the response data.

The goal of MI’s AI scoring was to provide scores that were statistically comparable to those obtained from human raters. To ensure this continued to be true after the initial model development, MI conducted ongoing quality checks to verify that the scoring models consistently performed as expected. Statistics such as perfect or adjacent agreement, the Pearson product-moment correction coefficient, or the quadratic weighted kappa (QWK) were used for comparing the agreement between AI scoring and human scoring. MI met with the California Department of Education (CDE) to specify the evaluation metric and expected level of accuracy for AI scoring. If an analysis of the human and AI agreement for an item indicated that the scoring engine needed to be adjusted, MI recalibrated the scoring model for that item. Using a new set of training papers (500–1,000, depending on the item type and complexity), MI retrained and recalibrated the scoring model until it met or exceeded the agreement level established by the CDE, using agreed-upon evaluation metrics.

ETS and MI developed and documented a proprietary standardized system for addressing the complexities inherent in monitoring and maintaining quality throughout largescale, human-scoring projects. ETS processes ensured that both organizations maintained a quality assurance system through 10 percent of AI-scored items being scored by a human rater and used for agreement sample analysis.

#### Score Verification Process

Various measures were taken to ascertain that the scoring keys were applied to the student responses as intended and the student overall and claim scores were computed accurately. ETS’ eSKM system used scoring specifications provided by psychometricians to derive all types of scores, such as theta scores, overall scale scores, claim scale scores, achievement levels, etc., from individual item scores. A series of quality control checks were carried out by ETS psychometricians to ensure the accuracy of each score. The details are described in [*9.5 Quality Control of Psychometric Processes*](#_Quality_Control_of_3).

#### Interrater Reliability Results

At least 10 percent of the test responses of CR items in ELA and mathematics were scored independently by a second reader. ETS and MI used at least 30 validity papers that covered the full range of scores. Validity sets were monitored throughout the administration and post administration periods for performance. Supplemental samples were added as needed. The statistics for interrater reliability for all items at all grade levels are presented in appendix 8.G. These statistics include the percentage of perfect agreement and adjacent agreement between the two readers and the QWK statistic. QWK is a statistic used to measure the degree of association between two ratings with values ranging from 0.0 (indicating no agreement) to 1.0 (indicating perfect agreement). Refer to subsection [*8.5.8.3 Quadratic Weighted Kappa*](#_Quadratic-Weighted_Kappa_(QWK)) for detailed information on QWK.

Smarter Balanced provided flagging criteria (Smarter Balanced, 2016a) based on the statistics that follow for identifying items to be reviewed for potential elimination after scoring was completed. Polytomous items were flagged if any of the following conditions occurred:

* Adjacent plus exact agreement < 0.80
* Exact agreement < 0.60
* QWK < 0.20

Dichotomous items were flagged if either of the following conditions occurred:

* Exact agreement < 0.80
* QWK < 0.20

ETS followed the Smarter Balanced recommended exact and adjacent agreement rates criteria. However, ETS used a more stringent agreement criterion for QWK; that is, dichotomous and polytomous items were flagged if their QWK was below 0.70.

Table 7.6 shows the number of items flagged by content area, grade, and scoring method. There were 425 items flagged among 1,051 scored items across all grades in ELA and mathematics. The summary results show that 60 percent of all CR scored items had interrater reliabilities that met or exceeded the minimum agreement rate thresholds. Of the 24 flagged dichotomous items, only three items (or 12.5 percent) were because of exact agreement rates that were too low. Of the 401 flagged polytomous items, 81 items (or 20.2 percent) were because of exact agreement rates that were too low. No polytomous item was flagged by combined exact and adjacent agreement being too low.

Table 7.6 Number of CR Items Flagged, by Content Area and Grade, 2020–2021

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scoring Method** | **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Flagged Polytomous Items** | **Flagged Dichotomous Items** | **Total Flagged Items** | **Total Number of Scored Items** | **Percentage Flagged** |
| Human-to-Human Short Answer (SA) | ELA | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 50 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 6 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 10 | 80 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 7 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 12 | 75 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 8 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 13 | 77 |
| Human-to-Human SA | ELA | 11 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 33 | 45 |

Table 7.6 *(continuation)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scoring Method** | **Content Area** | **Grade** | **Flagged Polytomous Items** | **Flagged Dichotomous Items** | **Total Flagged Items** | **Total Number of Scored Items** | **Percentage Flagged** |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 4 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 34 | 18 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 5 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 19 | 16 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 55 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 7 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 43 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 8 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 54 |
| Human-to-Human SA | Mathematics | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 3 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 10 | 90 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 4 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 12 | 83 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 5 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 13 | 77 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 6 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 26 | 46 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 7 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 33 | 45 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 8 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 37 | 32 |
| Human-to-AI SA | ELA | 11 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 66 | 42 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 0 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 5 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 45 | 16 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 6 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 42 | 17 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 7 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 25 | 20 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 8 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 28 | 21 |
| Human-to-AI SA | Mathematics | 11 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 40 | 28 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 3 | 20 | N/A | 20 | 36 | 56 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 4 | 30 | N/A | 30 | 63 | 48 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 5 | 25 | N/A | 25 | 72 | 35 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 6 | 24 | N/A | 24 | 39 | 62 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 7 | 29 | N/A | 29 | 66 | 44 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 8 | 26 | N/A | 26 | 72 | 36 |
| Human-to-Human WER | ELA | 11 | 4 | N/A | 4 | 15 | 27 |
| Human-to-AI WER | ELA | 3 | 18 | N/A | 18 | 18 | 100 |
| Human-to-AI WER | ELA | 6 | 11 | N/A | 11 | 15 | 73 |
| Human-to-AI WER | ELA | 7 | 1 | N/A | 1 | 3 | 33 |
| Human-to-AI WER | ELA | 11 | 34 | N/A | 34 | 54 | 63 |
| **Overall** | **N/A** | **N/A** | **401** | **24** | **425** | **1,051** | **40** |

### Rater Training

#### Training Overview

##### English Language Arts/Literacy

To score ELA items, raters received training based on the task model used to design a group of items with similar characteristics. Raters were first trained by grade band, claim, and target, and then applied generic rubrics to score the responses. For example, raters were trained to score Claim 1 Target 5 responses for grade band three through five. The training was further focused based on the item type—short answer or WER—as well as the grade band (grades three through five, six through eight, or grade eleven).

“Baseline” training sets of papers, also called anchors, as well as scoring rubrics, were provided to raters based on writing purpose (e.g., informational or explanatory writing) for the WER items. Baseline anchor and training sets of papers consisted of student responses that had been scored, reviewed by scoring experts, and selected to be exemplars of each score point. Often, these were annotated to provide a specific explanation of how the paper exemplified a response that should earn that particular score. Raters could refer to these sets to increase their understanding of how to accurately apply the scoring rubric.

Additional anchor and training sets were created for periodic qualification, a process in which raters engaged in a brief training and then scored a prescored set of papers before their shift began, to ensure they were scoring accurately.

Qualification and validity sets were provided for each WER essay type. Anchor and training sets were also provided for the task models associated with the ELA short-answer items in the CAT and PT sections. For the ELA short-answer items in the CAT and the PT sections, raters received training for a grade band—grades three through five, six through eight, or grade eleven—instead of a grade level.

Although training was provided at the task-model level, rater qualification occurred on an item-type and grade-span basis for all ELA human-scored items. Qualification and validity papers were provided for each ELA CR item. Raters qualified for each item type within a specific grade band before being assigned to score that item type (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2015).

##### Mathematics

To score mathematics items, raters received training and needed to qualify on all task models before scoring items on any task model. Similar to the training procedures for ELA, for mathematics, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium provided anchor papers, the baseline paper, and training sets for the task models. The Consortium also provided item-specific rubrics and item-specific validation sets for all mathematics items (AIR, 2015).

#### Training Process: English Language Arts/Literacy Performance Task Extended Writing Tasks

Baseline anchor sets for each writing purpose (e.g., informational writing or explanatory writing) were used to train raters on each of the writing traits―Organization and Purpose, Evidence and Elaboration or Development and Elaboration, and Conventions—within a particular grade band. The writing purposes are narrative, informational, and opinion at grades three through five; narrative, informational, and argumentative at grades six through eight; and explanatory and argumentative at grade eleven.

For all writing purposes, Organization and Purpose is the first trait and Conventions is the third trait. Evidence and Elaboration is the second trait for the opinion, argumentative, informational, and explanatory writing purposes. Development and Elaboration is the second trait for the narrative writing purpose.

What follows are writing traits for opinion, argumentative, informational, or explanatory writing:

* Organization and Purpose
* Opinion (grades three through five)
* Argumentative (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Informational (grades three through eight)
* Explanatory (grade eleven)
* Narrative (grades three through eight)
* Evidence and Elaboration
* Opinion (grades three through five)
* Argumentative (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Informational (grades three through eight)
* Explanatory (grade eleven)
* Conventions
* Opinion (grades three through five)
* Argumentative (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Informational (grades three through eight)
* Explanatory (grade eleven)
* Narrative (grades three through eight)

What follows are writing traits for narrative writing:

* Organization and Purpose,
* Opinion (grades three through five)
* Argumentative (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Informational (grades three through eight)
* Explanatory (grade eleven)
* Narrative (grades three through eight)
* Development and Elaboration
* Narrative (grades three through eight)
* Conventions
* Opinion (grades three through five)
* Argumentative (grades six through eight and grade eleven)
* Informational (grades three through eight)
* Explanatory (grade eleven)
* Narrative (grades three through eight)

A chart that presents the traits to their purposes is shown in figure 7.1.

**Writing Traits**

**1.** Organization and Purpose

**2.** Evidence and Elaboration

* Opinion (grades 3–5)
* Argumentative (grades 6–8, grade 11)
* Informational (grades 3–8)
* Explanatory (grade 11)
* Narrative (grades 3–8)
* Opinion (grades 3–5)
* Argumentative (grades 6–8, grade 11)
* Informational (grades 3–8)
* Explanatory (grade 11)
* Narrative (grades 3–8)

**2.** Development and Elaboration

**3.** Conventions

* Narrative (grades 3–8)
* Opinion (grades 3–5)
* Argumentative (grades 6–8, grade 11)
* Informational (grades 3–8)
* Explanatory (grade 11)

Figure 7.1 Writing traits

The training process for extended writing tasks is described next. The training steps are described in the following list.

**Training steps:**

1. Trainees read the task, rubrics, and source materials for the WER items in a particular grade band and writing purpose (for example, grades three through five informational). Trainees read sample responses and annotations.
2. Trainees read a training set of five responses to the same item (Essay 1) and scored those responses for Conventions.
3. Trainees reviewed the correct scores and the scoring rationale for the Conventions scores for those responses.
4. Trainees read another training set of five responses to that item (Essay 1) and scored those responses for Organization and Purpose. They then reviewed the correct scores and the scoring rationale for the Organization and Purpose scores for those responses.
5. Trainees read another training set of five responses to that item (Essay 1) and scored those responses for Evidence and Elaboration. They then reviewed the correct scores and the scoring rationale for the Evidence and Elaboration scores for those responses.
6. Trainees read another training set of five responses to that item (Essay 1) and scored each of those responses for all three traits.
7. Trainees reviewed the scoring rationale for the training responses and answered training questions.
8. Trainees scored a qualification round (10 papers) for all three traits for Essay 1.
9. Qualified raters—those who met the standard in the qualification round—began scoring.
10. Trainees who did not meet the qualification standard on their first attempt had an opportunity to review correct scores and the scoring rationale with a scoring leader before making a second attempt.

The training materials are described in the following list.

**Materials for training raters of WER items, at each grade level:**

1. Baseline anchor sets approved during Smarter Balanced pre–range finding (Range finding activities included the review of student responses against item rubrics, the validation of rubric effectiveness, and the selection of anchor papers used by human scoring for the larger population of responses.)
2. Field test prompt and stimulus materials
3. Purpose- and task-specific rubrics
4. Conventions charts approved by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
5. Supplemental scoring guidelines approved by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
6. Training sets specific to the first WER task for each grade and purpose
7. Qualification sets generally administered in two rounds of approximately 10 responses per WER task

#### Training Process: English Language Arts/Literacy Short-Answer Items

The process for training raters to score short-answer items was also organized by grade band (grades three through five, six through eight, or eleven). These training steps are described in the following list.

**Training steps:**

1. Trainees read the rubrics and scoring notes for the short-answer items in a particular grade band and purpose category (for example, grades three through five evidence). Trainees read sample responses to a prompt and the associated annotations.
2. Trainees reviewed the scoring rationale for each of the anchors (i.e., anchor sets for the claim, target, and subclaim).
3. Trainees scored the training set (5–10 papers) for the short-answer claim, target, and subclaim.
4. Trainees reviewed the correct scores and scoring rationale for the training set.
5. Trainees read the prompt, source materials, or stimuli for the first short-answer item in the claim, target, and subclaim (e.g., Grade 6, Claim 1, Reading Item 1).
6. Trainees scored a qualification round.
7. Qualified raters began scoring.
8. Trainees who did not meet the qualification standard on their first attempt had an opportunity to review correct scores and the scoring rationale with a scoring leader before making a second attempt.

The training materials are described in the following list.

**Materials for short-answer item training:**

1. Anchors and training sets by grade band, claim, target, and subcategory
2. Prompts and source materials or stimuli
3. Item-specific rubrics
4. One qualification set with 10 responses per item

#### Training Process: Mathematics Items

The training process for mathematics items is described next. The training steps for scoring mathematics items are described in the following list.

**Training steps:**

1. Trainees reviewed the items that are represented in the anchor and training sets, any associated source materials or stimuli, and the item-specific rubrics.
2. Trainees read the associated source materials or stimuli, as appropriate.
3. Trainees scored the training set for the item category.
4. Trainees reviewed the correct scores and scoring rationale for the training set.
5. Trainees scored a qualification round.
6. Trainees who did not meet the qualification standard on their first attempt had an opportunity to review correct scores and the scoring rationale with a scoring leader before making a second attempt.
7. Qualified raters began scoring.

The training materials are described in the following list.

**Materials for mathematics training:**

1. Anchors and training sets by PT grade, family, and item category or by CAT item
2. Prompts and source materials or stimuli
3. Item-specific rubrics
4. One or two qualification rounds per item category, depending on item complexity, with 10 responses per round

Unlike ELA PTs, mathematics PTs could contain interdependencies among the items within a task. Each mathematics PT was made up of four to six items. Items could be dependent on any of the previous items within the PT. For example, if item 6 was dependent on items 3 and 5, the rubric for item 6 specified the correct response based on prior correct responses to items 3 and 5. Raters were responsible for determining the appropriate response to item 6 and awarding credit accordingly, even when the student’s responses to items 3 and 5 were incorrect. It also was possible for the first two of the six items could be AI-scored while two or more of the other four were human scored.

The proper handling of tasks with dependencies was addressed in the training process. Raters had practice working through PT responses and recognizing correct work that was based on previous incorrect values. PTs are composed of items based on several different task models. In general, training materials were organized so raters trained on a task model rather than on a complete PT. However, when PT items that were dependent on previous items in the set were presented in training, the entire set of items and responses was included. This allowed raters to identify the previous responses that served as the basis for the item that is being scored.

#### Supplemental Training for Scoring Supervisors

Scoring condition codes allowed raters to categorize certain responses as unscorable. The code indicated the reason that the response could not be scored. Responses with condition codes were routed to scoring supervisors for final code assignment. Supervisors required detailed training on the Smarter Balanced condition codes and definitions (Smarter Balanced, 2014a).

Table 7.7 presents the valid condition codes used for scoring, along with descriptions of the responses that would warrant the assignment of the different codes.

Table 7.7 Scoring Condition Codes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Condition Code** | **Reason** | **Use** |
| B | Blank | No response |
| I | Insufficient | 1. Use the “I” code when a student has not provided a meaningful response; this may include the following:

Random keystrokesUndecipherable text“I hate this test”“I don’t know, IDK”“I don’t care”“I like pizza!” (in response to a reading passage about helicopters)Response consisting entirely of profanity1. For ELA WER items, use the “I” code for responses described previously and also if

the student’s original work is insufficient for the rater to determine whether the student is able to organize, cite evidence and elaborate, and use conventions as defined in the rubrics; orthe response is too brief to make a determination regarding whether it is on purpose or on topic. |
| L | Nonscorable Language | * ELA: Language other than English
* Mathematics: Language other than English or Spanish
 |
| T | Off-Topic for ELA WER Items Only | * The response is unrelated to the task or sources or shows no evidence that the student has read the task or the sources (especially for informational or explanatory and opinion or argumentative), or
* “Off topic” responses are generally substantial responses.
 |

Table 7.7 *(continuation)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Condition Code** | **Reason** | **Use** |
| M | Off-Purpose for ELA WER Items Only | The student has clearly not written to the purpose designated in the task:An off-purpose response addresses the topic of the task but not the purpose of the task.Students may use narrative techniques in an explanatory essay or use argumentative or persuasive techniques to explain, for example, and still be on purpose.Off-purpose responses are generally developed responses (essays, poems, etc.) clearly not written to the designated purpose. |

#### Human-Scoring Alerts

Raters were also trained to watch for indications of a “crisis paper” and cheating. Such information can require urgent attention. Any student response of a sensitive nature to any human-scored test item was assigned a score and identified as an “alert.” Raters received a process document as part of their training materials that described the steps to follow should they determine that a response should be classified as an alert response. The different types of crisis paper alerts are as follows:

* Suicide
* Criminal activity
* Alcohol or drug use
* Extreme depression
* Violence
* Rape, sexual, or physical abuse
* Self-harm or intent to harm others
* Neglect

For crisis paper alerts, the LEA’s superintendent and LEA CAASPP coordinator in the LEA for the flagged student were sent a copy of the response and the student’s Statewide Student Identifier via tracked delivery.

### Student Test Scores

ETS developed two parallel scoring systems to produce students’ scores: the eSKM scoring system, which scores and delivers individual students’ scores to the ETS reporting system; and the parallel scoring system developed by ETS Technology and Information Processing Services (TIPS), which computes individual students’ scores. The two scoring systems independently applied the same scoring algorithms and specifications. ETS psychometricians verified the eSKM scoring by comparing all individual student scores from TIPS and resolving any discrepancies. This process redundancy is an internal quality control step that is in place to verify the accuracy of scoring. Students’ scores were reported only when the two parallel systems produced identical results with acceptable tolerance.

Were scores not to match, the mismatch would be investigated by ETS’ PAR and eSKM teams and resolved. (For example, the mismatch could be a result of a Smarter Balanced and CDE decision to not score an item as a problem was identified in a particular item or rubric.) ETS would apply a problem item notification (PIN) not to score the item through the systematic process in eSKM, which might result in a mismatch if TIPS were still in the process of applying the PIN in the parallel system when the student score was being compared. This real-time scoring check is designed to detect mismatches and track remediation.

All scores must comply with the ETS scoring specifications and the parallel scoring process to ensure the quality and accuracy of scoring and to support the transfer of scores into the database of the student records scoring system, the Test Operations Management System (TOMS).

#### Total Test Scores

##### Theta Scores

For all of the tests, theta scores (item response theory [IRT] ability estimates) are obtained through maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) applied to item scores (Birnbaum, 1968). Items scored as one (correct) or zero (incorrect) are referred to as dichotomous items. Items scored from zero to some number of points greater than one are called polytomous items. The generalized partial credit model (GPCM) is applied to both types of items. The GPCM (Muraki, 1992) is presented in equation 7.1. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.1*](#_Alternative_Text_for_7) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.1)

where,

*Pih (θj)* is the probability of student with proficiency *θj* obtaining score *h* on item *i,*

*ni* is the maximum number of score points for item *i*,

*ai* is the discrimination parameter for item *i*,

*bi* is the location parameter for item *i*,

*div* is the category parameter for item *v* on score *v*, and

*D* is a scaling constant of 1.7 that makes the logistic model approximate the normal ogive model.

When *ni* = 1, equation 7.1 becomes an expression of the two-parameter logistic model for dichotomous items.

The log-likelihood of a student with proficiency *θj*, given the observed response vector *v*, is presented in equation 7.2. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.2*](#_Alternative_Text_for_1) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.2)

where,

*I* is the total number of items in the response vector,

*ni* is the maximum number of score points for item *i*,

*Pih* is the probability of the score *h* observed on item *i*, as expressed in equation 7.1, and

*uiv* is presented in equation 7.3. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.3*](#_Alternative_Text_for_20) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.3)

The theta that is associated with the largest log-likelihood for a particular pattern of scores is the maximum likelihood theta estimate. The equation for the MLE cannot generally be solved explicitly as it is nonlinear in nature (Hambleton & Swaminathan, 1985, p. 79). As a result, an iterative process such as the Newton-Raphson procedure is employed. At iteration *t*, a student’s estimated ability *θ* is calculated using equation 7.4. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.4*](#_Alternative_Text_for_2) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.4)

where,

 is the first derivative of the log-likelihood at iteration *t*−*1*, and

 is the second derivative.

When the difference between the estimates in successive iterations becomes acceptably small (i.e., difference is less than .0001), the process is said to converge. The convergence criterion determines the level of accuracy of estimation, provided that the process converges. Theta scores are the basis for scale scores but are not reported. Scale scores and the transformation from theta scores to scale scores are described in the [*Scale Scores for the Total Assessment*](#_7.4.1.2_Scale_Scores) subsection.

##### Inverse Test Characteristic Curve Method

There are some special cases in which the score reported for a student is not based on the MLE approach:

* The student got the lowest possible score on the total test, which would lead to an MLE of ‑∞.
* The student got the highest possible score on the total test, which would lead to an MLE of +∞.
* The student’s response pattern did not lead to a single most likely MLE of the student’s ability, or the likelihood function was so flat that its maximum was not much greater than the likelihood over a wide range of theta values.

In these cases, the student’s score is computed by the inverse test characteristic curve (TCC) method (Stocking, 1996). This method transforms the sum of the student’s item scores into an ability estimate. That estimate is the ability level at which the sum of the expected scores on the items the student took is equal to the sum of the scores that the student actually earned on those items.

The item characteristic curve for an item shows the probability of a correct answer to the item (in the case of dichotomous items) or the probability of responding in a score category (in the case of polytomous items) as a function of the student’s ability. The TCC for a set of items shows the expected total score on those items as a function of the student’s ability. Because information is lost by not utilizing each student’s unique pattern of responses, this method is used only when the response pattern does not lead to one clear MLE of the student’s ability or the likelihood function is so flat that although it has a maximum, there is a wide range of theta values at which the likelihood is only slightly less than the maximum.

The lowest obtainable theta (LOT) and the highest obtainable theta (HOT) defined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium are presented in table 7.8 for each grade and content area (Smarter Balanced, 2016b[[7]](#footnote-8)). The theta scores for grades three through eight and grade eleven are on a common vertical scale.

Table 7.8 Theta of Lowest and Highest Obtainable Scores

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **LOT** | **HOT** |
| ELA 3 | -4.5828 | 1.6527 |
| ELA 4 | -4.2914 | 2.1189 |
| ELA 5 | -3.5921 | 2.5851 |
| ELA 6 | -3.2424 | 3.0513 |
| ELA 7 | -2.8928 | 3.5175 |
| ELA 8 | -2.5431 | 3.9837 |
| ELA 11 | -2.4266 | 4.5664 |
| Mathematics 3 | -4.0971 | 1.8298 |
| Mathematics 4 | -3.9079 | 2.3342 |
| Mathematics 5 | -3.7188 | 2.8386 |
| Mathematics 6 | -3.5296 | 3.3430 |
| Mathematics 7 | -3.3405 | 3.8474 |
| Mathematics 8 | -3.1513 | 4.3518 |
| Mathematics 11 | -2.9622 | 4.8562 |

##### Scoring of Incomplete Cases

Sometimes students fail to complete their tests. Depending on the nature of the missing data, different actions are taken. This subsection covers the following three situations:

1. Attemptedness/Test-Taking rules that describe when a test is considered attempted or participated
2. When a test is scored
3. How and when incomplete tests are scored

As defined in the Smarter Balanced scoring specifications, tests are considered “complete” if students respond to at least the minimum number of operational items specified in the blueprint. Otherwise, the tests are “incomplete.” (Refer to table 8.1 and table 8.2 for the minimum number of items in each claim in the adjusted, shortened-form blueprint and in the full-form blueprint, respectively.) In a fixed-form (i.e., not CAT) assessment, unanswered items are treated as incorrect. However, in a CAT environment, all but one of the specific unanswered items are unknown, because the test administration terminates when a student stops responding to items. ETS implemented several procedures that score an incomplete test in a CAT environment; these procedures are presented in table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Treatment of Incomplete Tests

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **If the student ...** | **Classify the student as participating?** | **Include the data in the student file?** | **Score the responses for the student?** | **Classify the student as attempting the test?** | **Report a score for the student?** |
| Logged on to both the CAT and PT but answered no items | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Logged on to both the CAT and PT and answered at least one item for only CAT or PT | Yes | Yes | Lowest obtainable score for the test | No | No |
| Logged on to both the CAT and PT and answered at least one PT item but fewer than 10 CAT items | Yes | Yes | Lowest obtainable score for the test | Yes | No |
| Logged on to both the CAT and PT, answered at least one PT item and at least 10 CAT items, but did not answer a specified minimum number of items for a complete test | Yes | Yes | MLE (unanswered items in the middle of the test scored as incorrect), or for an incomplete test, estimate from equation 7.5 | Yes | Yes |

The number and percent of all students and students in the demographic student groups specified in table 7.17 who took the tests are presented in the tables of appendix 7.A. Results in appendix 7.A show that in general, across grades, approximately 24 percent of students took the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics. In high school, student test-taking rates were 45 percent in ELA and 44 percent in mathematics, which doubled the test-taking rates that ranged from 19 to 22 percent in grades three through eight in ELA and mathematics.

Among the demographic student groups, the American Indian or Alaska Native, White, and not economically disadvantaged student groups had a higher test-taking rate, whereas the Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, and economically disadvantaged student groups had a lower test-taking rate across grades three through eight in both ELA and mathematics. In high school, across content areas, the Asian and fluent English proficiency student groups had a higher test taking-rate, while the Black or African American, English learner (EL), and adult English learner (ADEL) student groups had a lower test-taking rate.

In addition, the number of students in the selected demographic student groups with different test completion conditions are presented in the tables of appendix 7.F. Among students who logged on to the tests, a majority of students completed the ELA and mathematics assessments. Students who logged on without answering any questions were fewer than 40 per grade in each content area. Students who logged on without answering any questions or answered at least one question but fewer than 10 CAT items were 1 percent or fewer per grade per content area.

Sometimes a student stops answering items before the TDS has administered all the items the student is supposed to answer. When that happens, the student’s test is considered complete if the student has answered at least a specified minimum number of items (less than the number of items in the full test). Otherwise, the student’s score is based on an adjusted ability estimate calculated by the formula in equation 7.5. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.5*](#_Alternative_Text_for_3) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.5)

where,

*θadj* is the student’s adjusted ability estimate,

*θachieved* is the theta estimate based on the incomplete test,

*θmin* is a predetermined theta estimate equal to -3.5, which is the average of the LOT values across all tests (on the vertical theta scale), and

*PropAdj* is the proportion of the test completed by the student.

##### Scale Scores for the Total Assessment

After MLE scoring is performed on the theta scale and the scoring rules are implemented, the scaling constants are applied. Scale scores (SS) are on the Smarter Balanced vertical scale and are formed by linking across grades using common items in adjacent grades. The vertical scale score is the linear transformation of the post–vertically scaled IRT ability estimate (refer to subsection [*2.6.3 Vertical Scaling*](#_Vertical_Scaling) for the procedure). The student’s estimated theta score is converted to a scale score using equation 7.6 for ELA. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.6*](#_Alternative_Text_for_4) *for a description of this equation.*

For ELA: SS = 85.8 *θ* + 2508.2 (7.6)

The student’s estimated theta score is converted to a scale score using equation 7.7 for *mathematics. Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.7*](#_Alternative_Text_for_5) *for a description of this equation.*

For mathematics: SS = 79.3 *θ* + 2514.9 (7.7)

There is a restriction that the scale score cannot be higher or lower than the specified highest and lowest possible scores for that content area and grade level. The revised lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS) and revised highest obtainable scale score (HOSS) for each test are displayed in table 7.10. The CDE revised LOSS and HOSS and started to implement them in the 2020–2021 administration to measure student growth over years more effectively. Scale scores are rounded to the nearest integer.

Table 7.10 Lowest and Highest Obtainable Scale Scores

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **LOSS** | **HOSS** |
| ELA 3 | 2115 | 2650 |
| ELA 4 | 2140 | 2690 |
| ELA 5 | 2200 | 2730 |
| ELA 6 | 2230 | 2770 |
| ELA 7 | 2260 | 2810 |
| ELA 8 | 2290 | 2850 |
| ELA 11 | 2300 | 2900 |
| Mathematics 3 | 2190 | 2660 |
| Mathematics 4 | 2205 | 2700 |
| Mathematics 5 | 2220 | 2740 |
| Mathematics 6 | 2235 | 2780 |
| Mathematics 7 | 2250 | 2820 |
| Mathematics 8 | 2265 | 2860 |
| Mathematics 11 | 2280 | 2900 |

Detailed information regarding the establishment of scale scores for the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments can be found in chapter 10 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a) and the *Smarter Balanced Scoring Specification: 2014–2015 Administration* (AIR, 2015). The original LOSS and HOSS were set by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium in 2015.

##### Achievement Levels

Standard settings were performed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, which defined four achievement levels based on overall scale scores. These achievement level categories were labeled “Standard Not Met,” “Standard Nearly Met,” “Standard Met,” and “Standard Exceeded.” The combined categories of “Standard Met” and “Standard Exceeded” are used to define students meeting the proficiency criterion for accountability purposes. Refer to *Chapter 10: Achievement Level Setting* of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a) for details related to the standard setting procedure; *Reporting Achievement Level Descriptors* (Smarter Balanced, 2015) for the descriptors used to describe Smarter Balanced achievement levels; and *Interpretation and Use of Scores and Achievement Levels* (Smarter Balanced, 2014b) for more information about using achievement levels.

Levels are defined as follows:

* **Level 1—Standard Not Met:** Student demonstrates minimal understanding of ELA and mathematics and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills for his or her grade level that are associated with college and career readiness.
* **Level 2—Standard Nearly Met:** Student demonstrates partial understanding of ELA and mathematics and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills for his or her grade level that are associated with college and career readiness.
* **Level 3—Standard Met:** Student demonstrates adequate understanding of ELA and mathematics and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills for his or her grade level that are associated with college and career readiness.
* **Level 4—Standard Exceeded:** Student demonstrates thorough understanding of ELA and mathematics and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills for his or her grade level that are associated with college and career readiness.

The thresholds for the achievement levels vary by grade and content area. Table 7.11 provides the theta thresholds for Standard Nearly Met, Met, and Exceeded at each grade level. For example, the threshold of -0.888 for “Standard Met” in grade three ELA means that a student must earn a theta score (𝜃) of -0.888 or higher to achieve that classification.

Table 7.11 Theta Thresholds for Achievement Levels

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Nearly Met** | **Standard Met** | **Standard Exceeded** |
| ELA 3 | -1.646 | -0.888 | -0.212 |
| ELA 4 | -1.075 | -0.410 | 0.289 |
| ELA 5 | -0.772 | -0.072 | 0.860 |
| ELA 6 | -0.597 | 0.266 | 1.280 |
| ELA 7 | -0.340 | 0.510 | 1.641 |
| ELA 8 | -0.247 | 0.685 | 1.862 |
| ELA 11 | -0.177 | 0.872 | 2.026 |
| Mathematics 3 | -1.689 | -0.995 | -0.175 |
| Mathematics 4 | -1.310 | -0.377 | 0.430 |
| Mathematics 5 | -0.755 | 0.165 | 0.808 |
| Mathematics 6 | -0.528 | 0.468 | 1.199 |
| Mathematics 7 | -0.390 | 0.657 | 1.515 |
| Mathematics 8 | -0.137 | 0.897 | 1.741 |
| Mathematics 11 | 0.354 | 1.426 | 2.561 |

Table 7.12 shows the scale score range of each achievement level for the ELA and mathematics assessments, respectively.

Table 7.12 Scale Score Ranges for Achievement Levels

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Not Met** | **Standard Nearly Met** | **Standard Met** | **Standard Exceeded** |
| ELA 3 | 2115–2366 | 2367–2431 | 2432–2489 | 2490–2650 |
| ELA 4 | 2140–2415 | 2416–2472 | 2473–2532 | 2533–2690 |
| ELA 5 | 2200–2441 | 2442–2501 | 2502–2581 | 2582–2730 |
| ELA 6 | 2230–2456 | 2457–2530 | 2531–2617 | 2618–2770 |
| ELA 7 | 2260–2478 | 2479–2551 | 2552–2648 | 2649–2810 |
| ELA 8 | 2290–2486 | 2487–2566 | 2567–2667 | 2668–2850 |
| ELA 11 | 2300–2492 | 2493–2582 | 2583–2681 | 2682–2900 |
| Mathematics 3 | 2190–2380 | 2381–2435 | 2436–2500 | 2501–2660 |
| Mathematics 4 | 2205–2410 | 2411–2484 | 2485–2548 | 2549–2700 |
| Mathematics 5 | 2220–2454 | 2455–2527 | 2528–2578 | 2579–2740 |
| Mathematics 6 | 2235–2472 | 2473–2551 | 2552–2609 | 2610–2780 |
| Mathematics 7 | 2250–2483 | 2484–2566 | 2567–2634 | 2635–2820 |
| Mathematics 8 | 2265–2503 | 2504–2585 | 2586–2652 | 2653–2860 |
| Mathematics 11 | 2280–2542 | 2543–2627 | 2628–2717 | 2718–2900 |

#### Claim Scores and Claim Levels (Subscores)

Claims identify knowledge and skills being measured through a set of items. Groups of items in each combination of grade level and content area are formed based on related content standards; outcomes for these groups of items are called claim scores. A claim score is a measure of a student’s performance on the items in that claim.

Note that when Smarter Balanced’s adjusted, shortened-form blueprint was implemented for the 2020–2021 administration, the number of items was not reliable enough to report performance levels for claims at the student level. Therefore, individual student claim-level information was not available in the Student Score Report (SSR). Aggregated claim-level information was reported at group levels (school and LEA) in aggregated data files, LEA downloadable files, and production files for the CDE. In addition, claim scores and claim-level information at the state level are analyzed and reported in the technical report.

##### Identified Claims

There are four claims for ELA assessments and three claims for mathematics assessments. Claims 2 and 4 of mathematics scores are combined because of content similarity and to provide flexibility for item development. Consequently, only three claim scores are reported with the overall mathematics score.

Like the overall test, results of each claim are reported as a theta score, a scale score, and a claim strength or weakness. The claims for ELA are identified in table 7.13 and are also available in the blueprints, which are provided in appendix 2.A.

Table 7.13 Claims Identified for ELA

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Claim** | **Description** |
| 1. Reading
 | Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts. |
| 1. Writing
 | Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences. |
| 1. Listening/‌Speaking
 | Students can employ effective listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences. |
| 1. Research
 | Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics and to analyze, integrate, and present information. |

The claims for mathematics are identified in table 7.14 and are also available in the blueprints, which are provided in appendix 2.A.Note that for mathematics, claims 2 and 4 are reported together as defined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, so there are only three reporting categories with four claims.

Table 7.14 Claims Identified for Mathematics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Claim** | **Description** |
| 1. Concepts and Procedures
 | Students can explain and apply mathematical concepts and interpret and carry out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency. |
| 1. Problem Solving
 | Students can solve a range of complex, well-posed problems in pure and applied mathematics, making productive use of knowledge and problem-solving strategies. |
| 1. Model and Data Analysis
 | Students can analyze complex, real-world scenarios and can construct and use mathematical models to interpret and solve problems. |
| 1. Communicating/‌Reasoning
 | Students can clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others. |

##### Scale Scores for Claims

Claim scores are calculated by applying the MLE approach to the items contained in a particular claim. The resulting ability estimates are converted to claim scale scores by applying equation 7.6 for ELA assessments and equation 7.7 for mathematics assessments. ELA scores are computed for each claim. Mathematics scores are computed for Claim 1, claims 2 and 4 combined, and Claim 3.

Claim scores are based on fewer items than total test scores. As a result, the number of students whose claim scores cannot be estimated by the MLE approach is larger than for the total score. ETS uses the inverse TCC approach when MLE-derived theta estimates are not available for a claim.

##### Performance Levels for Claims

The relative strengths and weaknesses for each student are reported for each claim. The three performance levels for each claim are as follows:

* **Above Standard**—Student clearly understands and can successfully apply his or her knowledge to the standards tested in this content area for his or her grade.
* **Near Standard**—Student shows understanding and can apply his or her knowledge to the standards tested in this content area for his or her grade.
* **Below Standard**—Student has limited understanding and difficulty applying his or her knowledge to the standards tested in this content area for his or her grade.

Because claim scores are based on fewer items than overall test scores, the standard error of the claim scale scores is included in the determination of the student’s performance level on a claim.  is a student’s estimated scale score on a claim.  is an estimated standard error of measurement (SEM) of the scale score on a claim. A range of possible student scale scores is calculated for each student from  to , each of which is converted to a scale score and rounded to an integer.

If the value at the high end of the score range is less than the minimum scale score associated with the overall “Standard Met” achievement classification, the claim performance level is reported as “Below Standard.” This achievement classification is also assigned when a student’s responses to all items associated with a claim are incorrect.

If the value at the low end of the range is greater than the minimum scale score associated with the overall “Standard Met” achievement classification, the claim performance level is reported as “Above Standard.” This claim performance level is also reported when all student responses are correct.

Scale score ranges that do not meet either of these classifications are reported as “Near Standard.”

#### Theta Scores Standard Error

A student’s true ability level or theta score and standard error of theta are not known. The SEM is the standard deviation of the distribution of theta scores that the student would earn under different testing conditions. In IRT, the only differences taken into account in the SEM are those associated with different sets of items that could be presented to the student. An error band can be calculated from the student’s theta score minus one SEM to the student’s theta score plus one SEM. Over a large number of replications of this procedure, the error band will contain the student’s true score approximately 68 percent of the time. The error band is transformed to the scale score metric and reported for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced assessments. It is useful to take into account the size of measurement errors because no assessment measures student ability with perfect accuracy or consistency. (Error bands are also discussed in subsection [*7.4.5 Error Band*](#_Error_Band).)

In the framework of IRT, the SEM is the reciprocal of the square root of the test information function (TIF) based on the items taken by each student. It is also the estimate of standard error for the estimate of theta. The TIF is the sum of information from each item on the test. With MLE, the SEM for a student with proficiency *θj* is calculated using equation 7.8. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.8*](#_Alternative_Text_for_6) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.8)

where,

*I(θj)* is the test information for student *j*, calculated as presented in equation 7.9. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.9*](#_Alternative_Text_for_8) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.9)

and *Ii*(*θj*)is the item information of item *i* for student *j*.

When item information is based on the GPCM for both dichotomous and polytomous items, it is calculated as presented in equation 7.10. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.10*](#_Alternative_Text_for_9) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.10)

where,

*Si*(*θj*) is the expected item score for item *i* on a theta scale score *θj*, calculated as presented in equation 7.11 (*Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.11*](#_Alternative_Text_for_10) *for a description of this equation.)*

 (7.11)

and equation 7.12 *(Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.12*](#_Alternative_Text_for_11) *for a description of this equation.)*

 (7.12)

where,

*Pih*(*θj*) is the probability of an examinee with *θj* getting score *h* on item *i*, the computation of which is shown in equation 7.1, and

*ni* is the maximum number of score points for item *i*.

The SEM is calculated based only on the answered item(s) for both complete and incomplete tests. The upper bound of the SEM is set to 2.5 on the theta metric, and any value larger than 2.5 is truncated at 2.5, as is required by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (AIR, 2015).

#### Scale Score Standard Errors

Standard errors of the maximum likelihood theta estimates are also transformed onto the reporting scale. This transformation is calculated using equation 7.13. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.13*](#_Alternative_Text_for_12) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.13)

where,

*SEθ* is the standard error of the ability estimate on the *θ* scale, and

*a* is the slope of the scaling constants that transform *θ* to the reporting scale.

The value of *a* is 85.8 for ELA and 79.3 for mathematics.

#### Error Band

A band of scale scores showing the measurement error associated with each scale score is reported. It is generated by developing a band of indeterminacy surrounding the scale score, as presented in equation 7.14. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.14*](#_Alternative_Text_for_13) *for a description of this equation.*

 (7.14)

where,

*SS* is the scale score,

*SE scaled* is the SEM associated with this scale score,

*SS − SE scaled* is the lower boundary of the error band, and

*SS + SE scaled* is the upper boundary of the error band.

#### Assessment Target Reports

##### Overview of Assessment Target Reports

The Smarter Balanced adjusted, shortened-form blueprint implemented for the 2020–2021 administration resulted in too few items for target standards to be reported. Therefore, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium decided that no target scores would be reported at the group level for the 2020–2021 administration.

Assessment target standards are specific to each content domain and linked to the CCSS associated with claim areas. For Smarter Balanced tests, assessment targets are intended to support the development of high-quality items and tasks that contribute evidence to the claims. The relationship between assessment targets and CCSS elements is made explicit in the Smarter Balanced content specifications (ETS, 2015a; 2015b).

Typically, assessment target scores, which are reported only at the group level, provide insight into strengths and weaknesses for a group of students relative to their performance on the test as a whole. For a selected group of students (for example, a classroom), if their performance on an assessment target is better than their performance on the test as a whole, the assessment target is an area of relative strength. Conversely, if the group of students did not perform as well on an assessment target in relation to the test as a whole, it would be an area of relative weakness.

Assessment target scores are derived from item *residuals*, which are the differences between a student’s observed score and expected score for a particular item. For the selected group of students, the assessment target scores for each student are calculated by summing the differences between the observed and expected scores for each student for all items that the student attempted within a particular assessment target. The sum of these differences is then divided by the total number of points possible for items within a particular target. Next, the mean assessment target scores, as well as the standard error for all students in the selected student group, are calculated. Finally, strengths and weaknesses thresholds are established after the values for each assessment target are calculated. More details on the calculation of the assessment targets and the establishment of the strengths and weaknesses thresholds are described in an ETS memorandum, *Target Score Reporting* (ETS, 2015b).

Note, however, that while assessment targets are based on target standards, not all claim areas support assessment target reporting. For example, assessment targets are reported for all claims in ELA but only for Claim 1 in mathematics.

##### Limitations

When reported, caution should be used when reporting or interpreting assessment targets. First, assessment targets can only be meaningfully reported at the group level because they are neither reliable nor generalizable enough to support inferences for individual students. Second, because residuals are sensitive to model fit, student strengths and weaknesses evaluated this way are sometimes the result of a misfit in item calibration. Therefore, it is necessary to compute the average residuals of each item across all students within each assessment target to determine whether the average residuals across all students are uniformly close to zero. Finally, assessment targets that are based on 10 or fewer items in the item bank are not reported, except the WER items.

The extent to which the scores are *generalizable* depends on the total number of items administered from that domain across all students. A small number of items is not sufficient to broadly represent the target domain or to support the general conclusions required of actionable information.

##### Reporting

The distribution of the average assessment target scores, when reported, depends both on the number of students in the defined group and on the number of items that these students answered in a target. As both numbers grow large, the average residuals increasingly cluster symmetrically around zero. To support California schools in making valid inferences based on the assessment target information, the number of items per target standard is considered when reporting the assessment target. A criterion that there are at least 10 items within the item pool for a target standard is recommended. No target score reports were conducted and reported because of the impact of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

#### Lexile and Quantile Scores

Students received Lexile scores (Lexile reader measure), derived from the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment in ELA; and Quantile scores, derived from the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment in mathematics, on the SSRs for the first time in the 2020–‍2021 administration.

The Lexile score describes a student’s reading ability and also connects the student’s reading ability with books and other useful reading materials that are at the appropriate difficulty level to challenge the student’s reading and promote reading improvement (MetaMetrics, 2020a).

The Quantile score indicates how well a student understands mathematical concepts and skills at the student’s grade level and connects targeted mathematical resources that appropriately match to the student for further learning (MetaMetrics, 2020b).

MetaMetrics, Inc. and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium conducted linking studies in ELA and mathematics, respectively, using the classical linear equating method. Two score scales—the Smarter Balanced for ELA scale and the Lexile scale; and the Smarter Balanced for mathematics scale and the Quantile scale—were linked using linear equating. The results of the linking studies provide information that can be used to match students’ achievement with instructional resources to identify the materials, concepts, and skills a student should be matched with for successful instruction in ELA and mathematics, given the student’s performance on a Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment.

The final linking equation between Smarter Balanced overall scale scores and Lexile measures can be written as presented in equation 7.15. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.15*](#_Alternative_Text_for_21) *for a description of this equation.*

$Lexile Measure =Slope\_{g} (SB ELA SS) + intercept$ (7.15)

where,

the slope and intercept are constants that convert Smarter Balanced ELA scale scores to Lexile measures, and

*g* represents the test levels.

The final linking equation between Smarter Balanced overall scale scores and Quantile measures can be written as presented in equation 7.16. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 7.16*](#_Alternative_Text_for_22) *for a description of the equation.*

$Quantile Measure =Slope\_{g} (SB mathematics SS) + intercept$ (7.16)

where,

the slope and intercept are conversion constants that convert Smarter Balanced mathematics scale scores to Quantile measures, and

*g* represents the test levels.

The slope and intercept for equations 7.15 and 7.16 are shown in table 7.D.9 and table 7.D.10.

Refer to the linking studies for detailed information about these studies (MetaMetrics, 2020a and 2020b).

### Overview of Score Aggregation Procedures

To provide meaningful results to the stakeholders, test scores for a given grade and content area are aggregated at the school, LEA or direct funded charter school, county, and state levels. The aggregated scores are generated both for selected groups and for the population. The next subsection contains a description of the types of aggregation performed on CAASPP Smarter Balanced computer-based summary assessment scores. Score aggregation includes only students with valid scores; refer to subsection [*7.6.2 Special Cases*](#_Special_Cases) for more information.

#### Score Distributions and Summary Statistics

Summary statistics that describe student performance on each assessment that contains only operational items are presented in table 7.15. Included in the tables are the number of students for each assessment and the mean and standard deviation (SD) of student scores expressed in terms of both scale score and theta score. The mean thetas and corresponding scale scores increase as expected over increasing grade levels across the vertical scale. [[8]](#footnote-9)

Table 7.15 Mean and SD of Theta and Scale Scores

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Number of Students** | **Mean Scale Score** | **Scale Score SD** | **Mean Theta Score** | **Theta Score SD** |
| ELA 3 | 80,029 | 2403 | 100 | -1.22 | 1.16 |
| ELA 4 | 82,494 | 2447 | 102 | -0.71 | 1.19 |
| ELA 5 | 84,164 | 2490 | 107 | -0.21 | 1.24 |
| ELA 6 | 87,259 | 2511 | 105 | 0.04 | 1.22 |
| ELA 7 | 96,798 | 2544 | 108 | 0.41 | 1.26 |
| ELA 8 | 98,297 | 2554 | 111 | 0.53 | 1.30 |
| ELA 11 | 207,139 | 2605 | 125 | 1.13 | 1.46 |
| Mathematics 3 | 85,277 | 2410 | 92 | -1.32 | 1.16 |
| Mathematics 4 | 87,802 | 2449 | 94 | -0.83 | 1.18 |
| Mathematics 5 | 89,402 | 2474 | 101 | -0.52 | 1.27 |
| Mathematics 6 | 87,368 | 2494 | 112 | -0.26 | 1.42 |
| Mathematics 7 | 96,828 | 2517 | 118 | 0.03 | 1.49 |
| Mathematics 8 | 97,837 | 2523 | 129 | 0.10 | 1.63 |
| Mathematics 11 | 199,959 | 2577 | 134 | 0.78 | 1.68 |

The number and the percentage of students in each achievement level and the number and the percentage who meet or exceed the standard are shown in table 7.16 and table 7.17. In general, more test takers met or exceeded standards in ELA than in mathematics across grades. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is in the range of 40 to 59 percent in ELA and 31 to 40 percent in mathematics in grades three through eight and grade eleven.

Table 7.16 Count and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for CAASPP Online Summative Assessments for ELA

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Not Met N** | **Standard Not Met %** | **Standard Nearly Met N** | **Standard Nearly Met %** | **Standard Met N** | **Standard Met %** | **Standard Exceeded N** | **Standard Exceeded %** | **Standard Met/‌Exceeded\* N** | **Standard Met/‌Exceeded\* %** |
| ELA 3 | 29,156 | 36% | 19,027 | 24% | 15,711 | 20% | 16,135 | 20% | 31,846 | 40% |
| ELA 4 | 31,243 | 38% | 17,031 | 21% | 16,821 | 20% | 17,399 | 21% | 34,220 | 41% |
| ELA 5 | 28,045 | 33% | 17,028 | 20% | 21,435 | 25% | 17,656 | 21% | 39,091 | 46% |
| ELA 6 | 26,533 | 30% | 22,710 | 26% | 23,879 | 27% | 14,137 | 16% | 38,016 | 44% |
| ELA 7 | 25,993 | 27% | 22,451 | 23% | 32,091 | 33% | 16,263 | 17% | 48,354 | 50% |
| ELA 8 | 27,150 | 28% | 24,581 | 25% | 30,704 | 31% | 15,862 | 16% | 46,566 | 47% |
| ELA 11 | 40,230 | 19% | 44,191 | 21% | 62,492 | 30% | 60,226 | 29% | 122,718 | 59% |

\* May not exactly match the sum of Level 3 and Level 4 percentages because of rounding

Table 7.17 Count and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for CAASPP Online Summative Assessments for Mathematics

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Not Met N** | **Standard Not Met %** | **Standard Nearly Met N** | **Standard Nearly Met %** | **Standard Met N** | **Standard Met %** | **Standard Exceeded N** | **Standard Exceeded %** | **Standard Met/‌Exceeded\* N** | **Standard Met/‌Exceeded\* %** |
| Mathematics 3 | 31,566 | 37% | 19,818 | 23% | 19,965 | 23% | 13,928 | 16% | 33,893 | 40% |
| Mathematics 4 | 30,673 | 35% | 25,630 | 29% | 18,572 | 21% | 12,927 | 15% | 31,499 | 36% |
| Mathematics 5 | 39,432 | 44% | 23,076 | 26% | 12,746 | 14% | 14,148 | 16% | 26,894 | 30% |
| Mathematics 6 | 36,497 | 42% | 23,999 | 27% | 13,690 | 16% | 13,182 | 15% | 26,872 | 31% |
| Mathematics 7 | 37,754 | 39% | 25,740 | 27% | 17,513 | 18% | 15,821 | 16% | 33,334 | 34% |
| Mathematics 8 | 45,197 | 46% | 22,484 | 23% | 13,710 | 14% | 16,446 | 17% | 30,156 | 31% |
| Mathematics 11 | 82,150 | 41% | 49,109 | 25% | 37,688 | 19% | 31,012 | 16% | 68,700 | 34% |

\* May not exactly match the sum of Level 3 and Level 4 percentages because of rounding

Figure 7.2 presents a graphical representation of the percentage of students at each ELA achievement level by grade. These are the achievement levels for ELA shown in table 7.16.

Figure 7.2 Percentage of achievement levels in ELA

Figure 7.3 presents a graphical representation of the percentage of students at each mathematics achievement level by grade. These are the achievement levels for mathematics shown in table 7.17.

Figure 7.3 Percentage of achievement levels in mathematics

Detailed score distribution information is available in the appendices. Table 7.B.1 and table 7.B.2 in appendix 7.B show the estimated distributions of theta scores for each test. Table 7.C.1 and table 7.C.2 in appendix 7.C present the selected percentiles of the scale score distributions. Table 7.C.3 through table 7.C.16 present the frequency distributions of scale scores for each assessment.

Table 7.D.1 through table 7.D.4 in appendix 7.D show the number of items presented within each test, number of students with valid scores in each claim, and the mean and standard deviation of student scores expressed in terms of both scale score and theta score. “Valid score” means the student records were not flagged as “not scored” or the students were enrolled in the grade for which they were tested. The number of students in each claim performance level are reported in table 7.D.5 through table 7.D.8.

#### Demographic Student Group Summaries

Statistics summarizing student performance by content area and grade for selected groups of the students who took items are provided in appendix 7.E: for each test in table 7.E.1 through table 7.E.14 and for each test claim in table 7.E.15 through table 7.E.28.

In the tables, students are grouped by demographic characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, English language fluency, economic status (disadvantaged or not), special education services status, migrant status, military status and homeless status, and ethnicity by economic status. For 2020–2021 reporting, the English proficiency category now includes ADEL (adult English learners).

The tables show, for each demographic group, the number of students with a valid scale score, scale score mean and standard deviation, and the percentage of students in each achievement level and claim performance level.

Table 7.17 lists the demographic student groups included in the tables. A student’s economic status was determined by the education level of the student’s parents/guardians and whether or not the student participated in the National School Lunch Program. To protect privacy when the number of students in a student group is 10 or fewer, the summary statistics at the achievement and claim level are not reported, but are replaced by “N/A.”

Table 7.17 Demographic Student Groups to Be Reported

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Student Groups** |
| **Economic Status** | * Not economically disadvantaged
* Economically disadvantaged
 |
| **English Language Fluency** | * English only
* Initial fluent English proficient (IFEP)
* EL
* Reclassified fluent English proficient (RFEP)
* ADEL
* To be determined (TBD)
* English proficiency unknown
 |
| **Ethnicity** | * American Indian or Alaska Native
* Asian
* Black or African American
* Filipino
* Hispanic or Latino
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* White
* Two or more races
 |

Table 7.17 *(continuation)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Student Groups** |
| **Gender** | * Male
* Female
 |
| **Homeless Status** | * Homeless
* Not homeless
 |
| **Migrant Status** | * Eligible for the Title I Part C Migrant Program (Migrant education)
* Not eligible for the Title I Part C Migrant Program (Not migrant education)
 |
| **Military Status** | * Military service
* No military service
 |
| **Special Education Services Status** | * No special education services
* Special education services
 |

### Reports Produced and Scores for Each Report

The tests that make up the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments provide results or score summaries that are reported for different purposes. The four major purposes are to

1. help facilitate conversations between parents/guardians and teachers about student performance,
2. serve as a tool to help parents/guardians and teachers work together to improve student learning,
3. help schools and LEAs identify strengths and areas that need improvement in their educational programs, and
4. provide the public and policymakers with information about student achievement.

This section provides detailed descriptions of the uses and applications of CAASPP reporting for students.

#### Online Reporting

TOMS is a secure website hosted by ETS that permits LEA users to manage the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments and to inform the TDS. This system uses a role-specific design to restrict access to certain tools and applications based on the user’s designated role. Specific functions of TOMS include the following:

* Manage user access privileges
* Manage test administration calendars and testing windows
* Manage student test assignments
* Manage and confirm the accuracy of students’ test settings (i.e., designated supports and accommodations) prior to testing
* Generate and download various reports

In addition to TOMS, another California online reporting system was used during the 2020–2021 administration: the California Educator Reporting System (CERS).

TOMS communicated with CERS, which provided authorized users with interactive and cumulative online reports for ELA and mathematics at the student, school, group, and LEA levels. CERS provided preliminary score data for each administered test available in the reporting system.

Based on the CAASPP reporting requirements, CERS provided the preliminary summative reports containing information outlining student knowledge and skills. CERS also permitted access to individual score reports, which provided preliminary score data for each administered test available in the reporting system. The online aggregate reports were available to be downloaded in PDF, Excel, and comma-separated value formats.

CERS was the primary source for LEA staff to analyze CAASPP results at the LEA, school, grade, classroom, or customized group level. CERS provided these reports, which can be downloaded to plan instruction. LEA staff with TOMS logon credentials could enter CERS through the CAASPP website to access student assessment results.

#### Special Cases

Student scores were not reported for the following cases:

* The student had a medical emergency during testing.
* The student’s parent/guardian requested exemption from testing.
* The student was tested but marked no answers.
* The student did not log on to both CAT and PT portions.
* The student logged on to two parts (PT and CAT) without any recorded answers.
* The student logged on to one part (PT or CAT), but not both parts, and had no recorded answers.
* The student attempted fewer than 10 CAT items and fewer than 1 PT item.

#### Types of Score Reports

There are two categories of CAASPP reports. The specific reports within each category are presented in this subsection.

* **SSR—**The SSR was the official score report for parents/guardians. An SSR described the student’s results and was made available only to students who met the participation requirement by logging on to at least one domain in each composite.
* **LEA student data files and aggregations—**LEA student data files were available for download on demand by the LEA in TOMS to coincide with availability of the SSRs.

##### Student Score Report

The CAASPP SSR is the official score report for parents/guardians and includes the following metrics:

* Scale score for each content area assessment reported (The ranges of scale scores for both ELA and mathematics are provided in table 7.10.)
* Achievement level for each content area assessment reported (Smarter Balanced achievement levels for both ELA and mathematics are “Standard Exceeded,” “Standard Met,” “Standard Nearly Met,” and “Standard Not Met.”)

Scores for students who were assigned accommodations or designated supports are reported in the same way as for students without accommodations or designated supports. (Refer to section [*2.4 Fairness and Accessibility*](#_Fairness_and_Accessibility_1) for more information about accessibility resources.)

LEAs had three options for accessing and distributing SSRs to parents/guardians:

1. Accessing electronic SSR PDFs using a locally provided parent/guardian or student portal
2. Downloading SSR PDFs from TOMS and making them available electronically using a secure local method
3. Downloading SSR PDFs from TOMS, printing them, and making them available locally

The LEA CAASPP coordinator could forward the appropriate reports to test sites. In the case of a locally printed CAASPP Smarter Balanced SSR, the LEA sent the printed report(s) to the child’s parent/guardian. CAASPP Smarter Balanced SSRs that included individual student results were not distributed beyond the student’s school.

Further information about the SSR and its interpretation is provided on the Smarter Balanced Starting Smarter website for California assessments.

###### Access via Student or Parent Portal

LEAs had the option to provide SSRs electronically using a locally provided parent or student portal.

Amazon Web Services—with the Amazon Simple Storage Service and the Amazon Key Management Service—ensured encrypted access for parents/guardians to view a child’s electronic SSR, which was available as a PDF.

###### Access via the Test Operations Management System

The LEA CAASPP coordinator downloaded the electronic PDFs directly from TOMS and could forward the appropriate reports to test sites. Optionally, the LEA could download and then print the SSR PDF and then send the printed report(s) to the child’s parent/guardian.

##### Local Educational Agency Student Data Files and Aggregations

The CAASPP student data files for the LEA were available for the LEA CAASPP coordinator and CAASPP test site coordinator to download from TOMS.

Preliminary student scores and aggregations were also available to LEAs prior to the release of final reports via electronic reporting, using CERS. This website permitted LEAs to view preliminary results data for all tests taken.

Current and historical aggregated results are accessible to the public on the CDE Test Results for California’s Assessments website.

#### Score Report Applications

CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results provided parents/guardians with information about their child’s progress. The results are one tool for increasing communication and collaboration between parents/guardians and teachers. Along with the results from the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments, the SSR could be used by parents/guardians while talking with teachers about ways to improve their child’s achievement of the CCSS.

Schools could use the CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results to help make decisions about how best to support student achievement. CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a child’s education.

CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results help schools and LEAs identify strengths and weaknesses in their instructional programs. Each year, staff from schools and LEAs examine CAASPP test results at each grade level and content area tested. Their findings are used to help determine

* the extent to which students are learning the academic standards,
* instructional areas that can be improved,
* teaching strategies that can be developed to address the needs of students, and
* decisions about how to use funds to ensure that students achieve the standards.

CAASPP computer-based summative assessments results were used to rank the academic performance of schools, compare schools with similar characteristics (e.g., size and ethnic composition), identify low-performing and high-performing schools, and set yearly targets for academic progress.

#### Criteria for Interpreting Test Scores

An LEA may use CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results to help make decisions about student placement, promotion, retention, or other considerations related to student achievement. However, it is important to remember that a single test can provide only limited information. Other relevant information should be considered as well. It is advisable for parents/guardians to evaluate their child’s strengths and weaknesses in the relevant topics by reviewing classroom work and progress reports in addition to the child’s CAASPP computer-based summative assessment results. It is also important to note that a student’s score in a content area could vary somewhat if the student were retested.

#### Criteria for Interpreting Score Reports

The information presented in various reports must be interpreted with caution when making performance comparisons. When comparing scale score and achievement-level results, the user is limited to comparisons within a content area. The scale scores are on a vertical scale across grades for each content area (ELA or mathematics), but the score scales for ELA and mathematics are not comparable to each other. The user may compare scale scores for the same content area and grade, within a school, between schools, or between a school and its LEA, its county, or the state.

The user can also make comparisons within the same grade and content area across years. Caution should be taken when comparing scale scores from different grades within a content area, because the curricula are different across grade levels. Comparing scores obtained in different content areas should be avoided because the results are not on the same scale. Finally, note that for 2020–2021, only a portion of students took the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. The test samples in the 2020–2021 administration may not be representative of the California student population. Caution should be exercised when comparing the 2020–2021 testing results with the testing results from previous years.

For more details on the criteria for interpreting information provided on the score reports, refer to the Smarter Balanced Starting Smarter website for California assessments. Refer also to the *2020–21 CAASPP Post-Test Guide* (CDE, 2021), which was applicable for the 2020*–*2021 CAASPP administration.

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### Accessibility Information

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.1

P sub I h of theta sub j equals the numerator exp open parenthesis the sum from v equals 1 to h of D times a sub i of the quantity open parenthesis theta sub j minus b sub I plus d sub iv close parenthesis close parenthesis and denominator 1 plus the sum from c equals 1 to n sub I exp open parenthesis the sum from v equals 1 to c D times a sub i of the quantity open parenthesis theta sub j minus b sub I plus d sub iv close parenthesis close parenthesis, if score h equals 1, 2, …., n sub i.

P sub I h of theta sub j equals 1 divided by denominator 1 plus the sum from c equals 1 to n sub I exp open parenthesis the sum from v equals 1 to c D times a sub i of the quantity open parenthesis theta sub j minus b sub I plus d sub iv close parenthesis close parenthesis, if score h equals 0.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.2

L of the union of theta sub j, U equals the natural logarithm of open parenthesis the product from I equals 1to I times the product from v equals 0 to n sub I of P sub ih of theta sub j to the u sub iv power.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.3

U sub i v equals 1, if the score h on polytomous item i is equal to v, 0, otherwise.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.4

Theta sub t equals theta sub t minus 1 minus the quantity with the numerator L prime sub t minus 1 and the denominator L double prime sub t minus 1.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.5

Theta sub adj equals theta sub min plus open parenthesis theta sub achieved minus theta sub min close parenthesis times PropAdj.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.6

ELA scale score is the sum of 2508.2 and 85.8 times theta.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.7

Mathematics scale score is the sum of 2514.9 and 79.3 times theta.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.8

SEM of Theta sub j equals 1 divided by the square root of I of theta sub j.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.9

I of Theta sub j equals the sum from I equals 1 to n of I sub I of Theta sub j.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.10

I sub i of Theta sub j equals open parenthesis D times a sub I close parenthesis squared times open bracket s sub i2 of theta sub j minus s squared sub I of theta sub j close bracket.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.11

S sub i of Theta sub j equals the sum from h equals 0 to n sub i of h times p sub ih of theta sub j.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.12

S sub i2 of Theta sub j equals the sum from h equals 0 to n sub i of h squared times p sub ih of theta sub j.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.13

Scale score standard error (SE sub scaled) equals a times SE sub theta sub j.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.14

Error band equals open parenthesis scale score (SS) minus scale score standard error (SE sub scaled), comma, scale score (SS) plus scale score standard error (SE sub scaled) close parenthesis.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.15

Lexile measure equals slope sub g times open parenthesis (SB ELA SS) plus intercept.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 7.16

Quantile measure equals slope sub g times open parenthesis (SB mathematics SS) plus intercept.

### Appendix 7.A: Test-Taking Rates

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 7.B: Theta Scores of Tests and Claims

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 7.C: Scale Scores of Tests

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 7.D: Summary Statistics and Performance Levels of Claims

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 7.E: Student Group Summaries

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 7.F: Student Completion Conditions

This content is located in a separate file.

## Psychometric Analyses

This chapter summarizes the item- and test-level statistics calculated for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments administered during the 2020–2021 administration. Note that all analyses were conducted on data from students taking the assessments in person and remotely unless specified otherwise.

### Overview

There are six primary statistical analysis procedures presented in this chapter:

1. Item response theory (IRT) parameters
2. Omission and completion analyses
3. Conditional exposure analyses
4. Reliability analyses
5. Analyses in support of validity evidence
6. Test location analysis

Caution should be taken when comparing the test results from the 2020–2021 administration with those from previous years because the testing samples in the 2020–‍2021 administration are small—about a 24 percent test-taking rate on average—and not representative of the student population.

#### Summary of the Analyses

This chapter summarizes the item- and test-level statistics calculated for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments administered during the 2020–2021 administration. Each of these sets of analyses is presented in the body of the text and in the listed appendices:

1. **IRT Parameters—**Appendix 8.A presents summaries of item difficulty parameter estimates (*b*-values) and item discrimination parameter estimates (*a*-values) for all of the items in each assessment and separate summaries for each claim. Also presented for each test are conditional distributions of *a*‑values and *b*‑values for students at specified ability levels (scale-score intervals) and the *a*-values and *b*‑values of all performance task (PT) items. For polytomous items, partial credit step values (*d*-values) are included.

**Omission and Completion Analysis—**Appendix 8.B shows item parameter estimate summaries for items with different omit rates. Statistics are shown for the PTs and computer adaptive test (CAT) items in each test. The item parameter estimates are from the field test calibrations. The purpose of these analyses is to examine whether the items with high omit rates are systematically more difficult or more discriminating than items with low omit rates. Appendix 8.B also shows the completion rates for each test. A student’s record is considered *complete* when the student answers at least one operational PT and at least 10 CAT items. Table 8.1 and table 8.2 present the minimum number of items for a complete claim score in the Smarter Balanced adjusted, shortened-form blueprint and in the Smarter Balanced full-form blueprints, respectively. Note that claim scores were reported at the group level, and not at student level, in 2020‒2021.

1. **Conditional Exposure Analyses—**Appendix 8.C shows, for each assessment, distributions (in intervals) of item exposure frequency for all items in that test, for the items in each claim, and for items at different difficulty levels.
2. **Reliability Analyses—**The following results of the analyses are presented:

Appendix 8.D presents results of the reliability analyses of overall test scores and claim scores for the population as a whole and for selected student groups.

Table 8.3 presents the reliability results for the population as a whole.

Table 8.4 shows the conditional standard errors of measurement (CSEMs) at achievement-level scale score cuts.

Tables in appendix 8.E present CSEM distributions for the total test scores.

Figure 8.E.1 through figure 8.E.14 in appendix 8.E present plots of CSEMs conditional on scale scores.

Table 8.5 presents the mean CSEM for each achievement level.

Tables in appendix 8.F present statistics describing the accuracy and consistency of the performance classifications.

Appendix 8.G shows interrater reliability statistics for the human-scored items and statistics showing the agreement of artificial intelligence (AI) scoring with human scoring for the constructed-response (CR) items.

1. **Analyses in Support of Validity Evidence—**Validity evidence related to the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments is discussed in section [*8.6 Validity Evidence*](#_Validity_Evidence). Appendix 8.H presents distributions of the time required to complete the total test for each content area, including both the PT and CAT portions. Table 8.8 and the tables in appendix 8.I present correlations between English language arts/‌literacy (ELA) and mathematics scores calculated for all students and for demographic student groups of interest.
2. **Test Location Analyses—**Subsection [*8.7 Test Location—Remote Versus In-Person Testing Analysis*](#_Test__Location) provides a summary of the test location analyses conducted for the 2020–2021 administration that examined whether student test scores from different test locations—in person versus remote—were comparable, as well as students’ testing experiences from different locations.

#### Samples for the Analyses

Analyses were conducted based on version 2 of the production data file (“P2”) received on September 27, 2021. The P2 file comprised the full CAASPP computer-based summative assessments’ data for the majority of tests. All valid student records were used for the technical report analyses.

Students whose records were flagged as “not scored” and students who were enrolled in a different grade than the one in which they were tested were not included. In addition, the students with paper–pencil test (PPT) scores or mathematics braille hybrid adaptive test (HAT) scores are excluded from the technical report tables because of low volume. In total, 29 students’ scores are excluded, 25 from the PPT and 4 from the braille HAT. The number of test takers for the PPT is reported in table 11.1; students who were assigned braille in ELA or mathematics are still included.

There were no embedded field test PTs in the 2020–2021 operational tests. Because the 2020–2021 administration was the only year that embedded field test PTs were not administered, and given that embedded field test PTs will be administered in 2021–2022, the description of the embedded field test PTs remains in the technical report, but without data presented for 2020–‍2021. In addition, because the field test data was not provided to ETS, none of the PT field test items were analyzed in this chapter.

### Item Response Theory Parameter Values

The purpose of the IRT calibration and scaling is to place item difficulty and student ability estimates onto a common theta scale in each content area. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide a foundation for developing Smarter Balanced assessments that support inferences concerning student changes in achievement (i.e., progress). One approach to modeling student progress across grades is to report scores on a vertical scale, which is a single scale for reporting scores on tests at different grade levels of the same content area. Its purpose is to report scores in a way that shows a student’s progress in a content area, from one grade level to the next. One key assumption with vertical scaling is that it is possible to make meaningful comparisons between scores on tests in the same content area at different grade levels.

Item parameters used in the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments were estimated and scales were constructed during the Smarter Balanced field test administration. Item parameter calibration software, model fit, and evaluation of vertical scale anchor items are not described in the current technical report. For more detailed information on these and other psychometric topics, refer to chapter 6 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical* *Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a) and subsequent Smarter Balanced technical reports (Smarter Balanced, 2016b, 2017j, 2018k, 2019, 2020).

Unidimensional IRT models were used to calibrate items within each content area. Based on the results from the psychometric analyses occurring during the pilot and field test administrations, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium chose the two-parameter logistic model (Birnbaum,1968) for calibration of the dichotomous items and the generalized partial credit model (Muraki, 1992) for calibration of polytomous items. The formula associated with these models is provided in equation 7.1 in subsection [*7.4.1.1 Theta Scores*](#_Theta_Scores).

Chapter 9 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* provides more detailed information about how Smarter Balanced assessments were calibrated and scaled both horizontally and vertically through IRT processes (Smarter Balanced, 2016a).

#### Summary Information

Parameter estimates for the 2020–2021 operational items were obtained mainly from the 2013–2014 Smarter Balanced field test analyses, but also from the subsequent Smarter Balanced embedded field test analyses after the 2013–2014 administration. Summary statistics of these parameter estimates are calculated to show the difficulty and discrimination of the overall test, as well as the difficulty and discrimination of claims; distributions of *b*-value and *a*-value parameter estimates are created to provide more detail. The step parameters for all polytomous items are also provided.

Appendix 8.A provides summary statistics describing the distributions of item difficulty and discrimination parameter estimates at each test level from the field test calibration and scaling. Note that only operational items from the item pool administered as part of the CAASPP administration are included in this analysis.

For more information regarding the IRT methodology used by Smarter Balanced to form the basis for new item development, test equating, and computer adaptive testing, refer to chapter 9 of the *2013–‍14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a).

##### All Items

Table 8.A.1 through table 8.A.14 in appendix 8.A present univariate statistics (mean, standard deviation (SD), minimum, and maximum) of the scaled IRT a-values. These statistics for each test are presented for all items in the test and for the items in each claim. Table 8.A.15 through table 8.A.28 present the univariate statistics of the IRT b-values for all items in the test and for the items in each claim.

##### Computer Adaptive Test Items

Table 8.A.29 through table 8.A.42 in appendix 8.A show the distributions of CAT item a‑values across 10 intervals of the ability scale, conditional on six intervals of student ability indicated by ranges of the overall test scale score. Table 8.A.43 through table 8.A.56 present the distributions of CAT items across 16 intervals of *b*-values conditional on six intervals of overall test scale scores. The mode of each distribution is in bold text and indicated with an asterisk.

##### Performance Task Items

Table 8.A.57 through table 8.A.70 in appendix 8.A show the conditional distribution of a‑values for the PT items. Table 8.A.71 through table 8.A.84 show the conditional distribution of b‑values for the PT items. Parameter values of all PT items are presented in table 8.A.85 through table 8.A.98.

For table 8.A.29 through table 8.A.84, the scale score intervals included in the table range from the lowest 100 scale scores containing the lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS) to the highest obtainable scale score (HOSS) with increments of 100 scale score points. For example, “2100–2199” to “2600–2699” for ELA in grade three includes the LOSS of 2115 and the HOSS of 2650.

### Omission and Completion Analyses

If a student views an item, leaves it unanswered, and then goes on to view and answer another item, the missing response is classified as an “omit.” If the student omits an item—that is, leaves the item unanswered—and does not view additional items, the responses for the successive items are classified as “not seen.”

Completion rates indicate the proportion of students who failed to complete a certain number of items in either the CAT or PT portion of the test. A student’s record is considered incomplete if the student did not complete at least one PT item and at least 10 CAT items. A student’s record is considered *complete* when the student answers at least one PT and at least 10 CAT items.

#### Omit Rates

The percentage of students leaving an item blank can indicate a problem with the time allowed for the test or with some feature of the item. If students are given an adequate amount of testing time, at least 95 percent of the students should attempt to answer each item. The CAASPP computer-based summative assessments are designed to be untimed, allowing all students to respond to all items. Because there is no time limit for the test, a percentage of blank responses that is greater than 5 percent for any single item may be an indication of a problem with an item.

Table 8.B.1 and table 8.B.2 in appendix 8.B present the summary of omit rates, including the number of items in each omit rate interval, for the PT and CAT items, respectively. The tables also contain the average difficulty and discrimination for these items. As shown, the overall omit rates for both CAT and PT items across content areas and grades are very low, with omit rates below .5 percent for a majority of items. All items across grades in mathematics and for grades three through five, grade seven, and grade eleven in ELA had omit rates lower than 5 percent. In grade six for ELA, one CAT item had an omit rate beyond 10 percent with *a*- and *b*-parameters as .75 and .94, respectively. Another CAT item had an omit rate between 5 and 10 percent in grade eight for ELA with *a*- and *b*-parameters as .36 and -.07, respectively.

#### Completion Rates

A student’s record for a claim is not considered complete unless the student completed at least the specified minimum number of items for that claim—refer to table 8.1 and table 8.2 for the minimum number of operational items in each claim, for both ELA and mathematics, in the adjusted, shortened-form blueprint and in the full-form blueprint, respectively. The percentage of students completing each test, each claim on the test, and each of the two parts of the test are presented in table 8.B.3 and table 8.B.4 in appendix 8.B. The completion rates show a same pattern across content areas and grades. The overall and PT item completion rate reached 100 percent. The CAT item completion rates reached 99 percent or higher across claims, except for Claim 2 in ELA grades six through eight and high school, which reached 98 percent.

Table 8.1 Minimum Number of Items for a Complete Claim Score in the Adjusted, Shortened-Form Blueprints

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Claim** | **Grades 3–5** | **Grade 6** | **Grades 7–8** | **Grade 11** |
| ELA Claim 1 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| ELA Claim 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| ELA Claim 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| ELA Claim 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Mathematics Claim 1 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Mathematics Claim 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Mathematics Claim 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |

Table 8.2 Minimum Number of Items for a Complete Claim Score in Full-Form Blueprints

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Claim** | **Grades 3–5** | **Grades 6–8** | **Grade 11** |
| ELA Claim 1 | 14 | 14 | 15 |
| ELA Claim 2 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| ELA Claim 3 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| ELA Claim 4 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Mathematics Claim 1 | 17 | 16 | 19 |
| Mathematics Claim 2 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Mathematics Claim 3 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

### Conditional Exposure Rates of Items

Item exposure refers to the frequency of item administration in the student population. Items that are selected too frequently may become known to students in advance of the test administration and, as a result, fail to perform as expected. Table 8.C.1 and table 8.C.2 in appendix 8.C show, for each test and for each claim, the number of items in five intervals of exposure, with the lowest being 1 to 100 student testing events and the highest being greater than or equal to 3,000 student testing events. These tables also show how many items were not administered.

Conditional exposure control refers to the establishment of exposure controls to be applied to the items at a specified level of difficulty (b-value). These controls become necessary when items at a particular level of difficulty are especially likely to be used too often. For example, it may be necessary to limit item exposure for very difficult items. Table 8.C.3 through table 8.C.16 present the same information as table 8.C.1 and table 8.C.2, computed separately for items in several intervals of difficulty.

### Reliability Analyses

There are many definitions of reliability (Haertel, 2006) that have their genesis in classical test theory and a variety of methods that can be used to estimate reliability.

The general concept of reliability concerns the extent to which the test scores measure *a particular construct* consistently. The variance in the distribution of test scores—essentially, the differences among individuals—is partly due to factors that are consistent over permissible differences in the testing process (e.g., different items or tasks or different raters) and partly due to factors that are not consistent. The measure of variation associated with the first kind of differences—consistent differences—is called “true variance”; the measure of variation associated with the remaining differences—those that operate essentially at random—is called “error variance.” Reliability is the proportion of total variance that is due to true variance. The standard error of measurement (SEM) is a statistic that characterizes the error variance.

#### Sample for Reliability Analyses

The reliability analyses performed for CAASPP require that the sample be screened beyond the requirements listed in subsection [*8.1.2 Samples for the Analyses*](#_Samples_for_the). When students’ ability estimates on the overall test or a claim are lower than the lowest obtainable theta (LOT) for that test, they are assigned the LOSS for that test. When students’ ability estimates on the overall test or a claim are higher than the highest obtainable theta (HOT) for that test, they are assigned the HOSS for that test. When a student is assigned either the LOSS or HOSS, a measure of the student’s true performance is not known, as it would be lower than LOSS or higher than HOSS, which ultimately impacts any reliability analyses. Because of this, the reliability analyses in this section further exclude students assigned the LOSS or HOSS from the student data used for general analyses that was described at the beginning of this chapter. (Refer to subsection [*7.4.1.4 Scale Scores for the Total Assessment*](#_Scale_Scores_for) for the definitions of LOSS–LOT and HOSS–HOT.)

#### Marginal Reliability

In a specified population of students, the reliability of test scores, *X*, is defined as the proportion of the test score variance that is attributable to true differences in student abilities and is sometimes operationalized as the correlation between scores on two replications of the same testing procedure, .

Reliability coefficients may range from 0 to 1. The higher the reliability coefficient for a set of scores, the more likely students would be to obtain very similar scores if they were retested. In applied settings, the requirement of repeated administrations is impractical, and methodologies estimating reliability from relationships among student performances on items within a single test form are often used. Coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) is among the most common of these methodologies. These reliability indices are not directly applicable to a CAT because each student takes a different test form.

An IRT-based approach called marginal reliability (Green, Bock, Humphreys, Linn, & Reckase, 1984) can be used to estimate the reliability of CAT scores. The estimates of reliability coefficients reported here are for IRT-based ability estimates.

This reliability coefficient for theta estimates,, is defined based on a single test administration, as shown in equation 8.1. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.1*](#_Alternative_Text_for_14) *for a description of this equation.*

 (8.1)

where,

$S\_{θ}^{2 }$is the measure of variance in ability estimates,

*θ* is an ability estimate, and

 is an average of the squared CSEM (i.e., error variances) at each value of the ability estimate.

#### Standard Error of Measurement

The SEM provides a measure of score instability in the scale score metric. The SEM is the square root of the error variance in the scores (i.e., the SD of the distribution of the differences between students’ observed scores and their true scores). The SEM is calculated using equation 8.2. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.2*](#_Alternative_Text_for_15) *for a description of this equation.*

 (8.2)

where,

 is the reliability estimated in equation 8.1,

*Sθ* is the SD of the total test *θ* score, and

*a* is the slope of the scaling transformation of *θ* to the reporting scale.

The SEM is useful in determining the confidence interval (CI) that likely captures a student’s true score. A student’s true score can be thought of as the mean of observed scores a student would earn over an infinite number of independent administrations of the test. Across those administrations, approximately 95 percent of the CIs from the student’s observed score -1.96 SEMs to the student’s observed score +1.96 SEMs would contain that student’s true score (Crocker & Algina, 1986). Therefore, this interval is called a 95 percent CI for the student’s true score. For example, if a student’s observed score on a given test equals 2440 points, and the SEM equals 23, one can be 95 percent confident that the student’s true score lies between 2395 and 2485 points (2440  45).

Table 8.3 gives the total score reliability for theta as well as the mean, SD, and SEM of both thetas and scale scores for each of the 14 tests, along with the number of student results upon which those analyses were performed. Note that in the case of the total test reliability, the reliability is for the whole test on the theta score scale; it is calculated using the total test theta scale score of individual students.

In table 8.3, only students who finished at least 10 CAT items and 1 PT item are included in the analysis. Results from the table show a reasonably high degree of reliability: .86 to .89 for ELA across grades and .86 to .90 for mathematics assessments. Note that the reliability coefficients were calculated using only 24 to 26 total items in ELA and 20 to 24 items in mathematics across grades based on the adjusted, shortened-form blueprints this test administration year, while there were 40 to 44 items in ELA and 35 to 42 items in mathematics for the full-form blueprints that were used in previous years.

Table 8.3 Summary Statistics for Scale Scores and Theta Scores, Reliability, and SEMs

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Number of Students** | **Reliability** | **Scale Score Mean** | **Scale Score SD** | **Scale Score SEM** | **Theta Score Mean** | **Theta Score SD** | **Theta Score SEM** |
| ELA 3 | 79,251 | 0.87 | 2403 | 97 | 35.04 | -1.23 | 1.13 | 0.41 |
| ELA 4 | 81,612 | 0.86 | 2446 | 99 | 37.45 | -0.72 | 1.15 | 0.44 |
| ELA 5 | 83,049 | 0.88 | 2489 | 103 | 36.13 | -0.23 | 1.20 | 0.42 |
| ELA 6 | 86,486 | 0.88 | 2511 | 102 | 35.23 | 0.03 | 1.19 | 0.41 |
| ELA 7 | 95,771 | 0.88 | 2545 | 105 | 36.72 | 0.43 | 1.22 | 0.43 |
| ELA 8 | 96,906 | 0.88 | 2557 | 107 | 36.62 | 0.57 | 1.25 | 0.43 |
| ELA 11 | 204,123 | 0.89 | 2607 | 120 | 40.80 | 1.15 | 1.40 | 0.48 |
| Mathematics 3 | 83,747 | 0.90 | 2412 | 88 | 27.62 | -1.30 | 1.11 | 0.35 |
| Mathematics 4 | 86,670 | 0.90 | 2449 | 90 | 29.08 | -0.83 | 1.13 | 0.37 |
| Mathematics 5 | 88,192 | 0.88 | 2474 | 97 | 34.19 | -0.51 | 1.22 | 0.43 |
| Mathematics 6 | 85,201 | 0.88 | 2496 | 105 | 36.57 | -0.24 | 1.33 | 0.46 |
| Mathematics 7 | 94,548 | 0.86 | 2520 | 112 | 42.15 | 0.06 | 1.41 | 0.53 |
| Mathematics 8 | 94,733 | 0.86 | 2527 | 121 | 45.51 | 0.15 | 1.53 | 0.57 |
| Mathematics 11 | 194,496 | 0.86 | 2579 | 125 | 47.61 | 0.81 | 1.58 | 0.60 |

#### Intercorrelations, Reliabilities, and Standard Errors of Measurement for Claim Scores

For each test, theta scores and scale scores are computed for claims. As is described in subsection [*7.1.1 Structure of the Assessments*](#_Structure_of_the) in [*Chapter 7:* *Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1), claims identify the set of knowledge and skills being measured. Claim scores are scores on the set of items that form the basis for a claim.

Intercorrelations, reliability estimates, and theta-based SEMs for the claims are presented in table 8.D.1 through table 8.D.14 in appendix 8.D. The reliability estimates vary significantly across claims according to both the number of items and the types of content standards that are included in each claim. Reliability is higher for the total scores than for the claim scores and is inversely related to SEM, because the number of items in each claim was much lower than the overall test.

Across grades in ELA, reliability of Claim 2—Writing—shows the highest reliability across claims, with a range of .58 to .71, although ELA Claim 1 had more items than ELA Claim 2. Claim 3—Speaking/Listening—had so few items (four items) that the claim reliability cannot be meaningfully interpreted. Claim 4—Research—had five items, which has resulted in the lowest reliabilities, ranging from .30 to .46.

Across grades in mathematics, Claim 1—Concepts and Procedures—exhibits higher reliability than the other two mathematical claims, with a range of .71 to .78. Reliabilities of Claim 3—Communicating Reasoning—have the lowest, with a range of .32 to .53. Claim 2—Problem Solving, Modeling and Data Analysis—is in the middle in terms of reliability coefficient, with a range of .49 to .68. These lower reliabilities in the 2020–2021 administration can be attributed to the reduction of the number of items for each claim. The standards of claims can be found in the Smarter Balanced blueprints that are provided in appendix 2.A.

#### Student Group Reliabilities and Standard Errors of Measurement

The reliabilities of the total test scores and the claim scores are examined for various student groups within the student population. The reliability analyses are also presented by primary ethnicity within economic status.

Reliabilities and theta-based SEMs for the total test scores and the claim scores are reported for each student group analysis. Table 8.D.15 through table 8.D.23 in appendix 8.D present the overall test reliabilities for student groups defined by student gender, economic status, special education services status, accommodations, English language fluency, primary ethnicity, migrant status, military status, and homeless status. Table 8.D.24 and table 8.D.25 present the reliabilities for the student groups based on primary ethnicity within economic status.

The next set of tables, table 8.D.26 through table 8.D.109, present the claim-level reliabilities for the student groups as follows:

* Table 8.D.26 through table 8.D.39: gender, economic status, and migrant status
* Table 8.D.40 through table 8.D.53: military status and homeless status
* Table 8.D.54 through table 8.D.67: special education services status and English language fluency
* Table 8.D.68 through table 8.D.81: student primary ethnicity
* Table 8.D.82 through table 8.D.109: primary ethnicity by economic status

Overall, most student groups across grades and content areas exhibited reasonably high reliability at 0.85 or higher. The exceptions are within student groups whose students were assigned accommodations; received special educational services in grades six through eight and grade eleven in mathematics, students with migrant status. In most grades, those student groups exhibited moderate high reliability in the range of .70 to .85.

The English learner (EL) student group showed moderate reliability in most grades, at .58 to .84. The accommodations category in grade eleven for mathematics showed low reliabilities for students who were assigned accommodations (.39) and were not assigned accommodations (.76). Small sample sizes and smaller variance of the lower scores of those groups may contribute to the lower reliability.

Note that the reliabilities are not reported for samples that comprise 10 or fewer students, based on the data suppression rule. Also, in some cases, score reliabilities are not estimable and are presented in the tables as “N/A.” The reliability estimates for some of the student groups are negative because of small variation in scale scores and large CSEMs for extreme score values. These negative reliabilities and their associated SEMs also are presented as “N/A.”

#### Conditional Standard Errors of Measurement

CSEMs are estimated as part of the IRT-based scoring procedure. CSEMs for scale scores are based on IRT and are estimated as a function of measured ability. The CSEMs of theta scores (or of linearly transformed theta scores) are typically smaller in scale score units toward the center of the scale in the test metric where more items are located. The CSEMs are usually larger at the extreme ends of the scale, because there is no way to know how much better than that a student really is in the case of an extremely high score, or how much worse than that a student really is in the case of an extremely low score, given the difficulty of content administered to the student. A student’s CSEM under the IRT framework is equal to the reciprocal of the square root of the test information function (TIF), as presented in equation 8.3. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.3*](#_Alternative_Text_for_16) *for a description of this equation.*

 (8.3)

where,

*SS = a × θ + b*,

CSEM (*SS*) is the conditional SEM on scale score scale, and

*I(θ)* is the TIF at ability level *θ*, as is shown in equations 7.9 to 7.12, which are in subsection [*7.4.3 Theta Scores Standard Error*](#_Theta_Scores_Standard).

The statistic is multiplied by *a*, where *a* is the scaling factor needed to transform theta to the scale score metric. The intercept to transform theta to the scale score is denoted as *b*. The values of *a* and *b* vary by content area and are shown in equations 7.6 and 7.7 for ELA and mathematics, respectively. (These equations are in subsection [*7.4.1.4 Scale Scores for the Total Assessment*](#_7.4.1.2_Scale_Scores).)

Because the Smarter Balanced assessments use item pattern scoring, each response pattern can have a unique ability estimate and CSEM. Some response patterns have more uncertainty or random error associated with their ability estimates at the upper or lower ends of the reporting scale, where items administered to students may not be well aligned to a student’s true ability level. For example, if there are not enough difficult items in the item pool, a high-ability student may not be presented with difficult items on every replication of the CAT. Under these circumstances, while the student’s scale score will be high, the student’s CSEM may not be well estimated.

To reduce the level of uncertainty, the CSEMs were averaged at each scale score point. In addition, the uncertainty associated with CSEMs across the entire ability continuum, including the extreme ends, was further reduced by loglinear smoothing. Loglinear smoothing is implemented by using loglinear models to replace a discrete empirical dataset with a discrete dataset that preserves some features of the observed data without the irregularities that are attributable to sampling. Loglinear models can preserve a variety of different features in observed data with a relatively small number of parameters (Moses, von Davier, & Casabianca, 2004). Loglinear smoothing is implemented through LOGLIN, which is a function of an open-source software *KE* (ETS, 2011).

The average CSEMs for the full-form blueprint at each scale score point are estimated from the 2018–2019 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment data for all students. When implementing the adjusted, shortened-form blueprint in 2020–2021, the average CSEMs for the adjusted blueprint were estimated from the 2018–2019 Smarter Balanced summative data. In the estimation, the number of items were randomly selected on the basis of the requirements of the adjusted blueprint. Given the stable California student populations and the stability of the item pools, the relationship between the reporting scale and CSEMs should remain stable across administration years. The stability of this relationship helps facilitate the estimation of CSEMs prior to the test administration instead of after the completion of all testing windows.

CSEMs vary across the *θ* scale. When a test has thresholds, it is important to estimate CSEMs at those thresholds. Table 8.4 presents the scale score CSEMs at the lowest score required for a student to be classified in the *Standard Nearly Met*, *Standard Met*, and *Standard Exceeded* achievement levels for each assessment.

Table 8.4 Scale Score CSEMs at Performance-Level Thresholds

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Nearly Met Minimum Scale Score** | **Standard Nearly Met CSEM Under Adjusted Blueprint** | **Standard Met Minimum Scale Score** | **Standard Met CSEM Under Adjusted Blueprint** | **Standard Exceeded Minimum Scale Score** | **Standard Exceeded CSEM Under Adjusted Blueprint** |
| ELA 3 | 2367 | 33.00 | 2432 | 31.00 | 2490 | 31.00 |
| ELA 4 | 2416 | 35.00 | 2473 | 34.00 | 2533 | 34.00 |
| ELA 5 | 2442 | 32.00 | 2502 | 32.00 | 2582 | 35.00 |
| ELA 6 | 2457 | 32.00 | 2531 | 31.00 | 2618 | 34.00 |
| ELA 7 | 2479 | 34.00 | 2552 | 33.00 | 2649 | 35.00 |
| ELA 8 | 2487 | 34.00 | 2567 | 34.00 | 2668 | 35.00 |
| ELA 11 | 2493 | 40.00 | 2583 | 37.00 | 2682 | 38.00 |
| Mathematics 3 | 2381 | 25.00 | 2436 | 23.00 | 2501 | 22.00 |
| Mathematics 4 | 2411 | 26.00 | 2485 | 24.00 | 2549 | 23.00 |
| Mathematics 5 | 2455 | 32.00 | 2528 | 26.00 | 2579 | 24.00 |
| Mathematics 6 | 2473 | 33.00 | 2552 | 29.00 | 2610 | 27.00 |
| Mathematics 7 | 2484 | 37.00 | 2567 | 31.00 | 2635 | 28.00 |
| Mathematics 8 | 2504 | 42.00 | 2586 | 35.00 | 2653 | 29.00 |
| Mathematics 11 | 2543 | 42.00 | 2628 | 35.00 | 2718 | 29.00 |

Table 8.5 presents the average CSEMs in each achievement level by content area and grade level. The CSEMs tended to be smaller in the achievement levels of *Standard Nearly Met*, *Standard Met,* and *Standard Exceeded* than *Standard Not Met* for all tests. The pattern of average CSEMs is similar for the assessments in each content area.

Table 8.5 Mean CSEMs for Each Achievement Level

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **Standard Not Met Under Adjusted Blueprint** | **Standard Nearly Met Under Adjusted Blueprint** | **Standard Met Under Adjusted Blueprint** | **Standard Exceeded Under Adjusted Blueprint** |
| ELA 3 | 40.41 | 31.75 | 31.00 | 32.92 |
| ELA 4 | 40.15 | 34.29 | 33.23 | 36.47 |
| ELA 5 | 37.03 | 32.00 | 33.08 | 38.55 |
| ELA 6 | 38.06 | 31.29 | 32.39 | 36.44 |
| ELA 7 | 39.59 | 32.79 | 33.43 | 38.58 |
| ELA 8 | 40.64 | 34.00 | 34.25 | 38.77 |
| ELA 11 | 46.90 | 37.56 | 36.49 | 41.66 |
| Mathematics 3 | 31.78 | 24.02 | 22.43 | 24.61 |
| Mathematics 4 | 33.56 | 24.90 | 23.05 | 24.78 |
| Mathematics 5 | 40.26 | 28.61 | 24.66 | 25.03 |
| Mathematics 6 | 44.37 | 30.73 | 27.55 | 28.39 |
| Mathematics 7 | 47.58 | 34.30 | 29.23 | 28.29 |
| Mathematics 8 | 49.93 | 38.59 | 31.60 | 29.44 |
| Mathematics 11 | 55.88 | 38.54 | 32.40 | 30.11 |

Scale score CSEM distributions are shown in table 8.E.1 through table 8.E.14 in appendix 8.E. The plots of the CSEMs conditional for scale scores are also presented in figure 8.E.1 through figure 8.E.14. In the figures, the vertical axis is defined as the CSEMs and the horizontal axis is designated as scale scores, which is a common metric for tests within the same content area. Each data point represents an individual student. Typically, for fixed-form tests, the pattern of the CSEMs tends to be U–‍shaped, such that the plotted values of CSEMs for the middle scale scores tend to be lower than those for extreme scale scores.

Table 8.4 and table 8.5, and figure 8.E.1 through figure 8.E.14 in appendix 8.E, show CSEMs are smallest in the upper-middle portion of the score range, slightly larger for high scores, and much larger for low scores, getting larger as the score gets lower. This is partially due to the impact of the CAT and vertical scales, which, in relation to a fixed-form test, is the attenuation of the U–‍shaped relationship between CSEMs and scale scores.

#### Decision Classification Analyses

When an assessment uses achievement levels as the primary method to report test results, accuracy and consistency of decisions become key indicators of the quality of the assessment.

Decision accuracy is the extent to which students are classified in the same way as they would be if each student’s score were the average over all possible forms of the test (the student’s true score). Decision accuracy answers the following question: How closely does the actual classification of test takers, based on their single-form scores, agree with the classification that would be made on the basis of their true scores, if their true scores could somehow be known?

Decision consistency is the extent to which students are classified in the same way as they would be on the basis of a single form of an assessment other than the one for which data is available. Decision consistency answers the following question: What is the agreement between the classifications based on two nonoverlapping, equally difficult forms of the test?

The methodology used for estimating the reliability of classification decisions is described in Livingston and Lewis (1995). The necessary input information includes only the maximum and minimum possible scores on the assessment and the observed score distribution and the reliability coefficient for the group of students referenced by the estimates. The method was implemented by the ETS proprietary computer program RELCLASS-COMP (Version 4.14).

The results of these analyses are presented in table 8.F.1 through table 8.F.28 in appendix 8.F. Included are the contingency tables for both accuracy and consistency of the various achievement-level classifications. The proportion of students accurately classified is determined by summing the main diagonal of the upper table. The proportion of students consistently classified is determined by summing the main diagonal of the lower table. The classifications are collapsed to *Standard Not Met* and *Standard Nearly Met* versus *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded*, which are the critical categories for accountability. In each case, the estimated proportion of classifications with exact agreement is the sum of the entries in the diagonal of the contingency table of the achievement level placements.

Reliability of classification at a threshold is estimated by combining the achievement levels above a particular threshold and combining the achievement levels below that threshold. The result is a two-by-two table indicating whether the students are above or below the threshold. The sum of the entries in the main diagonal is the number of students accurately (or consistently) classified as above or below that threshold. Table 8.6 and table 8.7 illustrate these two-by-two contingency tables.

Table 8.6 Decision Accuracy for Reaching an Achievement Level

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievement Level Status** | **Does Not Reach an Achievement Level Based on True Score** | **Reaches an Achievement Level Based on True Score** |
| Does not reach an achievement level | Correct classification | Incorrect classification |
| Reaches an achievement level | Incorrect classification | Correct classification |

Table 8.7 Decision Consistency for Reaching an Achievement Level

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievement Level Status** | **Does Not Reach an Achievement Level Based on an Alternate Form** | **Reaches an Achievement Level Based on an Alternate Form** |
| Does not reach an achievement level | Consistent classification | Inconsistent classification |
| Reaches an achievement level | Inconsistent classification | Consistent classification |

Across all grade levels and content areas, for the categories of *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded,* the reliability of classification for accuracy ranges from .88 to .90, and the reliability of classification for consistency ranges from .84 to .87, indicating a reasonably high degree of reliability of classification for accuracy and consistency.

#### Interrater Agreement

To monitor the consistency of ratings assigned to students’ responses by raters, approximately 10 percent of the CR items received a second rating. The two sets of ratings are used to compute statistics describing the consistency (or reliability) of the ratings. This interrater consistency is described in three ways:

1. Percentage agreement between two raters
2. Cohen’s Kappa
3. Quadratic weighted kappa (QWK) coefficient

##### Percentage Agreement

Percentage agreement between two raters is frequently defined as the percentage of exact score agreement and adjacent score agreement. The percentage of exact score agreement is a stringent criterion, which tends to decrease with an increasing number of item score points. The fewer the item score points, the fewer degrees of freedom on which two raters can vary, and the higher the percentage of agreement.

##### Kappa

Interrater reliability or consistency is an indicator of homogeneity and is most frequently measured using an intraclass correlation (ICC) which incorporates the exact agreement between raters over and above that expected by chance. The index is defined as presented in equation 8.4. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.4*](#_Alternative_Text_for_17) *for a description of this equation.*

ICC = rI = (msbetween − mswithin)/(msbetween + [k − 1]mswithin) (8.4)

where,

msbetween is the mean-square estimate of between-subjects variance, and

mswithin is the mean-square estimate of within-subjects variance.

For categorical ratings, Cohen’s Kappa statistic (1960) has the properties of an ICC and can be used for interrater reliability. Cohen’s Kappa is therefore used as a primary indicator of the interrater reliability of the human-scored items. In addition, the percentage of ratings on which the raters are in exact agreement or differ by just one point are computed.

##### Quadratic Weighted Kappa

QWK is used because kappa does not take into account the degree of disagreement between raters. It is a generalization of the simple kappa coefficient using weights to quantify the relative difference between categories. The range of the QWK is from 0.0 to 1.0, with perfect agreement being equal to 1.0.

For a human-scored item with *m* categories, one can construct an *m* × *m* rating table with scores provided by two raters, A and B. Suppose *m* is the maximum obtainable score for each item, *nij* is the number of responses for which rater A’s score equals *i* and rater B’s score equals *j*, *ni+* is the number of responses for which rater A equals *i*, *n+j* is the number of responses for which rater B equals *j*, and *n++* is the number of all responses from either rater A or rater B.

The weighted kappa coefficient is defined as presented in equation 8.5. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.5*](#_Alternative_Text_for_18) *for a description of this equation.*

 (8.5)

For QWK, the weights are calculated using equation 8.6. *Refer to the* [*Alternative Text for Equation 8.6*](#_Alternative_Text_for_19) *for a description of this equation.*

 (8.6)

The interrater reliability analyses are performed on approximately 10 percent of the overall testing population, randomly selected from the total population; those students’ responses are scored by two raters. In some scoring rubrics, zero is a valid score for the responses but is not provided by a rater. Instead, a score of zero is assigned when the student attempted the writing task but did not provide a response. Responses with zero scores should not be included in the calculation of the agreement statistics for these items.

Table 8.G.1 through table 8.G.14 in appendix 8.G present the results of the interrater analyses and descriptive statistics of the ratings by the two raters on short-answer items, including the following:

* Number of score points in each item
* Number of raters for each round of rating
* Kappa
* QWK
* Percent of exact agreement
* Percent of adjacent agreement
* Mean of the item score
* SD of the item score

Table 8.G.15 through table 8.G.21 present the results of the interrater analyses on writing extended-response (WER) items. The number of items that did not meet the Smarter Balanced interrater agreement standards were flagged and presented in table 7.6. In addition to the statistics described previously, the dimension name is also identified.

Refer to [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1) of this report and the *Smarter Balanced Scoring Guide for Grades 3, 6, and 11: English/Language Arts Performance Task Full-Write Baseline Sets* (Smarter Balanced, 2014) for scoring dimensions.

#### Agreement Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Scoring

To ensure that the AI scoring engine awarded scores that were consistent with the scores assigned by qualified human raters, Measurement Incorporated, the CAASPP subcontractor scoring some of the CR items, conducted ongoing quality checks to ensure that the scoring models perform consistently. A description of these quality checks is provided in subsection [*7.2.2 Quality Control of Artificial Intelligence Scoring*](#_Quality_Control_of_1).

Two sets of ratings for the same item, one set from the AI scoring engine and the other set from human raters, are evaluated and compared. Table 8.G.22 through table 8.G.35 in appendix 8.G present the agreement statistics between AI and human scoring for short-answer items for ELA and mathematics. Table 8.G.36 through table 8.G.39 present the agreement statistics between AI and human scoring for WER items. The dimension name is identified in the case of WER items. These tables include the following:

* Number of score points in each item
* Number of raters for each round of rating
* Kappa
* QWK
* Percent of exact agreement
* Percent of adjacent agreement

### Validity Evidence

Validity refers to the degree to which each interpretation or use of a test score is supported by the accumulated evidence (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014; ETS, 2014). It constitutes the central notion underlying the development, administration, and scoring of a test and the uses and interpretations of test scores.

Validation is the process of accumulating evidence to support each proposed score interpretation or use. This validation process does not rely on a single study or gathering only one type of evidence. Rather, validation involves multiple investigations and different kinds of supporting evidence (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014; Cronbach, 1971; ETS, 2014; Kane, 2006). It begins with the test design and is implicit throughout the entire assessment process, which includes item development and field testing, analyses of items, test scaling and linking, scoring, reporting, and score usage.

In this section, the evidence gathered is presented to support the intended uses and interpretations of scores for the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments. This section is organized primarily around the principles prescribed by AERA, APA, and NCME’s *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014). These *Standards* require a clear definition of the purpose of the test, a description of the constructs to be assessed, and the population to be assessed, as well as how the scores are to be interpreted and used. Since many aspects of the CAASPP System are still under development at the time of this report, additional research to further support the Smarter Balanced goals is mentioned as appropriate throughout this section.

The *Standards* identify five kinds of evidence that can provide support for score interpretations and uses:

1. Evidence based on test content
2. Evidence based on relations to other variables
3. Evidence based on response processes
4. Evidence based on internal structure
5. Evidence based on the consequences of testing

The next subsection defines the purpose of the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments, followed by a description and discussion of the kinds of validity evidence that have been gathered. For general test validity evidence collected by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, refer to chapter 1 of the *2014–15 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016b). The validity evidence presented in chapter 1 of that report was collected from the results of a pilot test and a field test prior to the operational administration of the nationwide Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessments.

#### Evidence in the Design of CAASPP

##### Purpose

The primary purpose of the CAASPP assessment system is to “assist teachers, administrators, students, and parents by promoting high-quality teaching and learning through the use of a variety of assessment approaches and item types” (CDE, 2021b).

##### Constructs to Be Measured

The CAASPP computer-based summative assessments are designed to show how well students perform relative to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium content standards, which are aligned to the CCSS. These standards describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Test blueprints define the procedures used to measure the claims and standards. These blueprints, for ELA and mathematics, are provided in appendix 2.A. They also provide an operational definition of the construct to which each set of standards refers (Smarter Balanced, 2021a and 2021b). That is, they define, for each content area, the subject to be assessed, the tasks to be presented, the administration instructions to be given, and the rules used to score student responses. The test blueprints control as many aspects of the measurement procedure as possible so that the testing conditions will remain the same over test administrations (Cronbach, 1971) to minimize construct-irrelevant score variance (Messick, 1989).

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium also created the content specifications used to create the CAASPP computer-based summative assessments (Smarter Balanced, 2015a and 2015b).

##### Interpretations and Uses of the Scores

Overall student performance is expressed as scale scores and achievement levels, which are generated for both ELA and mathematics assessments, as are strength and weakness levels for each claim. An inference is drawn about how much knowledge and skill in the content area the student has, on the basis of a student’s total score. The total score is also used to classify students in terms of their level of knowledge and skill in the content area. These levels are called achievement levels and are labeled *Standard Exceeded*, *Standard Met*, *Standard Nearly Met*, and *Standard Not Met*.

The strength and weakness levels are used to draw inferences about a student’s achievement in each of the claims for each test. As mentioned earlier, no claim performance-level information is reported at the student level in the 2020–2021 administration because of the implementation of the adjusted, shortened-form blueprint.

A detailed description of the uses and applications of the CAASPP computer-based summative assessment scores is presented in [chapter 7](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1). Parents/Guardians have access to the Starting Smarter website, which describes CAASPP Student Score Reports and how parents/guardians can use the reports to communicate with teachers about a child’s learning (The Regents of the University of California & CDE, 2020). The information provided is available in English and Spanish. Finally, additional information can be found in the *2020–21 CAASPP Post-Test Guide* (CDE, 2021a).

More detailed descriptions regarding score use can be found in the *Education Code* Section 60602 web page on the California Legislative Information website. Refer also to [*7.6 Reports Produced and Scores for Each Report*](#_Reports_Produced_and).

##### Intended Test Population

Students enrolled in grades three through eight and grade eleven are required to take part in the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, unless they are eligible to participate in the alternate assessments. EL students who were in their first 12 months of attending school in the United States were exempt from taking the ELA portion of the assessments.

#### Evidence Based on Test Content

Evidence based on test content refers to traditional forms of content validity evidence, such as the rating of test specifications and test items (Crocker, Miller, & Franks, 1989; Sireci, 1998), as well as alignment methods for educational tests that evaluate the interactions between curriculum frameworks, testing, and instruction (Rothman, Slattery, Vranek, & Resnick, 2002; Bhola, Impara & Buckendahl, 2003; Martone & Sireci, 2009).

The degree to which the Smarter Balanced test specifications captured the CCSS, and the items adequately represent the domains delineated in the test specifications, were demonstrated in the *Alignment Study Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016c). The major finding presented here is that the knowledge, skills, and abilities measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments are consistent with the ones specified in the CCSS. With computer-adaptive testing, an extra dimension of content validity evidence is to ensure that the item‑selection algorithm produces forms for individual students that conform to the test blueprint. It was found that across content areas and grade levels, 98 percent or more of the simulated tests covered the test blueprint (American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2015).

##### Description of the State Standards

As noted in section [*1.1 Background*](#_Background_1), the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are aligned with the CCSS for ELA and mathematics. The purpose of the CCSS is to provide school staff and teachers with the information and tools they need to improve teaching and learning so as to prepare all students for college and career readiness. These content standards describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level (Smarter Balanced, 2015a and 2015b).

##### Item Specifications

Item specifications describe the characteristics of items that are written to measure each content standard. Specifications were developed for each target, within each claim, and at each grade level, and are published by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium for ELA (Smarter Balanced, 2017a through 2017i) and mathematics (Smarter Balanced, 2018a through 2018j).

##### Item Selection Algorithm

The item selection algorithm is designed to cover a standards-based blueprint in the assembly of CAT forms. The general item selection approach is based on an item selection algorithm (refer to [*Chapter 4: Test Assembly*](#_Test_Assembly_1)) that evaluates an item’s contribution to each of the following measures:

1. A measure of content match to the blueprint
2. A measure of overall test information
3. Measures of test information for each reporting category on the test

Details can be found in the *Smarter Balanced Adaptive Item Selection Algorithm Design Report (*AIR, 2014).

##### Assessment Blueprints

The Smarter Balanced summative test blueprints provided in appendix 2.A describe the content of the ELA and mathematics summative assessments for all grades tested and how that content is assessed. The summative computer-based test blueprints reflect the depth and breadth of the performance expectations of the CCSS. The test blueprints have information about the number of items and depth of knowledge for items associated with each assessment target (Smarter Balanced, 2021a and 2021b). Each test is described by a single blueprint for each segment of the test and identifies the order in which the segments appear.

There are two sets of blueprints for ELA and mathematics available in appendix 2.A. The first set, the adjusted, shortened-form blueprints, was used to create the current computer-based assessments. The second set, the full-form blueprints, was used for the computer-based test up until the 2018–2019 administration and for the current paper–pencil tests and the braille hybrid adaptive tests.

##### Item Development Process

A detailed description of the content and psychometric criteria applicable to the construction of the Smarter Balanced item pool is included in *Chapter 4: Test Design*, for overall content validity, and *Chapter 3: Item Development*, for item development, of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a).

##### Alignment Study

A strong alignment between the CCSS and assessments is fundamental to the meaningful measurement of student achievement and instructional effectiveness. Alignment results demonstrate that the assessments represent the full range of the content standards and that these assessments measure student knowledge in the same manner and at the same level of complexity as expected in the content standards. For example, across all grades, 64.7 percent of the items are identified in alignment with the ELA grade-level CCSS and 76.7 percent of the items are identified in alignment with the mathematics grade-level CCSS by at least 50 percent of the reviewers (Smarter Balanced, 2016c).

##### Form Assembly Process

The content standards, blueprints, and item-selection algorithm are the basis for choosing items for each assessment. Additional item difficulty and discrimination targets are defined in light of what are desirable statistical characteristics in test items and statistical evaluations. Refer to [*Chapter 4: Test Assembly*](#_Test_Assembly_1) for additional information.

##### Simulation Study

Simulations are conducted to evaluate and ensure the implementation and quality of the adaptive item-selection algorithm and the scoring algorithm. The simulation tool allows for the manipulation of key blueprint and configuration settings to match the blueprint and minimize measurement error. The report *Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments Testing Procedures for Adaptive Item-Selection Algorithm* contains more information about the algorithms used (AIR, 2015).

The findings from the 2016–2017 simulation study demonstrate that the Smarter Balanced adaptive test delivery system administers assessments with items representing the breadth and depth identified in the test specifications and content standards, and that scores are comparable with respect to the targeted content and are measured with good precision across the range of proficiency. Refer to *Simulation Results, 2016–17 Test Administrations English Language Arts/Literacy grades 3–8, 11, and Mathematics Grades 3–8, 11* for detailed information (AIR, 2016)*.*

#### Evidence Based on Response Processes

Validity evidence based on response processes refers to “evidence concerning the fit between the construct and the detailed nature of performance or response actually engaged in by test takers” (AERA et al., 2014, p. 15). This type of evidence generally includes documentation of activities such as

* interviews with students concerning their responses to test items (i.e., think alouds);
* systematic observations of test response behavior;
* evaluation of the criteria used by judges when scoring PTs, analysis of student item response-time data, and features scored by automated algorithms; and
* evaluation of the reasoning processes students employ when solving test items (Embretson, 1983; Messick, 1989; Mislevy, 2009).

This type of evidence is used to confirm that the Smarter Balanced assessments are measuring the cognitive skills that are intended to be the objects of measurement and that students are using these targeted skills to respond to the items.

##### Think Alouds

One way to evaluate response process is through think-aloud protocols (Lewis, 1982). Think-aloud protocols were conducted early in the development of the Smarter Balanced assessments and were described by Smarter Balanced (2015a) in the following way:

“Using the revised item and task specifications, a small set of items was developed and administered in fall 2012 during a small-scale trial. This provided the Consortium with their first opportunity to administer and score the new item types. During the small-scale trials, the Consortium also conducted cognitive laboratories to better understand how students respond to various types of items. The cognitive laboratories used a think-aloud methodology in which students speak their thoughts while working on a test item. The item and task specifications were again revised based on the findings of the cognitive laboratories and the small-scale trial. These revised specifications were used to develop items for the 2013 pilot test, and they were again revised based on 2013 pilot test results and subsequent review by content experts.”

##### Testing Time Analysis

Testing times for each administration can be evaluated for consistency, with the expected response processes for the tasks presented to students. The length of time it takes students to take a test is recorded and analyzed to build a profile describing what a typical testing event looks like for each content area and grade. In addition, variability in testing time is investigated to determine whether a student’s testing time should be viewed as unusual or irregular. It should be noted that the Smarter Balanced assessments are untimed tests.

In these analyses, only students who completed at least 10 CAT items and 1 PT item and had timing records are included. The students having the shortest testing time in the PT portion—1 percent of all the students taking the test—and the students with the shortest testing time in the CAT portion—also 1 percent of all the students taking the test—are removed from the analysis. The remaining testing population is partitioned into quartiles based on scale scores on the total test. These groupings are not the same as the achievement levels.

The descriptive statistics—e.g., the number of students, mean, SD, minimum and maximum, and percentiles—of the following time variables are computed for each of the four quartile groups derived from the scale scores for each content area:

* Time required to complete the total test
* Time required to complete the CAT section of each test
* Time required to complete the PT section of each test

Some cases of extremely long testing time may be attributed to students with special needs taking longer to complete the tests, or the test not being closed down properly. Therefore, mean testing times may be misleading. The medians (50th percentile) are more meaningful in the interpretation of the time comparisons because medians are less impacted by the extreme values than means. The removal of the 1 percent of the student data with the shortest testing time is a modest exclusion that leaves some students with very short durations in the results for each of the tests. Similarly, some very long durations are present in the data, which may indicate errors such as the failure to close a testing session. Therefore, the median is a better statistic than the mean for evaluating testing time information.

Table 8.H.1 and table 8.H.2 in appendix 8.H provide descriptive statistics for ELA and mathematics testing time, respectively. These tables include total testing time and percentile information at each ability level. The unit of testing time is minutes; for example, in table 8.H.1, the median of the testing time for the ELA grade three Q1 group is 67 minutes. At every grade level, in both ELA and mathematics, students in the lowest ability level (1st quartile, Q1) have shorter median testing times than students in the other groups. The median of total testing time generally increases with ability level from Q1 to Q4. Students at the 50th percentile within each ability quartile spent 67 to 145 minutes on ELA assessments across all grades and 45 to 91 minutes on mathematics assessments across all grades, indicating that students spent more time in ELA than in mathematics.

Table 8.H.3 (for ELA) and table 8.H.4 (for mathematics) provide the descriptive statistics of testing time for the CAT portion and the percentile information at each ability level. The number of CAT items presented to each student is reported in table 5.B.2 in appendix 5.B.

Similar to total testing time, the median of testing time in the CAT portion generally increases with ability level from Q1 to Q4 in mathematics. For ELA, median testing times also increase with ability level, although there are no substantial differences in testing times between the Q3 and Q4 groups for ELA. Students at the 50th percentile within each ability quartile spent 30 to 62 minutes on the CAT portion of ELA assessments across all grades and 27 to 57 minutes on the CAT portion of mathematics tests across all grades.

After testing time distributions for the CAT were reviewed, testing times for the PTs were investigated. During testing, each student was presented with a few items (one to six) that were randomly assigned in each grade. (More details on assignment of PTs can be found in [*Chapter 5: Test Administration*](#_Chapter_5:_Test).) Table 8.H.5 and table 8.H.6 in appendix 8.H provide the descriptive statistics for ELA and mathematics testing times for each PT and the percentile information at each ability level, respectively.

Overall, students in the lowest ability level (1st quartile, Q1) have shorter testing times than students in the other groups. For ELA, the median of the PT testing time increases with ability level from Q1 to Q4. Students at the 50th percentile within each ability quartile spent 29 to 83 minutes on the PT portion of ELA assessments across PTs and all grades and 15 to 40 minutes on the PT portion of mathematics assessments across PTs and all grades. Similar to the overall tests, students tended to spend more time in ELA than in mathematics on the PTs.

#### Evidence Based on Internal Structure

Validity evidence based on *internal structure* refers to the statistical analysis of item and score subdomains to investigate the primary and secondary (if any) dimensions measured by an assessment. Procedures for gathering such evidence include factor analysis—both exploratory and confirmatory—or multidimensional IRT scaling. With a vertical scale, a consistent primary dimension across the levels of the test should be maintained.

##### Dimensionality

A dimensionality study was conducted during the pilot test phase to determine the factor structure of the assessments and the types of scales developed, as well as the associated IRT models used to calibrate them. In part, that study used the Akaike Information Criterion (Akaike, 1973) to evaluate the fit of potential multidimensional models relative to the unidimensional model. The results suggested that the unidimensional model fit better than the multidimensional model, once model complexity was taken into account. More detailed results for the Smarter Balanced pilot test are available in the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a).

##### Differential Item Functioning

Analysis of item functioning using IRT and differential item functioning (DIF) falls under the internal structure category. For Smarter Balanced assessments, DIF analyses were conducted to assess differences in the item performance of groups of students who differ in their demographic characteristics. DIF analyses were implemented during the pilot test and field test phases when the tests were delivered in linear fixed-length forms (Smarter Balanced, 2016a, chapter 6; and Smarter Balanced, 2016b, chapter 8). For both ELA and mathematics, few items were identified as having significant levels of DIF. In the operational assessment, by virtue of the CAT delivery, non-embedded field test items are not amenable to DIF analyses.

##### Overall Reliability Estimates

The results of reliability analyses on the total test theta scores on each summative assessment are presented in table 8.3. The results indicate that the reliability estimates for all summative assessment total scores are reasonably high, ranging from 0.86 to 0.90 for the adjusted, shortened-form blueprint, given that there are only 25 total items for ELA and 20 to 24 items for mathematics. Theta score SDs and SEMs are increasing with grade level; this is often an artifact of vertical scaling.

##### Claim Reliability Estimates

For each CAASPP Smarter Balanced computer-based summative assessment, theta scores are computed for claims. The reliability estimates of these scores are presented in table 8.D.1 through table 8.D.14 in appendix 8.D. The reliability estimates of claims are invariably lower than those for the total tests because they are based on fewer items. Because the reliabilities of scores at the claim level are lower than for total scores, and because each claim contains a different number of items, educators should supplement the score results with other information when interpreting claim scores.

##### Student Group Reliability Estimates

The reliabilities also are examined for various student groups that differ in their demographic characteristics within the student population. The characteristics considered are gender, ethnicity, economic status, accommodations, special education services status, migrant status, English language fluency, military status, homeless status, and ethnicity by economic status (refer to table 7.17 for the demographic student groups reported). Reliability estimates and SEM information for the total test theta scores and the claim theta scores are reported for each student group. Table 8.D.15 through table 8.D.25 in appendix 8.D present the reliabilities and SEMs on the overall test theta scores for the various student groups. Table 8.D.26 through table 8.D.109 present the reliabilities and SEMs of theta scores for the claims.

##### Reliability of Performance Classifications

The methodology used for estimating the reliability of classification decisions is described with the decision classification analyses in subsection [*8.5.7 Decision Classification Analyses*](#_Decision_Classification_Analyses). The results of these analyses are presented in table 8.F.1 through table 8.F.28 in appendix 8.F. When the classifications are collapsed to below Standard Met versus Standard Met and above, which are the critical categories for accountability analyses, the estimated proportion of students who are classified accurately ranges from 0.88 to 0.90 across all tests. Similarly, the estimated proportion of students who are classified consistently ranges from 0.84 to 0.87 for students classified into below *Standard Met* versus *Standard Met* and above. These are considered high levels of accuracy and consistency.

##### Interrater Reliability

Cohen’s Kappa statistics provide evidence of the degree to which a student’s score is consistent from one rater to another. Research has shown values of kappa between 0.41 and 0.60 exhibit moderate levels of agreement between the two ratings (Landis & Koch, 1977; Flack, Afifi, Lachenbruch, & Schouten, 1988) and that values of QWK greater than 0.70 indicate excellent agreement (Williamson, Xi, & Breyer, 2012).

The results in table 8.G.1 through table 8.G.14 in appendix 8.G show at least moderate levels of agreement, as defined previously, between raters who scored students’ responses for 71 percent of the human-scored, short-answer items in ELA and 90 percent of the human-scored items in mathematics. Using the guidelines for kappa values, the rater agreement is at reasonably high, with kappa over 0.6 for 12 percent of the ELA human-scored items and 70 percent of the mathematics human-scored items. Using the guidelines for QWK values, the rater agreement is excellent, with the QWK over 0.7 for 34 percent of the ELA human-scored items and 75 percent of the mathematics human-scored items.

The results in table 8.G.15 through table 8.G.21 show at least moderate levels of agreement, as defined previously, between raters who scored students’ responses for 68 percent of the human-scored WER items. The human-scored WER items in ELA exhibited high levels of agreement when exact and adjacent agreement rates were combined. Using the guidelines for QWK values, the rater agreement is excellent, with the QWK over 0.7 for 53 percent of the human-scored WER items.

Table 8.G.22 through table 8.G.35 present the results for AI machine-scored items for ELA and mathematics. The results show at least moderate levels of agreement, as defined previously, between human raters and AI engines that scored students’ responses for 70 percent of the AI machine-scored short-answer items in ELA and 87 percent of the AI machine-scored short-answer items in mathematics. Using the guidelines for values, the agreement is high, with kappa over 0.6 for 18 percent of ELA AI machine-scored short-answer items and 68 percent of mathematics AI machine-scored short-answer items. Using the guidelines for QWK values, the rater agreement is excellent, with the QWK over 0.7 for 47 percent of the ELA and 83 percent of the mathematics AI machine-scored items.

Table 8.G.36 through table 8.G.39 present the results for AI machine-scored WER items for ELA in grades three, six, seven, and eleven. The results show at least moderate levels of agreement, as defined previously, between human raters and AI engines for 61 percent of the AI machine-scored WER items. Using the guidelines for QWK values, the rater agreement is excellent, with the QWK over 0.7 for 51 percent of the AI machine-scored WER items.

##### Interrater Agreement

As shown in table 8.G.1 through table 8.G.14 in appendix 8.G, all human-scored items in ELA assessments can be awarded a maximum of two points (0, 1, or 2) for short-text items and a maximum of four points for WER items. In mathematics, human-scored items can be awarded between one (0, 1) and four (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) points. Approximately 10 percent of the test population’s responses to the human-scored items are scored by two raters. The percentage of responses for which the raters are in exact agreement ranges from 57 percent to 86 percent for ELA and 77 percent to 100 percent for mathematics. The percentage of responses for which the raters are in exact or adjacent agreement ranges from 98 percent to 100 percent for ELA and 97 percent to 100 percent for mathematics.

As is reported in table 8.G.15 through table 8.G.21, WER items have two points for convention dimension and four points for Organization and Purpose, Development and Elaboration, or Evidence and Elaboration scoring dimensions. The percentage of responses for which the raters are in exact agreement ranges from 52 percent to 81 percent; the percentage of responses for which the raters are in exact or adjacent agreement ranges from 95 percent to 100 percent in ELA assessments.

As presented in table 8.G.22 through table 8.G.35, 10 percent of the students’ responses that are scored by the AI engine are also scored by human raters. The percentage of responses for which the AI engine and human raters are in exact agreement ranges from 37 percent to 87 percent for ELA across the grades and from 66 percent to 100 percent for mathematics across the grades. The percentage of responses for which the AI engine and human raters are in exact or adjacent agreement ranges from 89 percent to 100 percent for ELA and 92 percent to 100 percent for mathematics.

Table 8.G.36 through table 8.G.38 present the interrater agreement between the AI engine and human raters for ELA WER items in grades three, six, and eleven; only these three assessments contain AI-scored WER items. The percentage of responses for which the AI engine and human raters are in exact agreement ranges from 46 percent to 80 percent. The percentage of responses for which the AI engine and human raters are in exact or adjacent agreement ranges from 88 percent to 100 percent.

##### Correlations Between the Claims Within Content Areas

The distinctiveness and reliability of the claim theta scores in each content area are important because CAASPP strength and weakness levels are reported based on claim scores. The interrelationships of claim scores should be shown to be consistent with the construct being assessed. Table 8.D.1 through table 8.D.14 in appendix 8.D provide the intercorrelations between claim scores within each test in the two content areas (i.e., ELA and mathematics). Results show that the correlations between claim scores are consistent across the grades. Correlations range from 0.40 to 0.67 for ELA and from 0.56 to 0.73 for mathematics.

##### Correlations Between Content Area Test Scores

The degree to which students’ content area test scores correlate as expected provides evidence of those scores as measures of the intended constructs. Table 8.8 provides the correlations between scores on the 2020–2021 CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments and the number of students on which these correlations are based. Results are based on all students with valid scale scores and are provided by grade.

Table 8.8 Correlations for All Students

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **ELA Sample Size** | **Mathematics Sample Size** | **Correlation Sample Size** | **Correlation** |
| 3 | 80,029 | 85,277 | 78,895 | 0.77 |
| 4 | 82,494 | 87,802 | 81,437 | 0.77 |
| 5 | 84,164 | 89,402 | 82,797 | 0.77 |
| 6 | 87,259 | 87,368 | 84,403 | 0.78 |
| 7 | 96,798 | 96,828 | 92,230 | 0.76 |
| 8 | 98,297 | 97,837 | 93,326 | 0.77 |
| 11 | 207,139 | 199,959 | 190,315 | 0.73 |

Results for these students appear to be consistent with expectations. In general, students’ ELA scores correlated moderately with their mathematics scores. They are correlated slightly higher among students in grades three through eight than in grade eleven.

Table 8.I.1 through table 8.I.8 in appendix 8.I provide the content area assessment score correlations by gender, ethnicity, English language fluency, economic status, special education services status, migrant status, military status, and homeless status. The correlation between students’ ELA and mathematics scores was approximately in the range of .68 to .77 at all grade levels for nearly all the student groups. One exception was EL students, who showed lower correlations at all grades in the range of .48 to .66. Note that the new student group in grade eleven, adult English learner, showed the lowest correlation, .18 with a sample of 35 students.

Correlations are reported only for groups of more than 10 students. Correlations between scores on any two content area assessments where 10 or fewer students took the tests are expressed as “N/A.”

#### Validity Evidence Based on Relations to Other Variables

Evidence based on *relations to other variables* refers to traditional forms of criterion-related validity evidence such as concurrent and predictive validity, as well as more comprehensive investigations of the relationships among test scores and other variables such as multitrait–multimethod studies (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). External variables can be used to evaluate hypothesized relationships between test scores and other measures of student achievement (e.g., test scores) to evaluate the degree to which different tests actually measure different skills and the utility of test scores for predicting specific criteria (e.g., college grades). This type of evidence is essential for supporting the validity of certain inferences based on scores from the Smarter Balanced assessments for certifying college and career readiness, which are the primary test purposes.

A subset of students who took National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) items also took Smarter Balanced CAT items and PTs. A summary of the resulting item performance for NAEP, PISA, and all Smarter Balanced items can be found in chapters 7 and 8 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016a). That study found item-level performance to be similar for NAEP and Smarter Balanced populations. A study relating Smarter Balanced scales to NAEP or PISA scales has not been made.

Another study established the relationship between Smarter Balanced field test scores and the likelihood of achieving “Conditionally Exempt” status based on achieving the required minimum scores for the California State University Early Assessment Program (EAP). During the 2013–2014 administration, students in grade eleven took the EAP for ELA, mathematics, or both. The comparison showed a correlation of 0.68 between Smarter Balanced ELA and EAP ELA assessments and correlations from 0.49 to 0.61 between Smarter Balanced mathematics and EAP mathematics tests (ETS, 2015a, 2015b, and 2015c). These correlations indicate that Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments might be measuring different aspects of college readiness than the EAP assessments, which previously provided insight into the readiness of California students in grade eleven for college-level mathematics and ELA courses. Other predictive validity research is being pursued by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium as part of their research agenda.

#### Validity Evidence Based on Consequences of Testing

Evidence based on *consequences of testing* refers to the evaluation of the intended and unintended consequences associated with a testing program. Examples of evidence based on testing consequences include investigations of adverse impact, evaluation of the effects of testing on instruction, and evaluation of the effects of testing on issues such as high school dropout rates. With respect to educational tests, the *Standards* stress the importance of evaluating test consequences. For example, they state the following:

“When educational testing programs are mandated…the ways in which test results are intended to be used should be clearly described. It is the responsibility of those who mandate the use of tests to monitor their impact and to identify and minimize potential negative consequences. Consequences resulting from the use of the test, both intended and unintended, should also be examined by the test user.” (AERA et al., 1999, p. 145)

Investigations of testing consequences relevant to the Smarter Balanced goals include analyses of students’ opportunity to learn the CCSS and analyses of changes in textbooks and instructional approaches. Unintended consequences, such as changes in instruction, diminished morale among teachers and students, increased pressure on students leading to increased dropout rates, or the pursuit of college majors and careers that are less challenging can be evaluated. These sorts of investigations require information beyond what has been available to the CAASPP program to date. Refer to the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: 2017–18 Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2019) for more validity evidence.

### Test Location—Remote Versus In-Person Testing Analysis

At the start of the 2020–2021 school year, LEAs offered varying instructional options, with a substantial percentage offering only distance learning options. The CDE allowed LEAs flexibility to use multiple test administration options so LEAs could best meet the needs of students in response to the local context and to ensure the safety and health of students and LEA staff. As a result, both in-person and remote testing modes were used for the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration. In addition, to reduce the testing burden for educators and students and, in particular, to reduce the possibility of remote students experiencing a technology-related test disruption, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium adjusted its test blueprints to reduce the testing time.

To evaluate whether those assessment flexibilities used in the administration impact test score interpretation and to examine whether there were issues in student test experience related to those assessment flexibilities that could affect score validity, ETS conducted an internal investigation into test location comparability. This study investigated and analyzed a variety of factors that could have an impact on student testing performance and experiences, such as student test participation, student performance at test level and item level, student testing time, test reliability, and student testing issues related to the validity of score interpretation.

To facilitate more direct comparisons between students who tested in person and students who tested remotely, ETS used a weighting approach to match students within these groups (i.e., in-person and remote groups) to the 2018–2019 population. In addition, for many students, the mode of instruction was intertwined with their testing location, which made it difficult to determine whether the difference in the students’ performance was a result of the test location difference or the mode of instruction. To provide an unconfounded comparison of test performance between students testing remotely and in person, analyses were conducted for students who received only remote instruction—most schools provided remote instruction for a significant portion of the school year—in addition to the analyses on all students regardless of the instructional modes they received.

The average ELA and mathematics scale scores for the weighted remote sample were compared to the weighted in-person sample. For students who were instructed remotely, the mean scale score differences for the ELA assessments ranged from -3 to 7 scale score points, with remote students performing slightly better in most grades. For the mathematics assessments, the mean differences were larger than what was observed for the ELA assessments, ranging from 6 to 22 scale score points, with the remote group performing higher than the in-person group. These differences corresponded with effect sizes—a measure of the magnitude of the mean difference—ranging from -0.03 to 0.16. Using Cohen’s *d* criteria (1988) (with values of 0.2 representing a small effect, 0.5 a medium effect, and 0.8 a large effect), they are considered negligible differences. Although, for the mathematics assessments for higher grade levels (i.e., grade seven and above), the effect sizes were nearing a small difference.

This investigation concluded that remote testing can be viewed as reasonably comparable to in‑person testing for all grade levels of the Smarter Balanced for ELA assessments and for the lower grades (i.e., grade three through grade six) of the mathematics assessments.

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### Accessibility Information

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.1

Rho sub theta prime equals 1 minus M sub SEM squared sub theta divided by s squared sub theta.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.2

SEM sub scaled equals a times s sub theta times the square root of 1 minus rho sub theta prime.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.3

CSEM of SS equals 1 times a divided by the square root of I of theta hat.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.4

ICC is interrater reliability, which is equal to the difference between mean square between variance and mean square within variance divided by the sum of mean square between variance and k minus 1 of mean square within variance.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.5

K sub ij equals open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub ij divided by n sub plus close parenthesis minus open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub I plus times n sub plus j divided by n squared sub plus close parenthesis divided open parenthesis 1 minus open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub i plus times n sub plus j divided by n squared sub plus close parenthesis close parenthesis, K sub ij equals open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub ij divided by n sub plus close parenthesis minus open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub i plus times n sub plus j divided by n squared sub plus close parenthesis divided open parenthesis 1 minus open parenthesis the sum from i equals zero to m the sum from j equals zero to m of w sub ij times n sub i plus times n sub plus j divided by n squared sub plus close parenthesis close parenthesis.

#### Alternative Text for Equation 8.6

W sub ij equals 1 minus open parenthesis I minus j close parenthesis squared divided by m squared.

### Appendix 8.A: Item Response Theory Parameter Estimates

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.B: Omission and Completion Analyses

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.C: Item Exposure

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.D: Reliability Analyses

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.E: Scale Score Conditional Standard Error of Measurement Distribution

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.F: Analyses of Classification

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.G: Interrater Reliability

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.H: Analyses in Support of Validity Evidence

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 8.I: Correlations Between Content Areas

This content is located in a separate file.

## Quality Control Procedures

The California Department of Education (CDE), Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and ETS implemented rigorous quality control procedures throughout the test development, administration, scoring, and analyses processes. As part of this effort, ETS staff worked with its Office of Professional Standards Compliance, which publishes and maintains the *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness* (ETS, 2014). These standards support the goal of delivering technically sound, fair, and useful products and services while assisting the public and auditors in evaluating those products and services. Quality control procedures are outlined in this chapter.

### Quality Control of Item Development

Item writers hired to develop Smarter Balanced assessment items were trained in Smarter Balanced policies on sensitivity and bias guidelines, as well as guidelines for accessibility, to ensure that the items allow the widest possible range of students to demonstrate their content knowledge (Smarter Balanced, 2016). A group of educators reviewed the items and performance tasks (PTs) for accessibility, bias and sensitivity, as well as content prior to their administration in the 2013–2014 field test.

To further ensure the quality of Smarter Balanced assessment items, in early May 2013, Smarter Balanced recruited a panel of English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics content experts and decision-makers with expertise in the needs of students with disabilities and students who were English learners. This panel reviewed item specifications, item types, items, and PTs and made recommendations for item development and item-quality criteria.

After the 2012–2013 pilot test, staff from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium used statistical criteria to flag items that were potentially problematic because of content, bias, or accessibility issues.

For more information regarding the steps taken by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to ensure quality during item development, refer to chapter 3 of the *2013–14 Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016).

### Quality Control of Test Assembly and Delivery

The assembly of all test forms must conform to blueprints that represent a set of constraints and specifications. There were separate specifications for the ELA and mathematics assessments. These blueprints are critical to the formation of valid assessments and can be found in appendix 2.A.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium conducted computer simulations to evaluate the test delivery system and the adaptive testing algorithm. Two sets of simulation studies were conducted:

1. The simulation study conducted prior to the 2013–2014 Smarter Balanced field test that is described in chapter 4 of the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: 2013–14 Technical Report* (Smarter Balanced, 2016)
2. The simulation study conducted prior to the 2016–2017 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) operational administration that is described in [*Chapter 4: Test Assembly*](#_Test_Assembly_1) in this current technical report

### Quality Control of Test Materials

Brief descriptions of other types of materials used for and during testing appear in the following subsections.

#### Developing Assessments

##### Computer-based Assessments

The steps taken to develop and ensure the quality of the computer-based assessments is described in section [*5.1 Overview*](#_Test_Administration_1).

##### Paper–Pencil Forms

Test forms and response booklets received from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium were carefully reviewed by ETS staff to ensure that materials met quality standards. Each document was reviewed for accuracy, completeness, and alignment with supporting materials.

Print-ready PDFs received for the paper versions of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments underwent a stringent quality control process to ensure that there was adequate space for student response.

##### Test Administration Manuals

ETS staff consulted with internal subject matter experts and conducted validation checks to verify that test instruction manuals accurately matched the test booklets and testing processes. Copy editors and content editors reviewed each document for spelling, grammar, accuracy, and adherence to CDE style. Manuals received from Smarter Balanced were customized to fit the CAASPP System specifications. Each document was approved by the CDE before being published to the CAASPP website. Only nonsecure documents were posted to this website.

#### Collecting Test Materials

##### Computer-based Assessments

During the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration, there were no collectable materials associated with computer-based testing.

##### Paper–Pencil Forms

Once the paper–pencil tests (PPTs) were administered at test sites whose local educational agencies (LEAs) had received prior approval from the CDE, LEAs were instructed to enter student responses into the CAASPP Data Entry Interface (DEI) before returning all scorable and nonscorable materials within five working days after the last day of each test administration period. The LEAs packed all materials into cartons, applied the labels, and then numbered the cartons prior to returning the materials to ETS by means of their assigned carrier.

#### Processing Test Materials

##### Computer-based Assessments

Computer-based tests that were submitted by students were transmitted from Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) to ETS each day. Each system checked for the completeness of the student record and stopped records that were identified as having an error. (For example, the system would identify a test part that was missing a content registration ID, a unique identifier that matches the student’s opportunities—computer-adaptive testing [CAT] and PT—in final scoring.)

Test responses were separated for human scoring between ETS and Measurement Incorporated (MI), and the reader’s ratings were delivered to ETS scoring systems for merging with machine-scored items, final scoring, and scoring quality checks.

##### Paper–Pencil Forms

Upon receipt of the test materials, ETS personnel examined each shipment of materials by comparing the serial numbers of returned materials with those on actual documents received. LEAs were contacted by phone if there were any missing materials.

### Quality Control of Test Administration

The quality of test administration for the CAASPP Smarter Balanced was monitored and controlled through several strategies. A fully staffed support center, the California Technical Assistance Center (CalTAC), supported all LEAs in the administration of CAASPP assessments. In addition to providing guidance and answering questions, CalTAC regularly conducted outreach campaigns on particular administration topics to ensure all LEAs understood correct test administration procedures. CalTAC was guided by a core group of LEA outreach and advocacy staff that managed communications to LEAs; provided regional and web-based trainings; and hosted a website, [the](https://www.caaspp.org/) CAASPP website, that housed a full range of manuals, videos, and other instructional and support materials.

The quality of test administration was further managed through comprehensive rules and guidelines for maintaining the security and standardization of CAASPP assessments. LEAs received training on these topics and were provided tools for reporting security incidents and resolving testing discrepancies for specific testing sessions.

The ETS Office of Testing Integrity (OTI) reinforced the quality control procedures for test administration, providing quality assurance services for all testing programs managed by ETS. The detailed procedures the OTI developed and applied in quality control are described in subsection [*5.2.1 ETS’ Office of Testing Integrity*](#_ETS’_Office_of).

### Quality Control of Psychometric Processes

#### Development of Scoring Specifications

A number of measures were taken to ascertain that the scoring keys are applied to the student responses as intended and the student scores are computed accurately. ETS built and reviewed the scoring system models based on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium scoring specifications and CDE requirements (Smarter Balanced, 2014; American Institutes for Research, 2015). Machine-scored item responses and demographic information were collected and provided electronically to ETS in a master student data file. Human-scored item responses were sent electronically to the ETS Online Network for Evaluation or MI scoring centers for scoring by trained, qualified raters. Record counts were verified against the counts obtained during security check-in from the document processing staff to ensure all students were accounted for in the file.

Once the record counts were reviewed, the machine-scored item responses were scored against the appropriate answer key provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. In addition, the student’s original response string was stored for data verification and auditing purposes.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium provided the specifications for scoring the assessments well in advance of the receipt of student response data. These specifications contained detailed scoring procedures, along with the procedures for determining whether a student had attempted a test and whether that student response data should be included in the statistical analyses and calculations for computing summary data. Standard quality inspections were performed on all data files, including the evaluation of each student data record for correctness and completeness. Student results were kept confidential and secure at all times.

#### Development of Scoring Procedures

ETS’ Enterprise Score Key Management (eSKM) system uses scoring procedures specified by psychometricians and provides scoring services. Following scoring of the CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, a series of quality control checks were carried out by ETS psychometricians to ensure the accuracy of each score.

##### Enterprise Score Key Management System Processing

ETS developed two independent and parallel scoring structures to produce students’ scores: the eSKM scoring system, which collected, scored, and delivered individual students’ scores to the ETS reporting system and produced the ETS scores of record; and the parallel scoring system developed by ETS Technology and Information Processing Services (TIPS), which scored individual students’ responses. The two scoring systems independently applied the same scoring algorithms and specifications.

ETS psychometricians verified the eSKM scoring by comparing all individual student scores from TIPS and resolving any discrepancies. This process redundancy is an internal quality control step in place to verify the accuracy of scoring. Students’ scores were reported only when the two parallel systems produce identical results.

If scores did not match, the mismatch would be investigated by ETS’ Psychometrics, Statistics, and Data Science and eSKM teams and resolved. The mismatch could be a result of a Smarter Balanced and CDE decision not to score an item because a problem was identified in a particular item or rubric. ETS applied the problem item notification (PIN) not to score the item through the systematic process in eSKM and a mismatch could be possible, if TIPS were still in the process of applying the PIN in the parallel system when the student score was being compared. This real-time scoring check is designed to continually detect mismatches and track remediation.

ETS’ Centralized Repository Distribution System and Enterprise Service Bus departments collected and parsed .xml files that contained student response data from CAI and sent constructed-response (CR) item responses to ETS and MI for human scoring. After receiving the results of human scoring, eSKM merged student scores from the CAT and PT test components, calculated individual student scores, and generated student scores in the approved statistical extract format on a daily basis. These data extracts were sent to ETS’ Data Quality Services for data validation. Following validation, the student response statistical extracts were made available to the psychometricians.

##### Psychometric Analyses

Psychometricians verified the eSKM scoring by comparing the parallel scoring programs, conducting extensive analyses to resolve any discrepancies, and verifying the accuracy of all student scores and reported results. In particular, psychometricians checked variables such as total scale scores, achievement levels, number of scored items, and performance levels of claims. To investigate discrepancies, theta scores and completeness were also checked; refer to [*7.4 Student Test Scores*](#_Student_Test_Scores) for definitions of these scores. Refer also to section [*12.3 Psychometric Analyses*](#_Psychometric_Analyses_1) for more information on psychometric quality control.

All scores complied with the ETS scoring specifications and the parallel scoring process to ensure the quality and accuracy of scoring and to support the transfer of scores into the database of the student records scoring system before student reports were generated. In addition to parallel scoring for both computer-based and PPT assessments, ETS provided verification of answer keys and item analysis for PPTs.

### Quality Control of Constructed-Response Scoring

#### Team Training and Calibration

Rater qualifications, rater certifications, and daily rater calibrations are all processes used to control the reliability of CR scoring. Raters were led through a training period by trained Assessment and Learning Technology Research & Development staff, content scoring leaders, group scoring leaders, and scoring leaders for an assigned grade level and specific prompt types prior to the annual scoring period. In the training period, raters were trained to appropriately apply the rubrics by using the Smarter Balanced–provided benchmark sample papers.

Trained raters were scheduled to score in four- or eight-hour shifts. Prior to starting a shift, a rater was required to take and pass a calibration test that demonstrated sufficient training in Smarter Balanced scoring criteria and ability to score accurately.

Scoring leaders were qualified raters with the responsibility of providing feedback to raters to provide additional content support and offer corrective mentoring for struggling raters.

Each rater was assigned a secure user ID and password to log on to the scoring system and was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. System access for the rater was restricted to the hours that the rater was scheduled to work.

#### Hand Scoring Verification

##### Criteria for Read-Behinds

Ten percent of responses were scored twice (i.e., “read behind”) to check agreement among raters, although the percentage could vary, depending on item type and reader performance. Scoring leaders read behind raters throughout a shift and entered their own scores on responses that raters had read. Both first and second readings were eligible for read-behind.

A scoring leader reviewed the randomly selected responses after raters submitted scores. Leaders reviewed rater scoring statistics (i.e., interrater reliability, score point distributions, and validity performance) to determine the need for monitoring via read-behinds or additional training. Responses determined to be scored incorrectly during read-behind review could be rescored by leadership and used to inform and instruct raters as a performance improvement strategy.

When a response was selected for a second reading, the corrected score was used for interrater reliability calculation. The original rater’s score was not used for any calculation.

##### Validity Responses

Validity responses were provided randomly as part of the set of “live” responses being scored, so a rater did not know that the response being scored was for validity. These responses were selected from “live” responses by scoring leaders prior to the scoring of the item. Leadership staff identified the response to be used for validity and the system added the response to the validity pool for use during scoring.

All staffing levels were eligible to score second readings. Ten percent of responses were assigned to be read a second time. Second readings were scored independently from the first reading.

Only scorable responses were selected for second readings. Nonscorable (i.e., condition code) responses were not eligible for second readings and so were not included in the calculation of interrater reliability.

The second reading sample was not a stratified random sample. The selection of a second reading response was also not based on the first reading score or any demographic information associated with the response. Instead, responses flagged for second reading were flagged at random by the scoring system for each item identification number.

Second reading scores were used only for statistical analysis to obtain interrater reliability. They were not included in the calculation of the final item score.

#### Artificial Intelligence Scoring Verification

To ensure the quality of machine scoring with artificial intelligence (AI), ETS and MI maintained a quality assurance system where 10 percent of AI-scored items were scored by a human rater and used for agreement sample analysis. More details are presented in subsection [*8.6.4.8 Interrater Agreement*](#_Interrater_Agreement). Also, refer to section [*7.2 Quality Control of Scoring*](#_Quality_Control_of_2) and section [*12.2 Hand Scoring*](#_Hand_Scoring) for more information.

### Quality Control of Paper–Pencil Scoring

If an LEA was approved to administer the PPT version of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, student responses were entered into the Data Entry Interface and scored electronically and by a rater, depending on the item type.

### Quality Control of Reporting

To ensure the quality of CAASPP Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessment results, for both individual student and summary reports, three general areas were evaluated:

1. Comparison of report formats with input sources from the CDE-approved samples
2. Validation of the report data through quality control checks performed by ETS’ Data Quality Services and Center of Reporting & Scoring Services teams, as well as running of all Student Score Reports (SSRs) through ETS’ patented QC Interrogator software, which compares elements of the SSR to acceptable values to identify errors and is used in conjunction with human review to detect errors on every score report batch as part of quality control procedures
3. Proofreading of the quality control and production reports by the CDE and ETS prior to making reports available to the LEA for download in the Test Operations Management System (TOMS) and California Educator Reporting System as well as via the LEA’s student information system

All reports were required to include a single, accurate LEA code, an LEA name, and a school name. All elements conformed to the CDE’s official county/district/school (CDS) code and naming records. From the start of processing through scoring and reporting, the CDS Master File was used to verify and confirm accurate codes and names. The CDE provided a revised LEA Master File to ETS throughout the year as updates became available.

After the reports were validated in accordance with the CDE’s requirements, a set of reports representing all possible grades, content areas, and reporting outcomes was provided to the CDE and ETS for review and approval. Electronic reports were sent on the actual report template to the CDE. The CDE and ETS reviewed and approved the reports after a thorough examination.

Upon the CDE’s approval of the reports generated for the quality control LEAs, ETS proceeded with the first batch of report production. The reviewed set of reports incorporated CDE-selected LEAs and provided the final check prior to generating all reports and making them available electronically for download in TOMS and for student information systems through an application programming interface.

#### Exclusion of Student Scores from Summary Reports

ETS provided the CDE with reporting specifications that documented when to exclude student scores from summary reports. These specifications included the logic for handling submitted assessments that, for example, indicated the student tested but responded to no items, was absent, was not tested because of parent/guardian request, or did not complete the assessment because of illness. The methods for handling other anomalies were also covered in the specifications. These anomalies are described in more detail in [*7.6.2 Special Cases*](#_Special_Cases).

### Quality Control of End-to-End Testing

ETS conducted end-to-end testing prior to the start of the test administration. The purpose of this testing is to verify that all systems, processes, and resources were ready for the operational administration.

#### Computer-based Assessments

ETS employed a number of strategies to verify ongoing systems performance, including monitoring of system availability and system usage. Time was allotted for user acceptance testing to confirm that the systems met requirements and to make identified corrections before final deployment. To accomplish system acceptance and sign-off, ETS deployed systems to a staging area, which mirrors the final production environment, for operational and user acceptance testing. Final approval by the CDE triggered final deployment of the system.

#### Paper–Pencil Tests

The DEI underwent user acceptance testing to ensure that the correct test items were available for a grade-level assessment in the DEI. Then, during testing, information technology personnel monitored daily feeds to ensure the completeness and timeliness of records sent for hand scoring.

### References

American Institutes for Research. (2015). *Smarter Balanced scoring specification: 2014–2015 administration, version 7*.

Educational Testing Service. (2014). *ETS standards for quality and fairness.* Princeton, NJ: Author.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2014). *Hand-scoring rules.* Los Angeles, CA: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2016). *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: 2013–14 technical report.*

## Historical Comparisons

Historical comparisons are performed to identify the trends in student performance and test characteristics over time. Such comparisons are performed for the three most recent administration years of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced test administration—2020–2021, 2018–2019, and 2017–2018. The comparisons include both cross-sectional comparisons for the same grades in different years (with different students) and longitudinal comparisons for the same students in different years (in different grades).

The indicators of student performance include the mean and standard deviation of scale scores and the percentage of students classified into achievement levels for an overall test and into performance levels for claims. Test characteristics are compared by examining the reliability and standard error of measurement (SEM) for each test. Caution should be exercised when reviewing the historical comparisons. The test sample in the 2020–2021 administration was approximately 24 percent of the testing population, which may not represent the population well.

### Student Performance

#### Cross-Sectional Comparisons on the Overall Tests

In cross-sectional comparisons, cohorts of students from the 2017–2018 CAASPP administration are compared to students in the same grades from the 2018–‍2019 and 2020–‍2021 CAASPP administrations. For example, students enrolled in grade three for the 2017–2018 CAASPP administration are compared with students enrolled in grade three for the 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 CAASPP administrations. Note that test results for 2019–2020 are not considered because of small sample sizes that resulted from the suspension of testing statewide.

As noted in table 7.10 in [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1), the reporting scale ranges from 2115 to 2900 for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and from 2190 to 2900 for mathematics. The difference between the two adjacent years in average scale score and percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is the later year’s values minus the previous year’s values for the same grade. For example, in comparing the values from the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 administrations, a positive value indicates an increase from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 and a negative value indicates a decrease. The achievement level percentage may not sum to exactly 100 or to exactly the combined achievement level percentage because of rounding.

##### Summary Statistics

Table 10.A.1 in appendix 10.A contains the number of students assessed, the number of students with valid scores, the means and standard deviations of students’ scale scores in 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021 for each test; as well as the differences in scale scores between 2017–2018 and 2018–2019; and 2018–2019 and 2020–2021.

The three-year performance trend shows improvements of student average scale scores from 2017–2018 to 2020–2021 in high school for both ELA and mathematics, but a decrease from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021 in grade three through grade eight in both content areas. Note that the test sample was only 24 percent of the 2020–2021 testing population and may not represent the population, while the test samples in the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 administrations were full samples and represented the population well.

##### Achievement Levels of Overall Students

Scale score thresholds are used to classify each student into one of four achievement levels: *Standard Not Me*t, *Standard Nearly Met,* *Standard Met,* or *Standard Exceeded*. Refer to table 7.12 in [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1) for the achievement level scale score ranges for each test.

The percentage of students for each achievement level and qualifying for the *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded* levels, as well as the differences in the percentage of the students in *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded* levels between 2017–‍2018 and 2018–‍2019, and 2018–2019 and 2020–2021, are presented in table 10.A.2 in appendix 10.A. There is an increase in the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards from 2016–2017 to 2018–2019 across most grades and content areas, except for grade eight in mathematics; but there is a decrease in the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021, except for grade eleven in ELA and mathematics, where an increase was shown. Note that this information may differ slightly from information found on the California Department of Education (CDE) Test Results for California’s Assessments website because of different dates on which the data was accessed.

##### Scale Score Distributions

Table 10.A.3 through table 10.A.6 in appendix 10.A show the distribution of scale scores observed in 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021 for each grade and content area. Frequency counts are provided for each scale score interval of 30. “N/A” indicates that there is no obtainable scale score in the interval. The scale score ranges for each grade on the vertical scale are those defined by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Refer to table 7.10 in [chapter 7](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1) for the scale score ranges.

##### Achievement Levels of Selected Student Groups

Table 10.A.7 through table 10.A.20 in appendix 10.A provide statistics summarizing student achievement by content area and grade for selected student groups. In the tables, students are grouped by demographic characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, English language fluency, economic status (disadvantaged or not), need for special education services, migrant status, assigned designated supports, and assigned accommodations. The tables show, for each demographic student grouping, the number of students with a valid scale score, scale score means and standard deviations, and the percentage of students in each achievement level, for 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021.

The tables also show the differences in the percentage of *Standard Met* or *Standard Exceeded* between 2017–2018 and 2018–‍2019, as well as between 2018–2019 and 2020–‍2021. All student groups in grades three through eight show a decrease from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021 in ELA and mathematics after an increase from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019. Almost all groups in high school show continuous improvement from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 and from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021 in both ELA and mathematics, except for the student group using designated supports, who show a drop from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021 in both mean scale score and percentages in the *Standard Met* or *Standard Exceeded* achievement levels.

#### Longitudinal Comparisons on the Overall Groups

For longitudinal comparisons, the data is gathered and compared for the same students in 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021. Through vertical scaling, scores on tests at different grade levels of the same content area are placed on a common scale. For Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, reporting scores on a vertical scale allows student progress to be tracked for a particular content area across grade levels.

The difference in average scale scores or in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards is the later year’s (e.g., 2018–2019) values minus the previous year’s (2017–2018) values for the same students. Therefore, a positive value indicates an increase in the later year (e.g., 2018–2019) and a negative value indicates a decrease in the later year (e.g., 2018–2019). Individual achievement level percentages may not sum to exactly 100 or the combined achievement level percentage because of rounding.

For year-to-year comparisons, only the differences between 2018–‍2019 and 2020–2021 and the differences between 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 are presented. The statistics in these tables include only those students who advanced one grade each year and whose scores are available in all three years.

Refer to the *2017–18 CAASPP Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (CDE, 2019) for the comparison of data from the 2017–2018, 2016–2017, and 2015–2016 administrations. If information from comparisons before the 2017–2018 technical report is needed, earlier CAASPP Smarter Balanced technical reports, such as those from 2016–2017 or 2015–2016, are available on the CDE website.

##### Summary Statistics

Table 10.B.1 in appendix 10.B shows the number of students assessed, the number of students with valid scores, the means and standard deviations of students’ scale scores in 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 for each test, as well as the differences in scale scores between 2018–2019 and 2020–2021. Table 10.B.2 presents the same set of statistics as in table 10.B.1, but for all three administration years (2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021), as well as the year-to-year differences in scale scores.

Longitudinal comparisons for the scale scores reveal positive gains for all grades for the two-year and three-year trends. The two-year trend shows that the smallest gain occurs in grades six and eight in mathematics, with an increase in 3 score points. The largest gain occurs in ELA for grades three and five, with an increase of 64 points. The smallest gain for the three-year trend (2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021) occurs in grade eight (grade five in 2017–2018; grade six in 2018–2019; and grade eight for the current administration) in mathematics, with an increase of 30 scale score points. The largest gain occurs in grade seven ELA (grades four, five, and seven), with an increase of 77 scale score points.

Scale score comparisons were based on the Smarter Balanced vertical scale. The comparisons show the magnitude of gains from the previous year to the current year, or from a lower, previous grade level to a current grade level.

On the vertical scale, most students achieved higher in comparison with previous years. Comparing percentages of students in each achievement level is to compare students’ performance against the standards or targets of knowledge and skills at a certain grade level. However, a student achieving positive gains on the vertical score scale does not mean this student met the *Standard Met* or *Standard Exceeded* achievement level.

##### Achievement Levels of Overall Students

The percentage of students for each achievement level and qualifying for the *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded* levels, as well as the differences in the percentage of the students in *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded* between 2018–2019 and 2020–2021, are presented in table 10.B.3 in appendix 10.B. The same information is presented in table 10.B.4 for all three administration years (2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021).

The two-year performance (2018–2019 and 2020–2021) trend in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards shows a decrease for all grades across content areas. The three-year trend (2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021) shows a decrease in grade six (grades three, four, and six) and grade seven (grades four, five, and seven) in mathematics, but there was an increase from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 across grades in ELA and grade eight (grades five, six, and eight) in mathematics.

##### Scale Score Distributions

Table 10.B.5 and table 10.B.7 in appendix 10.B show the distribution of scale scores observed in 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 for the same students per each grade level in ELA or mathematics, respectively. Frequency counts are provided for each scale score interval of 30. The scale score distributions for 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021 are presented in table 10.B.6 and table 10.B.8.

##### Achievement Levels of Selected Student Groups

Table 10.B.9 through table 10.B.16 in appendix 10.B provide statistics summarizing student performance in 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 for the same students by content area and grade for selected groups of students. In the tables, students are grouped by demographic characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, English language fluency, economic status (disadvantaged or not), need for special education services, migrant status, the assignment of designated supports, and the assignment of accommodations.

The tables show, for each student group, the number of students with valid scale scores in 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 as well as the scale score means and standard deviations and the percentage of students in each achievement level. Additionally, the differences in the percentage of *Standard Met* and *Standard Exceeded* between 2018–‍2019 and 2019–2020 are shown. The statistics for three years—2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–2021—are presented in table 10.B.17 through table 10.B.22.

In ELA, the two-year trend from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021 shows that almost all student groups in grades five through eight have positive gains in scale score and negative gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards, except for the English learner (EL) student group. The three-year trend shows positive gains from 2017–2018 to 2020–‍2021 in scale score and also in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 across almost all groups. However, the three-year trend also shows negative gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021.

In mathematics, the two-year trend shows that all groups show positive gains in scale scores and negative gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in grades five through seven, as well as for most groups in grade eight. Some student groups in grade eight, such as the EL, economically disadvantaged, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Migrant, and reclassified fluent English proficient, show negative gains in both scale score and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards. The three-year trend from 2017–2018 to 2020–2021 shows positive scale score gains but negative gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards across almost all student groups and grades, except for grade eight, which shows a positive gain in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards across most groups from 2017–‍2018 to 2018–2019.

### Test Characteristics

The marginal reliabilities and SEMs expressed in theta score units for each test are presented in table 10.C.1 in appendix 10.C.

A reasonably high degree of reliability is consistent over three years, from 2017–2018, 2018–2019, and 2020–‍2021, although reliability decreased slightly in 2020–2021. For all grades and content areas, reliability in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 is in the range of .92 to .93 for ELA and .93 to .95 in mathematics. In 2020–2021, reliability is in the range of .86 to .89 for ELA and .86 to .90 in mathematics. The decrease of reliability was mainly because fewer items were used in the 2020–‍2021 administration with the adjusted, shortened-form blueprints.

Reliabilities are affected by both item characteristics and student characteristics. Refer to subsections [*8.5.2 Marginal Reliability*](#_Marginal_Reliability) and [*8.5.3 Standard Error of Measurement*](#_Standard_Error_of) for the methods used to calculate marginal reliability and SEM, respectively.

### Reference

California Department of Education. (2019). *2017–18 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Smarter Balanced technical report.* California Department of Education website.

### Appendix 10.A: Cross-Sectional Comparisons of the Overall Group and Student Groups on the Overall Tests

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 10.B: Longitudinal Comparison of the Overall Group and Student Groups on the Overall Tests

This content is located in a separate file.

### Appendix 10.C: Comparisons of Test Characteristics

This content is located in a separate file.

## Paper–Pencil Version of Smarter Balanced Assessments

This chapter provides a summary of test assembly, test administration, calibration, and scaling procedures that are specifically applied to the paper–pencil tests (PPTs), as well as the results of the analyses performed on the data for students who took PPTs instead of the computer-based assessments. Analyses include score summaries, item response theory (IRT) parameter values, correlations between claims and between content areas, and the assignment of designated supports and accommodations.

Because there were no grade-level tests with more than three students in the group, no analysis can be conducted and reported for PPTs this year.

### Overview

Braille, large-print, and standard PPT versions of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are made available to local educational agencies that do not have the necessary computer network infrastructure to administer the computer-based tests or for students whose need to take a PPT is documented in a student’s individualized education program or Section 504 plan. The PPT versions contain a fixed set of questions that includes components of the computer-based assessment such as multiple-choice (MC) items, constructed-response (CR) items, and performance tasks (PTs). The assembled PPTs used the Smarter Balanced full-form blueprint that is mentioned in subsection [*2.2.2.1 Operational Items*](#_Operational_Items) and included in appendix 2.A.

PPT versions were available only with prior permission from the California Department of Education (CDE).

Table 11.1 presents the number of students who took the 2020–2021 Smarter Balanced summative PPTs. There were 25 students across grades and content areas who took the PPT versions of the assessments in the 2020–2021 administration, with 12 students testing in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and 13 students testing in mathematics. The largest group testing was in grade eight, where three students took the ELA and mathematics PPTs, respectively.

The next sections in this chapter include descriptions of the methodology and procedures of scoring the Smarter Balanced summative PPTs.

### Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Consistent with the computer-based assessments, designated supports, accommodations (subsections [*5.6.1.1 Universal Tools*](#_Universal_Tools), [*5.6.1.2 Designated Supports*](#_Designated_Supports), and [*5.6.1.3 Accommodations*](#_Accommodations)) and unlisted resources (subsection [*5.6.1.4 Unlisted Resources*](#_Unlisted_Resources_1)) are assigned to individual students based on student need. Because of the extremely small testing sample, the counts and percentage of students that used universal tools cannot be analyzed and reported in the 2020–2021 Smarter Balanced PPT administration.

### Calibration and Scaling

When a Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment paper form was built for the first time, a postequating procedure was conducted by the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), using testing data from that year from PPTs administered from representative member states of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (CRESST, 2015). To produce scores for the PPTs that are on the same scale as the computer-based tests, separate calibrations of the PPT response data were conducted and then scaled to the computer-based item bank. The “new” calibrations for the PPT versions were established by calibrating samples of item response data from the PPT administrations; the “reference” calibrations were based on the Smarter Balanced Online Summative Assessment item bank that was established during the field test.

After the resulting equated item parameters for the summative PPTs were determined, the Smarter Balanced member states used those item parameters to estimate student theta scores using the pattern scoring procedures, and then the theta scores were converted to the scale scores using the same transformation constants that the computer-based tests used. In summary, a postequating was conducted in the first year for a new paper form to scale the item parameters to the computer-based item pool scale based on testing data. After the equated item parameters were obtained in the first year, and when the form was reused in the subsequent years, preequating procedures as used for computer-based tests were used to estimate student scores. The procedures of producing the theta scores and scale scores were the same as those used in computer-based tests. Refer to section [*7.4 Student Test Scores*](#_Student_Test_Scores) for details.

For the purpose of linking the PPT forms to the official reporting scale derived from the computer-based test mode, the PPT item parameter estimates were placed on the reference scale by using a set of anchor items that were not modified. Specifically, these unmodified items indicated these items could appear in either test delivery mode as-is without altering the construct; that is, the item parameter estimates should be invariant across the delivery mode.

The procedure used for equating the Smarter Balanced summative PPTs involved three parts: initial item calibration, anchor item evaluation, and final item calibration. Each of those procedures, as described in the next subsection, was applied to all tests. The calibrations were performed with the flexMIRT® item response modeling software (Cai, 2017).

#### Initial Calibration

The following steps are involved in the initial calibration to obtain item parameter estimates and model goodness-of-fit indices. The generalized partial credit model (GPCM) was applied to both MC items and polytomously scored items. Refer to subsection [*7.4.1 Total Test Scores*](#_Total_Test_Scores) in [*Chapter 7: Scoring and Reporting*](#_Scoring_and_Reporting_1) of this report for the mathematical formula of the GPCM:

1. The parameters of all unmodified items are fixed to the parameter values obtained from the computer-based item pool.
2. The parameters of all modified items are freely estimated.
3. The latent variable density is estimated as an empirical histogram (refer, for example, to Woods, 2007; Houts & Cai, 2013) with estimated mean and variance from the “all” student population, including students taking computer-based tests.

#### Anchor Item Evaluation

The purpose of anchor item evaluation is to select items that function similarly across both computer-based and PPT modes as anchors. By linking tests through these anchor items, PPT results are placed onto the computer-based test scale and scores from the two modes should be comparable.

A series of calibrations identical to the “initial” calibration were performed but with the parameters of one unmodified item at a time freely estimated. The parameters of all other unmodified items were fixed to their prior estimates from the computer-based item pool. As in the initial calibration, the parameters of all modified items were freely estimated, along with the population distribution’s mean, variance, and shape.

To decide whether each unmodified item should be retained or rejected as an anchor in the final calibration for the PPT forms, the parameter estimates from the computer-based item pool administration and the parameter estimates from the initial calibration were used to compute the expected score functions for the two modes of test administration. The two expected score functions—for the computer-based and PPT administrations—were plotted, and differences in item functioning across the two modes were quantified by computing a weighted Area Between the Curves (wABC; refer to Hansen, Cai, Stucky, Tucker, Shadel, & Edelen, 2014). Any items with a wABC value greater than 0.150 were rejected as anchors.

#### Final Calibration

For tests in which any unmodified item was rejected as an anchor, a final calibration was conducted using the approach described in subsection *11.6.1 Initial Calibration* of the *2016–‍17 CAASPP Smarter Balanced Technical Report* (CDE, 2018), except that the parameters of all rejected anchor items were freely estimated. Parameters of the modified items also were freely estimated. The parameter estimates from this final calibration were used in scoring the PPT forms. In this way, PPT version scores were placed on the computer-based test scale.

### Scoring

As in the CAASPP Smarter Balanced computer-based assessments, student item responses in the PPT forms were scored and individual student scores were calculated (i.e., overall scale scores and claims and subscores) based on the scored item responses. The same scoring specifications and procedures as in the computer-based assessments were followed. However, because of the small student sample sizes, caution should be taken when interpreting some of the summary statistics.

#### Number of Students Who Took the 2020*–*2021 Smarter Balanced Paper–Pencil Assessments

Summary data that describes the number of students who took the PPTs is presented in table 11.1. Included in the table are the number of students with valid scores. “Valid score” means the student records were not flagged as “not scored,” and the students were enrolled in the same grade as they were tested.

Table 11.1 Number of Students Who Took CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative PPTs for 2020–2021

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Content Area and Grade** | **No. of Students** |
| ELA 3 | 2 |
| ELA 4 | 2 |
| ELA 5 | 2 |
| ELA 6 | 0 |
| ELA 7 | 1 |
| ELA 8 | 3 |
| ELA 11 | 2 |
| Mathematics 3 | 2 |
| Mathematics 4 | 2 |
| Mathematics 5 | 3 |
| Mathematics 6 | 0 |
| Mathematics 7 | 1 |
| Mathematics 8 | 3 |
| Mathematics 11 | 2 |

#### Item Response Theory Parameter Values

Parameter estimates for the PPT versions of the 2020–2021 CAASPP Smarter Balanced operational items were obtained using the procedure described in section [*11.3 Calibration and Scaling*](#_Calibration_and_Scaling). Summary statistics of these parameter estimates are calculated to show the difficulty and discrimination of the overall test, as well as the difficulty and discrimination of claims; distributions of *b*-value and *a*-value parameter estimates are created to provide more detail. The step parameters for all polytomous items are also presented.

Table 11.A.1 through table 11.A.14 in appendix 11.A present univariate statistics (mean, standard deviation (SD), minimum, and maximum) of the scaled IRT a‑values. For each test, the results are presented for all items in the test and for the items in each claim. Table 11.A.15 through table 11.A.28 present the univariate statistics of the IRT b-values for all items in the test and for the items in each claim.

Table 11.A.29 through table 11.A.35 show PT item statistics in ELA. Table 11.A.36 through table 11.A.42 show PT item statistics in mathematics.

### References

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### Appendix 11.A: Item Response Theory Parameter Estimates

This content is located in a separate file.

## Continuous Improvement

The seventh operational administration of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics occurred in 2020–2021. Throughout the past seven years, continuous efforts have been made to improve the assessments in various ways. This chapter summarizes accomplishments and ongoing improvements for the Smarter Balanced assessments in test delivery and administration, hand scoring, psychometric analyses, location analyses, and accessibility.

Because the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium owns the test design and item development of these assessments, the focus of ETS’ continuous improvement is limited to test administration, scoring and reporting, and analyses.

### ETS Administration and Delivery

#### 2020–2021 Feedback for Continuous Improvement Survey

The CAASPP program annually solicits feedback from CAASPP stakeholders through the 2020–2021 Feedback for Continuous Improvement Survey. Local educational agency (LEA) and test site staff, as well as test administrators and test examiners, were invited to participate in the survey. A total of 1,615 California educators provided specific, actionable insights about their testing experience. This survey gathered information and data from educators who were part of the administration of CAASPP and the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). Its goal was to highlight successes and identify areas for improvement, both immediate and long term.

Overall, California educators continue to express positive experiences in their preparations for CAASPP and the ELPAC. Although the 2020–2021 school year included the new remote testing mode, educators also felt that the resources and training materials they were given were useful in preparing them and their students for test administration. Their feedback generally described smooth preparation, training, support, and assessment administration experiences. Educators provided valuable feedback for potential improvements to future administrations of CAASPP and the ELPAC by reporting some lessons they learned in 2020–2021.

All users were asked whether they would be interested in continuing the use of an adjusted, shortened form for the Smarter Balanced for ELA and mathematics assessments. Percentages of individuals associated with the following user roles responded “Yes”:

* Eighty-four percent of LEA CAASPP coordinators
* Seventy-nine percent of CAASPP test site coordinators
* Seventy-four percent of test administrators

Refer to the *2020–21 CAASPP and ELPAC Feedback for Continuous Improvement Survey and Focus Groups Report* for detailed information (California Department of Education [CDE], 2021).

### Hand Scoring

#### Documenting Summative Assessment Scoring Activities

Continuous improvements that occurred in 2020–2021 included that rater agreement and validity statistics for rater agreement were monitored each week. Scoring leaders provided feedback to ETS Assessment and Learning Technology Research & Development to determine what adjustments to training or samples were to be made.

Although volumes were decreased in 2020–2021, the following scheduled improvements were implemented; full evaluation will take place during the 2021–2022 administration to measure success.

For the 2021–2022 CAASPP Smarter Balanced administration, ETS will use standardized training to assist the scoring leader in utilizing the performance indicator panels, which allows easier access to quantitative feedback regarding individual raters. Improved training will be conducted via online learning courses, as opposed to the WebEx sessions used previously. Online learning courses provide the following expected benefits:

* Standardized explanation on what information is available within the performance indicator panel, as well as how to use the information
* Standardized format for providing feedback to individual raters to ensure the area of improvement needed is clear and consistent regardless of which scoring leader may be monitoring an individual rater on any given day
* Automatic restriction of scoring leaders from monitoring raters until training requirements have been satisfied (previously done manually)

#### Documenting and Revisiting Summative Assessment Item Flagging Criteria

At least 10 percent of the ELA and mathematics responses are scored independently by a second reader each year. Of these, the statistics for the interrater reliability were calculated for all items at all grades. To determine the reliability of scoring, ETS examined the percentage of perfect agreement and adjacent agreement between the two readers. The item-level quadratic weighted kappa (QWK) statistic was calculated to reflect the level of improvement beyond the chance level in the consistency of scoring in [chapter 8](#_Analyses).

Since the 2019–2020 administration, the item flagging criterion was raised from the QWK at 0.2 established by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced, 2016) to 0.7 as suggested by Williamson, Xi, and Breyer (2012). Refer to subsection [*7.2.4 Interrater Reliability Results*](#_Interrater_Reliability_Results) for detailed information on flagging criteria.

#### Monitoring, Documenting, and Evaluating Rater Qualifications to Industry Standards

Starting with this current technical report, ETS documents rater qualification in subsection [*7.2.1.2 Quality Control Related to Raters*](#_Quality_Control_Related) and shares reports with the CDE on the counts of California educators and California residents participating in both the existing rater pool and as potential raters. Systemically, ETS Human Resources analyzes the data received in its application process and uses the answers to these questions to support the development of a strong, qualified workforce.

In 2020–2021, ETS updated and documented the qualifications of the rater pools in subsection [*7.2.1.2.1 Rater Qualification*](#_Rater_Qualification). Documentation of the qualifications of the rater pool will be produced annually.

### Psychometric Analyses

#### Scoring Verification Process

Continued improvements for item flagging for the quality assurance procedures were conducted in the 2020–2021 administration.

The *p*-value for item flagging was changed to a range of [0.03, 0.97], from [.05, 0.95], to avoid more type I errors. In addition, polytomous items will be flagged if any one of the scoring categories has less than 3 percent of responses.

* An average theta was added to a flagged item when results were sent to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. When a polytomous item was flagged, its historical performance in the previous year was included for a comparison. The corresponding average theta for the group in the previous year was included.
* ETS notified the Smarter Balanced psychometric team two weeks before ETS sent the list of flagged items that required Smarter Balanced’s review, giving Smarter Balanced sufficient time to identify appropriate assessment development staff who could be made available to perform timely content reviews.

In the 2020–2021 administration, the ETS psychometric team delivered flagged items and comprehensive information on the flagged items to Smarter Balanced for verification in a timely manner. Also, a memorandum with information about the flagged items was sent to the CDE for review and approval.

Before Smarter Balanced test scores were released, ETS, the CDE, and Smarter Balanced ensured all scores reported were based on quality items.

#### The Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement for the Smarter Balanced Adjusted, Shortened-Form Blueprint

In the 2020–2021 administration, the Smarter Balanced adjusted, shortened-form blueprint was implemented. The average conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) for each scale score generated based on the Smarter Balanced full-form blueprint was not useful. Based on the required item length in the adjusted blueprint, the ETS psychometric team used the 2018–2019 testing data and estimated the average CSEMs for the 2020–‍2021 administration. The average CSEMs are reported in table 8.3 and table 8.4 as well as figure 8.E.1 through figure 8.E.14 in appendix 8.E.

### Summary of Location Analyses

ETS investigated testing locations to evaluate whether assessment flexibilities, such as in-person or remote testing, impacted the comparability of student test performance. Additional goals of the investigation were to evaluate the differences in the testing experience for students who were assessed remotely in relation to students who were assessed in person and to evaluate the differences in the reliabilities and standard errors of measurement for the adjusted Smarter Balanced test forms in relation to the full-length test form.

### Accessibility

Like all CAASPP assessments, the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are administered using the test delivery system (TDS) created by Cambium Assessment, Inc., for the Smarter Balanced assessments. As such, implementation of new computer-based universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are provided by Smarter Balanced (Smarter Balanced, 2020) and aligned with the TDS.

The following changes will be implemented during the 2020–2021 Smarter Balanced administration:

* The text-to-speech resource will include a new button on the text editor toolbar that permits students to hear a constructed response (CR) after typing it in.
* Speech-to-text will be available as an embedded accommodation within the TDS. It will not require use of external software or permissive mode.
* The turn off any universal tools embedded designated support will be indicated in the Test Administrator Interface
* The Smarter Balanced for Mathematics designated support of Translations (Spanish stacked) will be modified to Translations (Spanish stacked–dual language).
* Braille hybrid adaptive test content will be delivered in Unified English Braille (UEB) with Nemeth math code (contracted and uncontracted) and UEB with UEB Math (Technical) code (contracted and uncontracted).
* Speech-to-text will be embedded within the student testing interface for CR items. Third-party applications will no longer be required.
* Text-to-speech for CR items will be added. This resource will allow a student’s response to be read back using text-to-speech.

### References

California Department of Education. (2021). *2020–21 CAASPP and ELPAC feedback for continuous improvement survey and focus groups report*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

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Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2016). *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: 2013–14 technical report.* Los Angeles, CA: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. (2020). *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, accessibility, and accommodations guidelines.* Los Angeles: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

1. This definition was retrieved from the Child Care Reporting--Child is English Learner web page on the CDE website. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Data for 2020–2021 was retrieved from the *CalEdFacts* web page on the CDE website. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This definition was retrieved from the CDE California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) web page on the CDE website. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. This technical report is based on the version of the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* that was available during the 2020–2021 CAASPP administration. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The *Crosswalk* has since been replaced with the Accessibility Strategies web page on the Tools for Teachers website. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Smarter Balanced blueprints describe that three WER items are worth 0–10 points, including one item with 2 points and two items with 4 points each. The scoring specifications from Smarter Balanced instruct combining the two 4-point items to take the average of the two for scoring. As a result, the total WER items are worth 0–6 points. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The LOTs and HOTs were revised slightly by the CDE in 2020 based on the LOTs and HOTs set by Smarter Balanced in 2015 to avoid the accumulation of LOTs and HOTs. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Note that the information in this technical report may differ slightly from information found on the CDE Test Results for California’s Assessments website because of different dates on which the data was accessed. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)