Santa Barbara
County Education Office
Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent

Overview of English Language Arts State Assessments

Santa Barbara County Board of Education
December 12, 2025

Ellen Barger
Associate Superintendent, C&I

Overview of Today's Session

Santa Barbara County Education Office
Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent

CONTENT

What is tested?
(A snapshot of
3rd grade Reading test)

Public Reporting

Quantitative Scores reported
in 2 ways

Perspective

Additional Data Displays
(Correlation: poverty and literacy w/
Bright Spots)

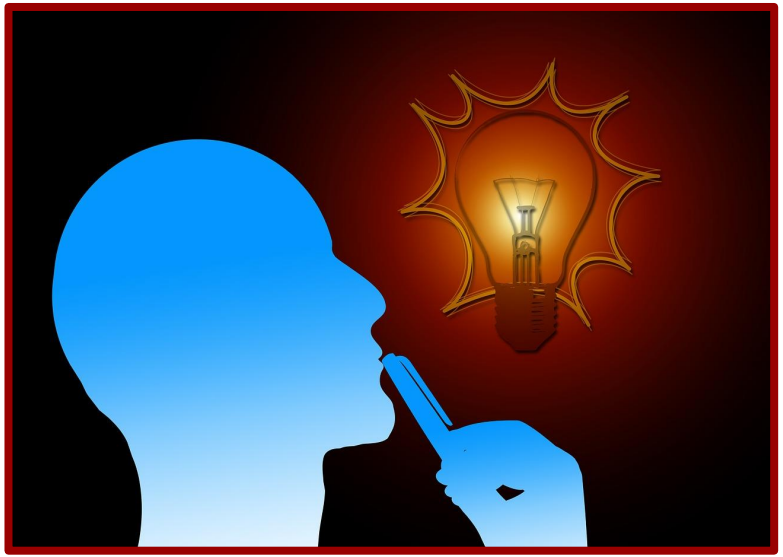
State and Local Supports

Brief overview of State and
SBCEO supports

What does the Smarter Balanced ELA Assessment Test?

Santa Barbara
County Education Office
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Pause: Literacy Scores…????



When you hear: ***"xx% of our students are meeting standard in ELA/ literacy,"***

What does that mean to you?

What do you think students are being asked to do?

CLAIMS



Overall Claim for Grades 3–8

"Students can demonstrate progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy."

Overall Claim for Grade 11

"Students can demonstrate college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy."

R	**Claim #1 – Reading** "Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts."
W	**Claim #2 – Writing** "Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences."
SL	**Claim #3 – Speaking and Listening** "Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences."
RI	**Claim #4 – Research/Inquiry** "Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information."

Contribute to the overall performance claim



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Reading Standards are Assessed in Reading & Research/Inquiry

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CA State Assessments for Literacy

	Current	Former
CONTENT	CA Common Core State Standards for Literacy (2010)	1998 CA ELA Standards
INSTRUMENTS	SMARTER Balanced Summative Literacy Assessment (2015 - present) Grades 3-8,11	CAHSEE(2002 - 2015) HS graduation requirement CST: CA Standards Test ELA (2003 - 2014) Grades 2-11

Reading/ ELA (former)

OLD CAHSEE - CA High School Exit Exam

All HS Sophomores used to take it; Graduation Requirement.

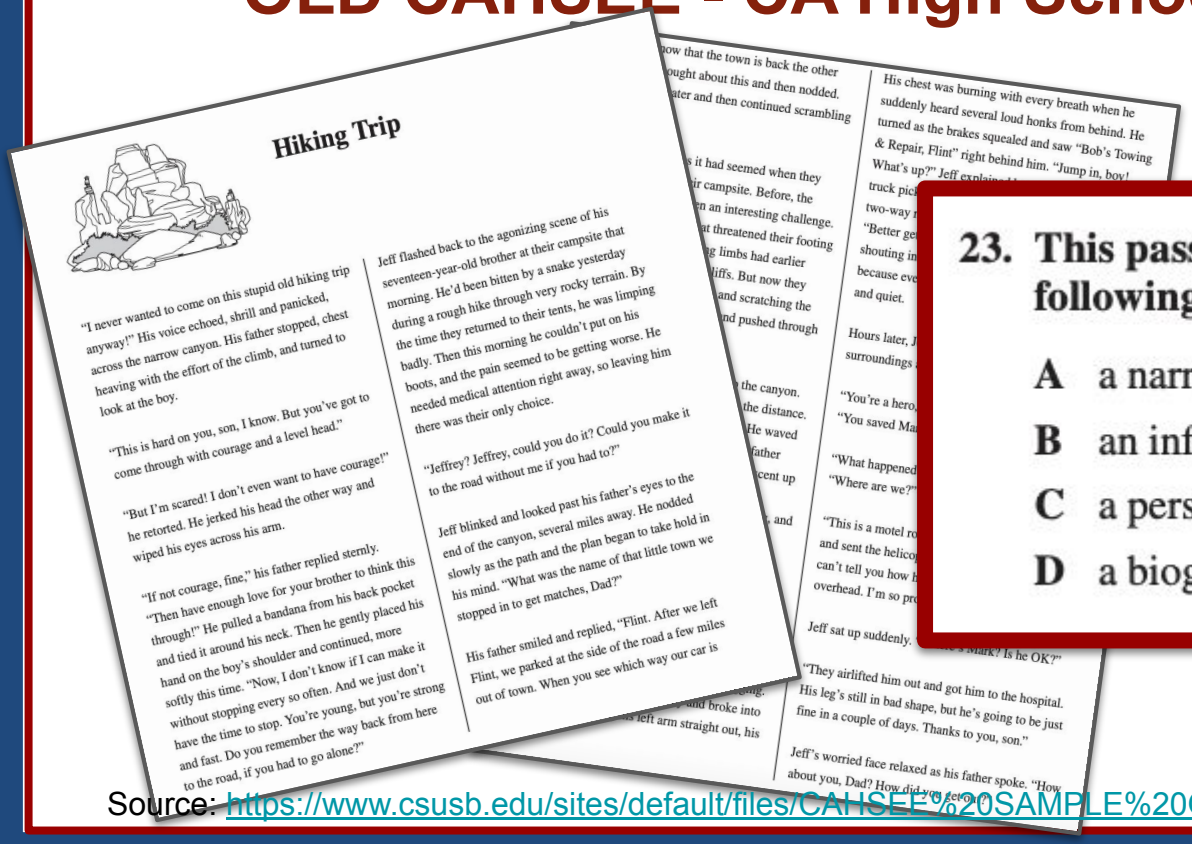
Based on the 1998 ELA 8th and 10th grade standards
The ELA portion had *80 multiple choice questions and 1-2 essays*
Reading passages: most were approximately 250 - 800 words
MC: 4 responses: A, B,C,D; No penalty for guessing
60% correct to pass

By 2010, 81% of 10th graders passed on the first try.
Suspended in 2015

Reading

Old Sample Items for High School

OLD CAHSEE - CA High School Exit Exam



Hiking Trip

"I never wanted to come on this stupid old hiking trip anyway!" His voice echoed, shrill and panicked, across the narrow canyon. His father stopped, chest heaving with the effort of the climb, and turned to look at the boy.

"This is hard on you, son, I know. But you've got to come through with courage and a level head."

"But I'm scared! I don't even want to have courage!" he retorted. He jerked his head the other way and wiped his eyes across his arm.

"If not courage, fine," his father replied sternly. "Then have enough love for your brother to think this through!" He pulled a bandana from his back pocket and tied it around his neck. Then he gently placed his hand on the boy's shoulder and continued, more softly this time. "Now, I don't know if I can make it without stopping every so often. And we just don't have the time to stop. You're young, but you're strong and fast. Do you remember the way back from here to the road, if you had to go alone?"

Jeff flashed back to the agonizing scene of his seventeen-year-old brother at their campsite that morning. He'd been bitten by a snake yesterday during a rough hike through very rocky terrain. By the time they returned to their tents, he was limping badly. Then this morning he couldn't put on his boots, and the pain seemed to be getting worse. He needed medical attention right away, so leaving him there was their only choice.

"Jeffrey? Jeffrey, could you do it? Could you make it to the road without me if you had to?"

Jeff blinked and looked past his father's eyes to the end of the canyon, several miles away. He nodded slowly as the path and the plan began to take hold in his mind. "What was the name of that little town we stopped in to get matches, Dad?"

His father smiled and replied, "Flint. After we left Flint, we parked at the side of the road a few miles out of town. When you see which way our car is

23. **This passage is an example of which of the following genres of writing?**

A a narrative short story

B an informational text

C a persuasive essay

D a biographical essay

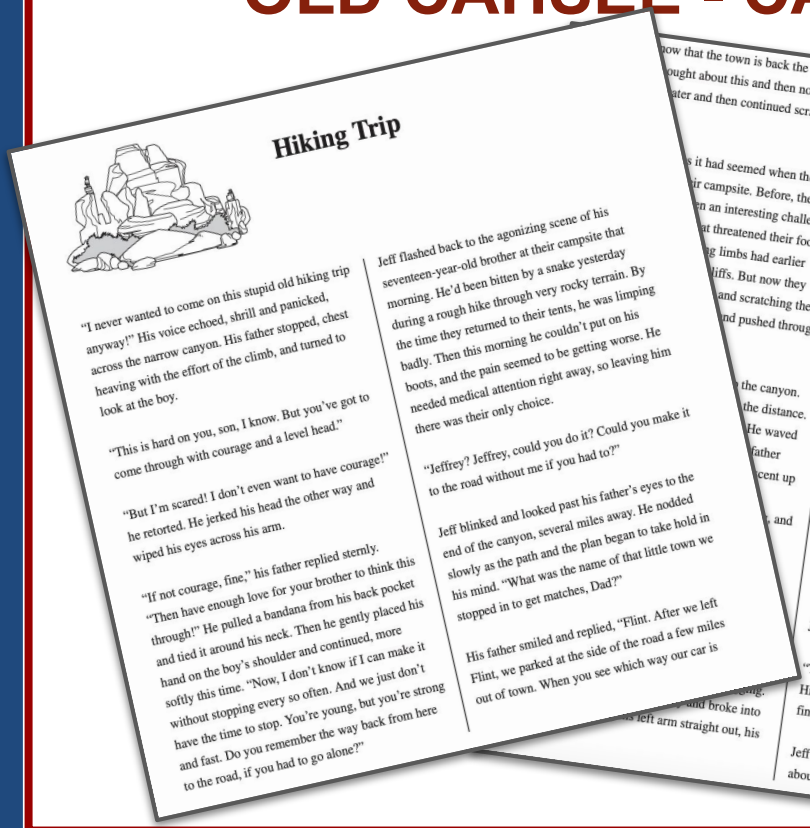
Identify the Genre

Source: https://www.csusb.edu/sites/default/files/CAHSEE%20SAMPLE%20QUESTION%20%281%29.pdf

Reading

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24. **Which of the following sentences BEST explains Jeff's biggest problem in the passage?**

A He needed to face his fear of losing his father's respect.

B He needed to find someone to take him to the town of Flint.

C He needed to climb the rock-covered hill to get to the top.

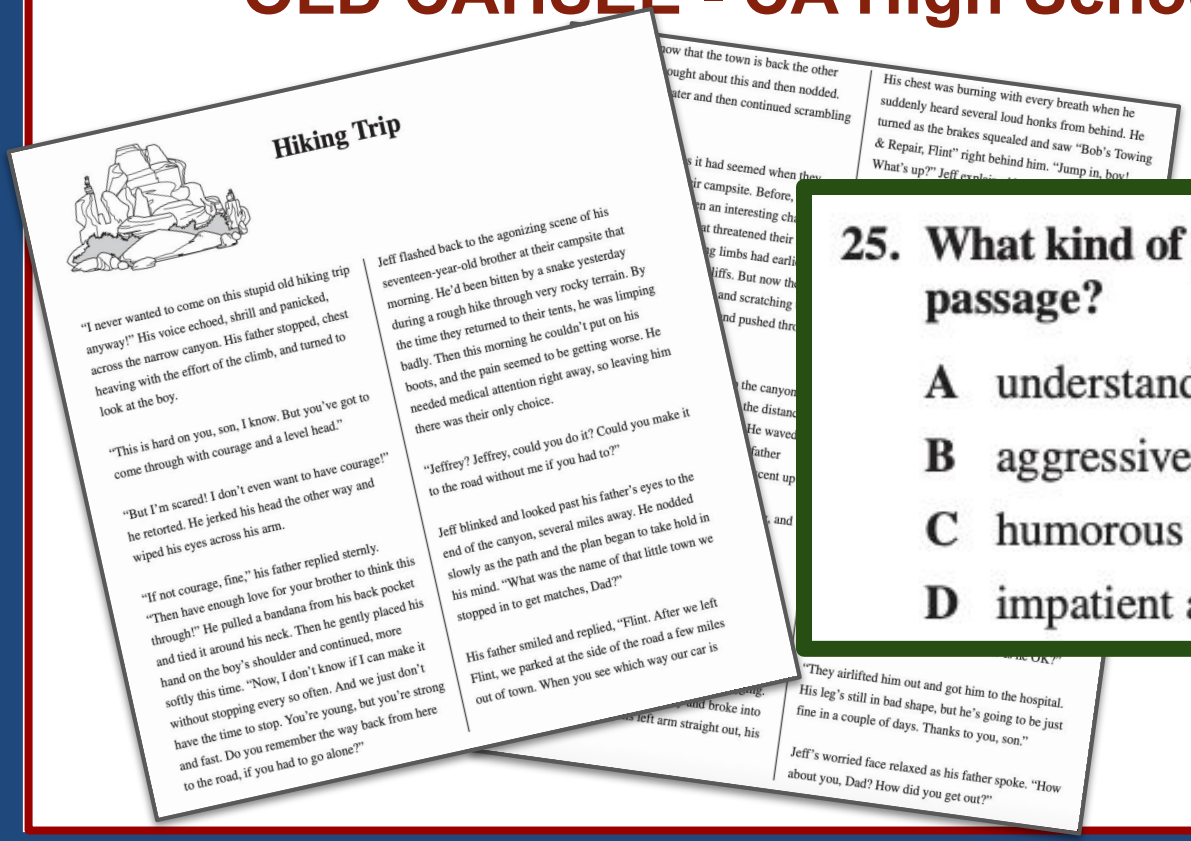
D He needed to face his fear in order to help his brother.

Conflict/Plot

Reading

Old Sample Items for High School

OLD CAHSEE - CA High School Exit Exam



25. What kind of person is Jeff's father in the passage?

A understanding and motivating

B aggressive and annoying

C humorous and entertaining

D impatient and anxious

Character Trait

Reading Old Sample Items for 3rd grade

OLD CST - CA Standards Test

Short piece of text

Frog and Coyote's Race

A Native-American Tale

1 One afternoon, Coyote went hunting. He caught a mouse, and later, a squirrel. As a fat rabbit hopped by, Coyote grabbed him too and started home to cook his supper.

2 Suddenly, a large frog landed in front of him. Coyote pounced and pinned Frog to the ground.

3 Frog thought quickly ...me up with a plan. "Brother Coyote," he cal... ...ot eat me today!"

4 ...houldn't I help myself to such ...

...u," Frog stated. ...oyote's ears twitched. "A ... continued. "You and I will race. If you win, then ...ay eat me."



7 Coyote was never able to pass up dares, refuse bets, or miss a race. He agreed and loped away swiftly to enjoy his dinner. Frog hurried to the lake.

8 There he told his friends of his bet with Coyote. They laughed, knowing one little frog could never win against such a large, strong coyote. Frog hushed them and explained his clever plan. With some help, it was certain that Coyote would lose.

9 In the morning, the animals gathered to watch as Coyote and Frog agreed on the course they would run. They were to start at the large stone and circle all the way around the lake. The first one back to the stone would be the winner. When the sun reached the noonday mark, they were off. Coyote sprinted as quickly as he could. Frog bounded into the grass and waited. Coyote looked behind him. Seeing no sign of Frog, Coyote was sure he would win. As Coyote was beginning to tire, Frog's look-alike buddy jumped onto the course from behind an alder tree ahead. Coyote was surprised to see what he thought was Frog, and ran even faster, determined to win. Coyote dashed past him and called, "You may be fast, but I'm faster. I'll wait at the finish line to eat you up, Frog!"

10 When Coyote came in sight of the finish line, Frog had emerged from his hiding place and easily hopped across the line. "You may be fast, Coyote, but I've managed to beat you!" Frog joyfully called out. Silently, he added, "With the help of my friends."

11 Coyote went home puzzled and hungry again.

4 option multiple choice

10 **Read this sentence from the passage.**

> Coyote laughed loudly, "Why shouldn't I help myself to such a tasty morsel?"

In this sentence, you can tell that a morsel is something

A to eat.
B to chase.
C to laugh at.
D to help out.

CSR01546.230

11 **Which word BEST describes Coyote in this passage?**

A weak
B foolish
C afraid
D tricky

CSR01550.230

12 **What is Frog's problem in this passage?**

A He is hungry.
B He is in danger.
C He has no friends.
D He thinks too slowly.

CSR01544.230

13 **How does ... passage?**

A He hid...
B He runs away.
C He outsmarts Coyote.
D He becomes friends with Coyote.

CSR01545.230

14 **This passage teaches readers that it is better to be**

A fast than slow.
B big than little.
C a rabbit than a mouse.
D clever than strong.

CSR01542.230

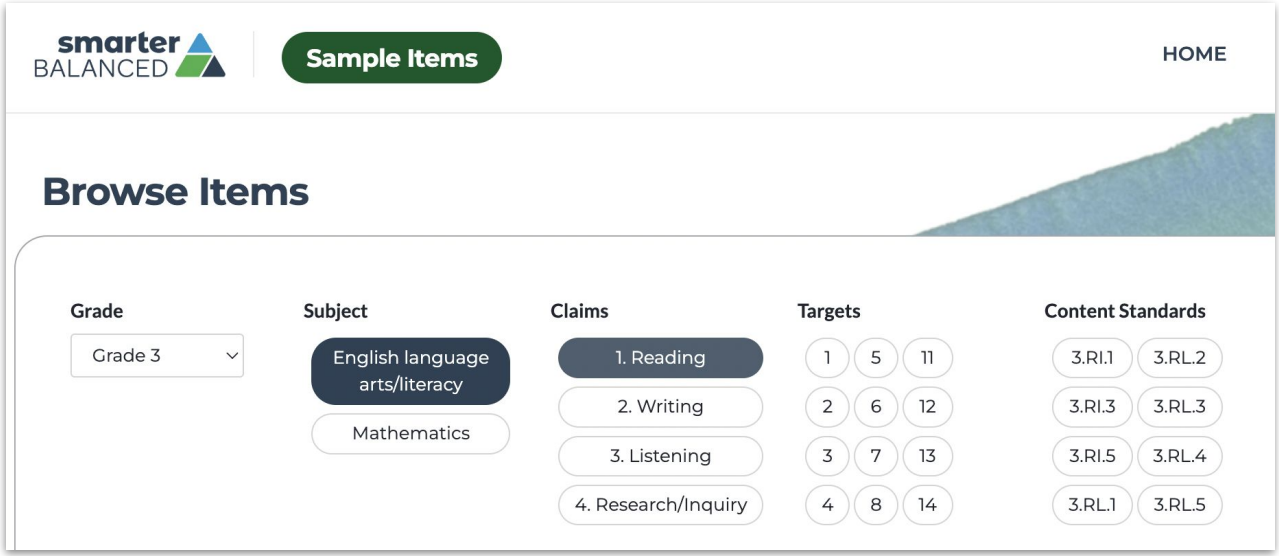
Basic Comprehension

Source: 2007 CDE Released Test Questions



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Reading Standards are Assessed in Reading & Research/Inquiry

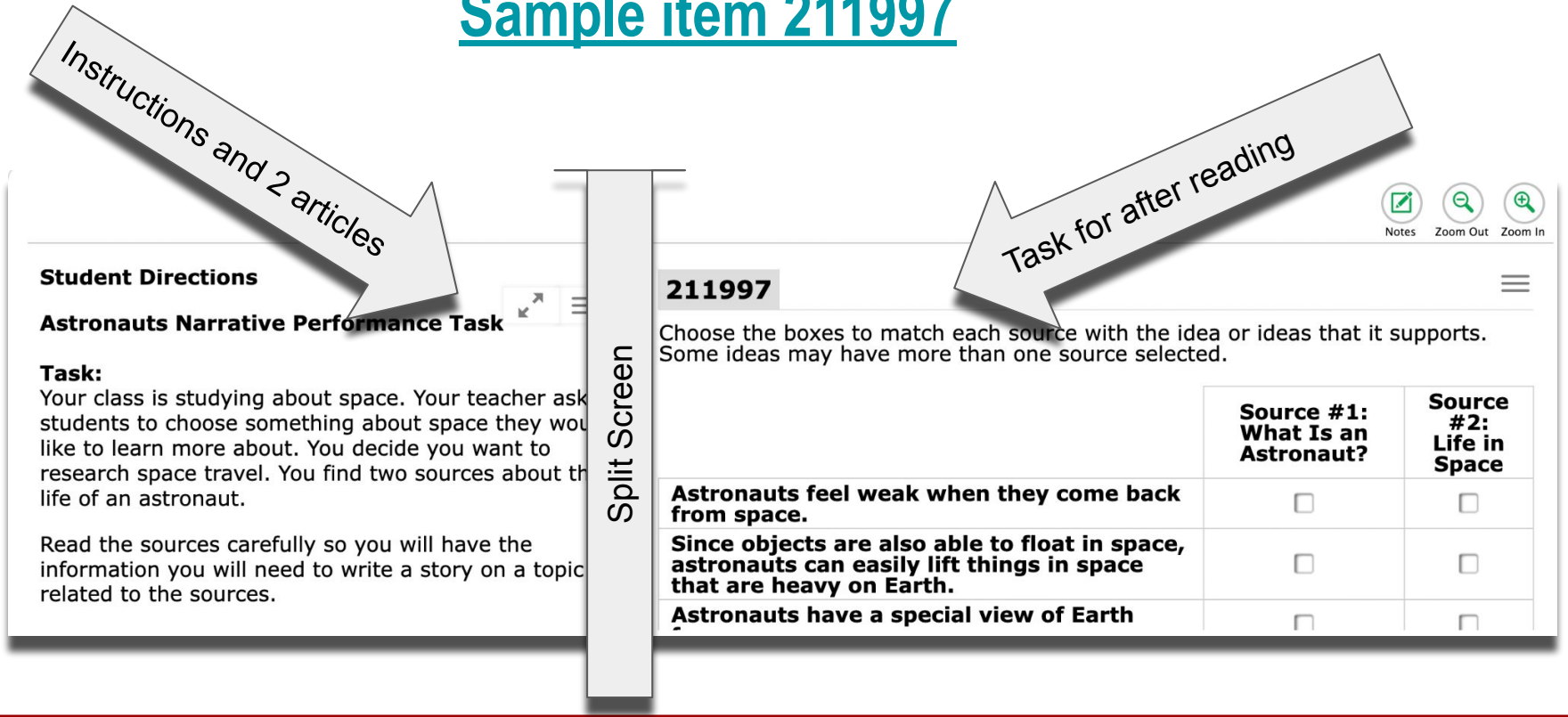


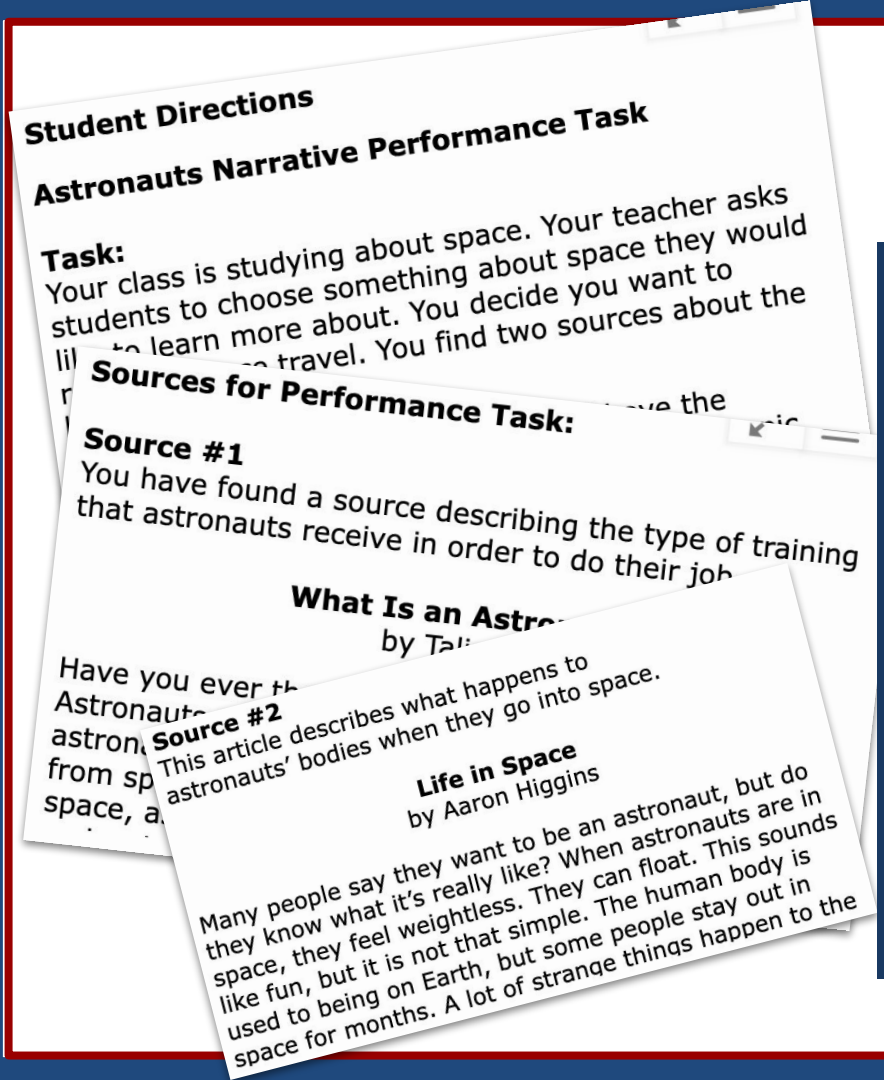
3rd grade Research and Inquiry

Sample item 211997

RI 3rd grade Research and Inquiry

Sample item 211997





3rd grade

Some elements of the READING

- Length of Passages (1017 words)
- Sentence Complexity
- Reading level (Flesch-Kincaid) is 4.5
- Background knowledge - gravity, scuba, circulation of blood and body systems, etc.
- Language Demands of the Instructions; Shift in POV
- Computer Scrolling

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ELA Assessment Scores

Released in 2 different ways each fall

Learning : 2024-25 school year

Assessment : Spring 2025

Public Score Release : September 2025
(% achievement levels)

CA Dashboard Release : November 2025
(Average Distance from standard)

Results from assessment instruments are used to make **CLAIMS** about what students know and are able to do

Quantitative scores are translated into **qualitative descriptors** of **performance,** intended to describe **achievement**

CLAIMS



Overall Claim for Grades 3–8

"Students can demonstrate progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy."

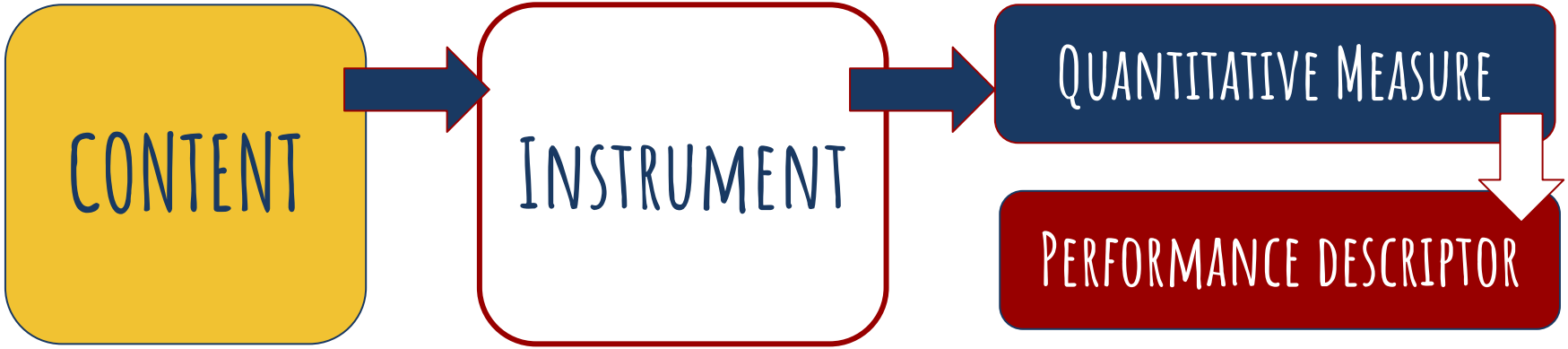
Overall Claim for Grade 11

"Students can demonstrate college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy."

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Contribute to the overall performance claim

Results from assessment instruments are used to make CLAIMS about what students know and are able to do



SEPTEMBER

ELA/ Literacy

CONTENT

Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Language, Research, & Inquiry

Instrument

smarter BALANCED

Smarter Balanced Assessment (Grades 3-8, 11)

Scale Score

(Scales vary by grade)

Quantitative Measure

Performance descriptor

One of 4 levels

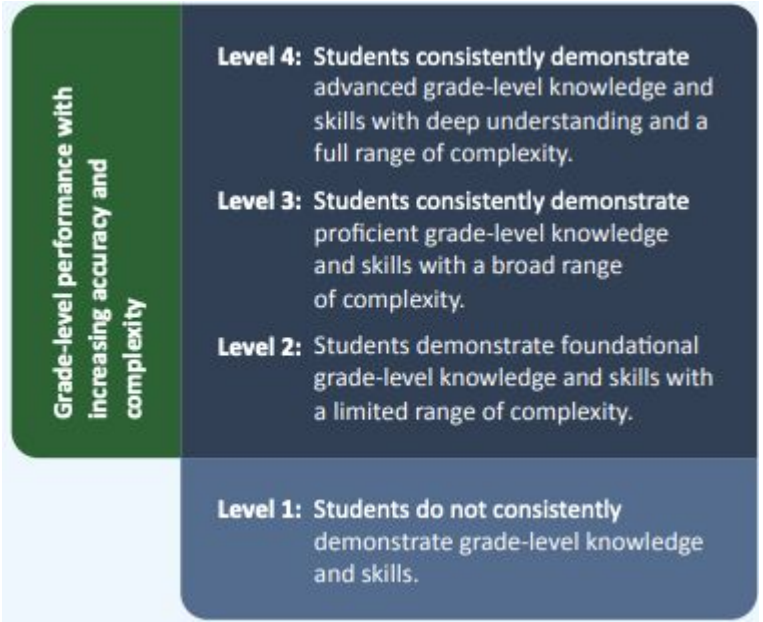
Overall Claim

Composite Achievement Level Descriptors

2026 Descriptors *(2025 Descriptors)*

4	**Advanced** *(Standard Exceeded)*
3	**Proficient** *(Standard Met)*
2	**Developing** *(Standard Nearly Met)*
1	**Minimal** *(Standard Not Met)*

smarter BALANCED



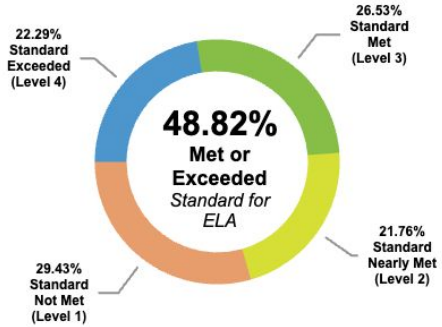
Overall Claim

Composite Levels for Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Language, Research, and Inquiry

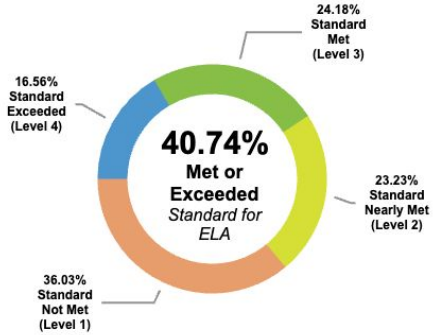
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2025

California



SB County



Source: https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/caaspp/

ELA Assessment Scores were Released Again on the Dashboard (November 13, 2025)

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November

ELA/ Literacy

CONTENT

Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Language, Research, & Inquiry

Instrument

smarter BALANCED

Smarter Balanced Assessment (Grades 3-8, 11)

Scale Score

(Scales vary by grade)

Quantitative Measure

Performance descriptor

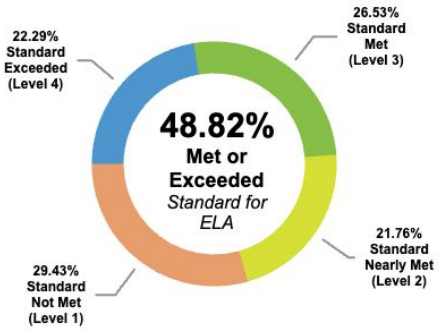
Average Distance from Standard

September

Performance descriptor

Achievement Level

Percent in each level



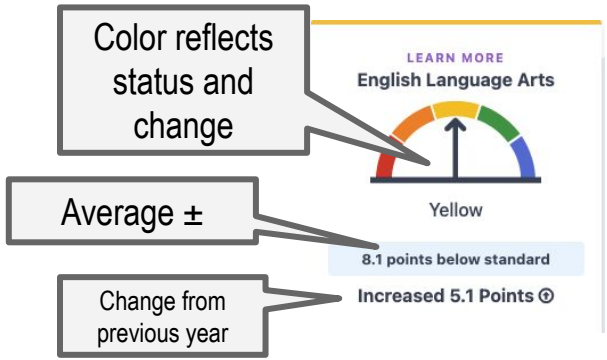
Purpose - Results for Analysis

November

Performance descriptor

Distance from Standard

Average Distance ±



Purpose - Results for Accountability

Analyzing, Interpreting, and Using the Assessment Results

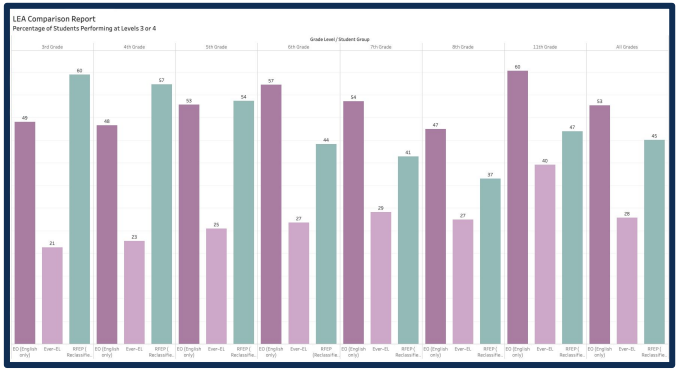
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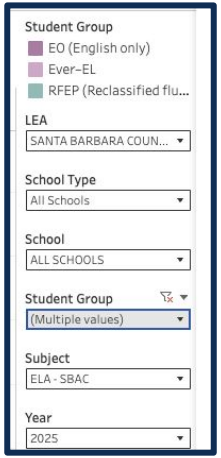
Data Tools, Supports, and Displays

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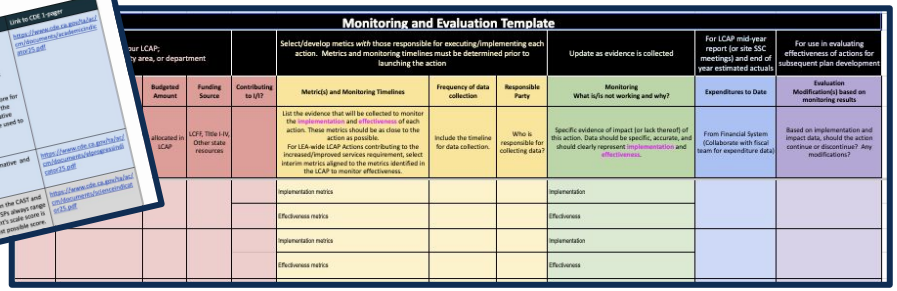
SBCEO C&I Creates Custom, Dynamic Search and Display Tools for our LEAs











Tools and Supports for Analysis and Action

Making Meaning of the Data Correlation and Bright Spots

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Correlation between Poverty and Literacy in Schools

Santa Barbara County Education Office
Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent

Bright Spots

These Schools Are Beating the Odds in Teaching Kids to Read

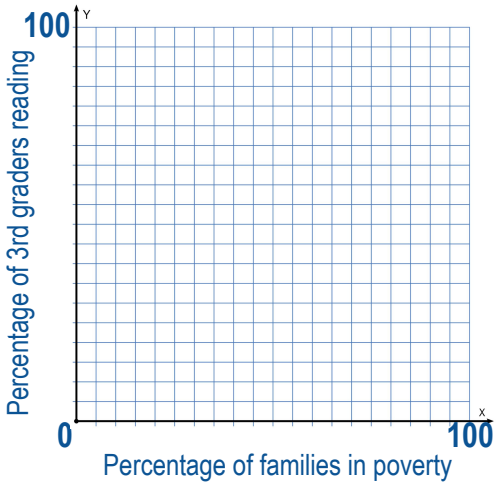
New analysis compares literacy vs. poverty rates for 10,000 districts, 42,000 schools and 3 million kids. Is your school a Bright Spot?

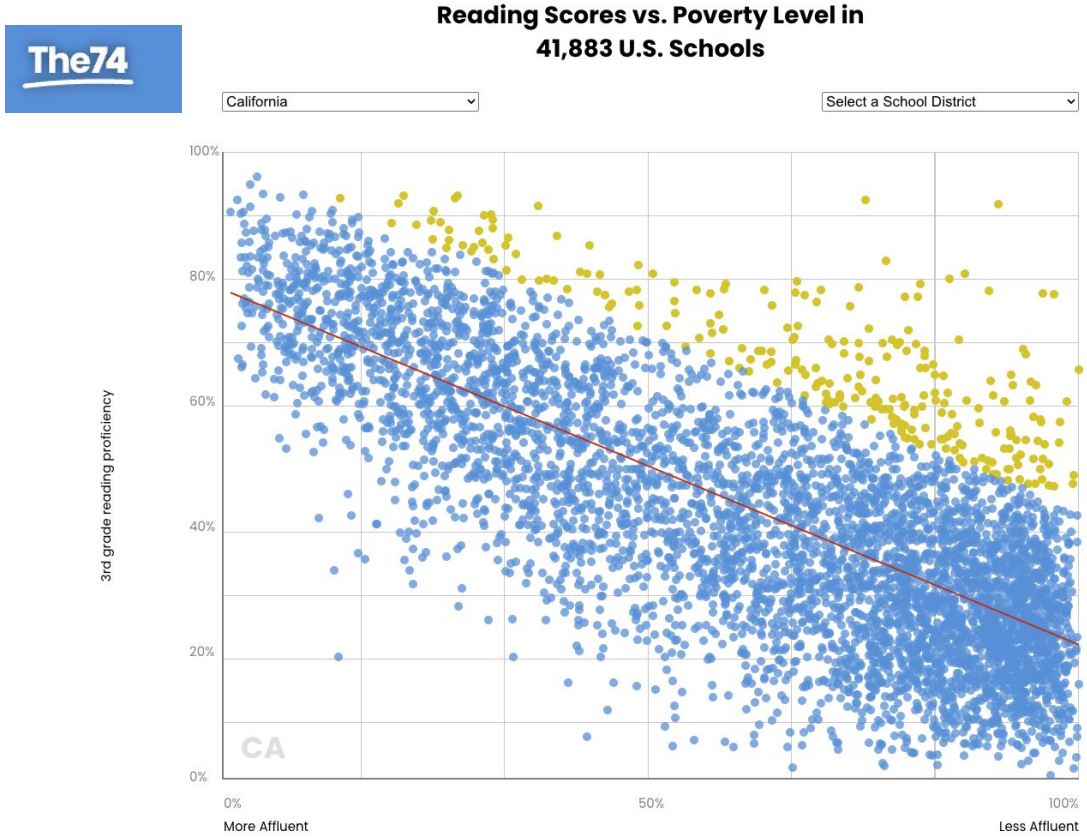


Article by Chad Aldeman November 2025
Data tool by Eammon Fitzmaurice

https://www.the74million.org/article/these-schools-are-beating-the-odds-in-teaching-kids-to-read

Correlation between Poverty and Literacy in Schools

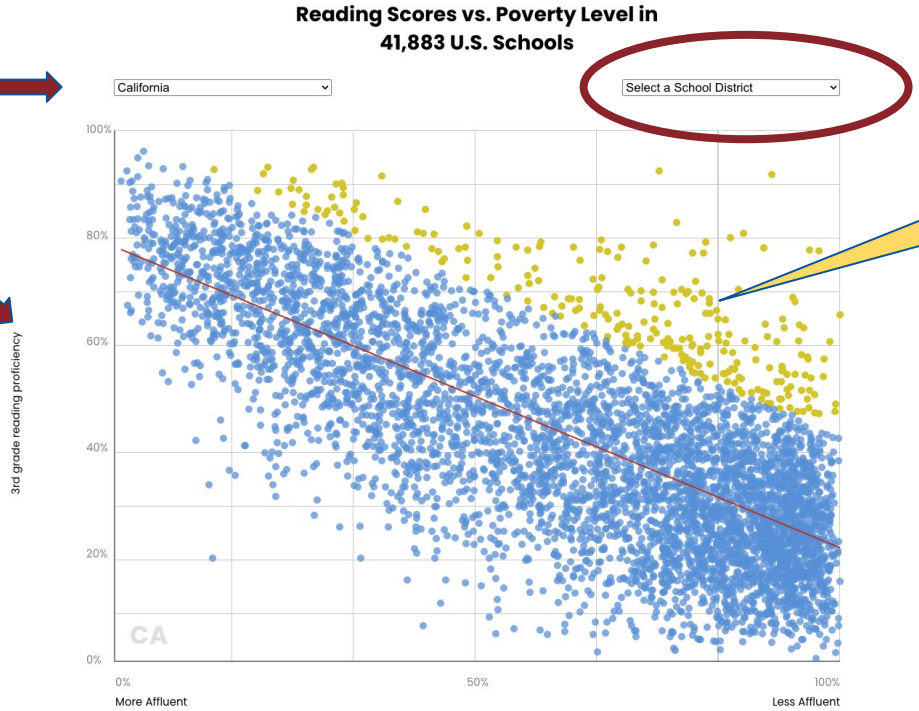




https://www.the74million.org/article/these-schools-are-beating-the-odds-in-teaching-kids-to-read

Correlation between Poverty and Literacy in Schools

Each state has its own measure of “3rd grade reading proficiency” (SBAC in CA)



Positive Outliers

Any school above the line - better than predicted

Any school below the line - worse than predicted

https://www.the74million.org/article/these-schools-are-beating-the-odds-in-teaching-kids-to-read

Bright Spots - Beating the Odds

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Franklin Elementary

School District: Santa Barbara Unified

Poverty Level: 90% | Students Tested: 57

Reading Proficiency

Actual: 49%

Expected: 27%

Washington Elementary

School District: Santa Barbara Unified

Poverty Level: 45% | Students Tested: 58

Reading Proficiency

Actual: 76%

Expected: 52%

Aliso Elementary

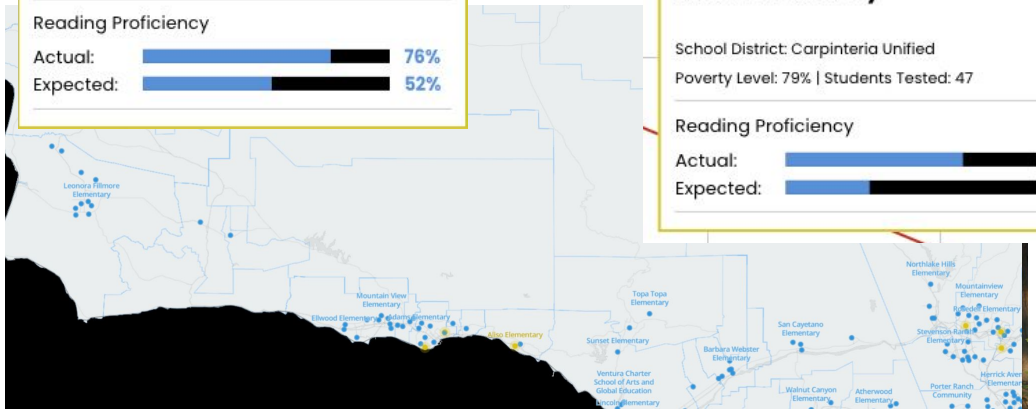
School District: Carpinteria Unified

Poverty Level: 79% | Students Tested: 47

Reading Proficiency

Actual: 70%

Expected: 33%



https://www.the74million.org/bright-spots-us-literacy-map/#

District Article and interactive map

Which School Districts Do the Best Job of Teaching Kids to Read? – The 74

Hope Elementary

Poverty Level: 25% | Enrollment: 229

Reading Proficiency

Actual: 66%

Expected: 28%

Hope Elementary

The74

A Sampling of Support: State and Local Investments in Literacy

Santa Barbara County Education Office
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[The Golden State Literacy Plan]

Current Major California Literacy Initiatives

Established but not yet implemented
Funding Allocated
Development/Implementation Period
Ongoing Impacts

COVID-19 Pandemic State of Emergency

Where the state currently is in implementation

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
California Dyslexia Initiative ($4 million)										
UCSF Dyslexia Initiative ($28.7 million)										
Federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant ($37.5 + $38 million)										
Early Literacy Support Block Grant ($50 million)										
Expert Lead in Literacy ($3 million)										
Learning Acceleration Grant ($50 million)										
Reading Instruction and Intervention Grant ($10 million)										
Strengthen Literacy Preparation for Teacher Candidates (SB 488)										
Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists ($225 million)										
Literacy Coaches/Reading Specialists Educator Training Grant ($25 million)										
Universal Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties - All K-2 Grade Students										
Additional Funding for Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists ($250 million)										
State Literacy Roadmap										

Literacy Coaches & Reading Specialists Grant
K-3 ≥ 95% Undup. School-level (refuse by Sept. 30) $$

Student Support & Professional Development Discretionary Block Grant
Tk-12; Based on ADA; District-level; Allocations Pending $$

LREBG
Tk-12; Evidence-based intervention; Included in LCAP $$

$$= Grant Funds

= Learning Resources

= Teaching Resources

2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30

RDRS Funding
K-2;pending $$

Literacy Professional Development Programs
Tk-5; Based on FTE Tk-5;
Approved programs posted by Sept. 30, 2026 $$

ELA/ELD Adoption Follow Up Selection
K-8; SBE Approved List
Anticipated Nov. 2026

ELA/ELD Adoption Follow Up Implementation
K-8

Reading Instruction & Intervention Grant
Lead: Contra Costa; Project Arise
2025-26 Offerings Flyer
Supporting Adolescent Lit; RDRS Series; Diverse Needs - MLLs; Diverse Needs

Literacy Coaches & Reading Specialists Educator Training (LCRSET)
Lead: SCOE; 25-26 Focus: Evidence-based practices to support Multi-lingual Learners (MLLs)

2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30

Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant
3 Grants to COE Lead/Consortium; 3 Priority Areas - SBCEO chosen as a partner on 2 (Tk-5 and 6-12)

RLAA Credential Authorization Grant
SB County - Provides funds for 75 teachers to get literacy specialist authorization

$$

RLAA Expansion grant in final stages (with Math specialists added)
Will allow for a total of 120 teachers to earn literacy specialist authorization

SBCEO Universal Supports in Literacy

Project or Initiative	Purpose/Goal	Audience	Grade(s)
Language Education Network	Networking; BCN updates: language development PD (D-ELD, I-ELD, World Language), ELPAC	District leads supporting ELs	Tk-12
RDRS Network	Implementation of *Education Code* Section 53008; networking; MTSS; intervention systems; assessment systems	District leads supporting assessment, literacy	K-2
Reading & Literacy Added Authorization Grant Administrator	Increase # educators who have attained a Reading & Literacy Added Authorization on their credential in SB County	Teachers identified by LEAs	Tk-12
Bilingual Authorization Program (BAP)	Increase educators qualified to teach ELD and Primary Language Development	Teachers	Tk-12
BTPDP - Funding for BAP - DLI Institute - GLAD Training	Professional learning for teachers centered around ELD, Dual-Immersion programs, Bilingual Education, World Languages, BAP Funding	DLI instructors, ELD instructors	Tk-12
P-3 Learning Progressions: Language & Literacy	Provide introduction/orientation to P-3 Learning Progressions; re-engage educators in ELA/ELD Framework; support vertical articulation; practical application samples	District admin/leadership, site leaders, teacher leaders	Tk-3rd

SBCEO Universal Supports in Literacy

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Overview of Today's Session

Santa Barbara County Education Office
Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent

CONTENT

What is tested?
(A snapshot of
3rd grade Reading test)

Public Reporting

Quantitative Scores reported
in 2 ways

Perspective

Additional Data Displays
(Correlation: poverty and literacy w/
Bright Spots)

State and Local Supports

Brief overview of State and
SBCEO supports

Questions and Remarks



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