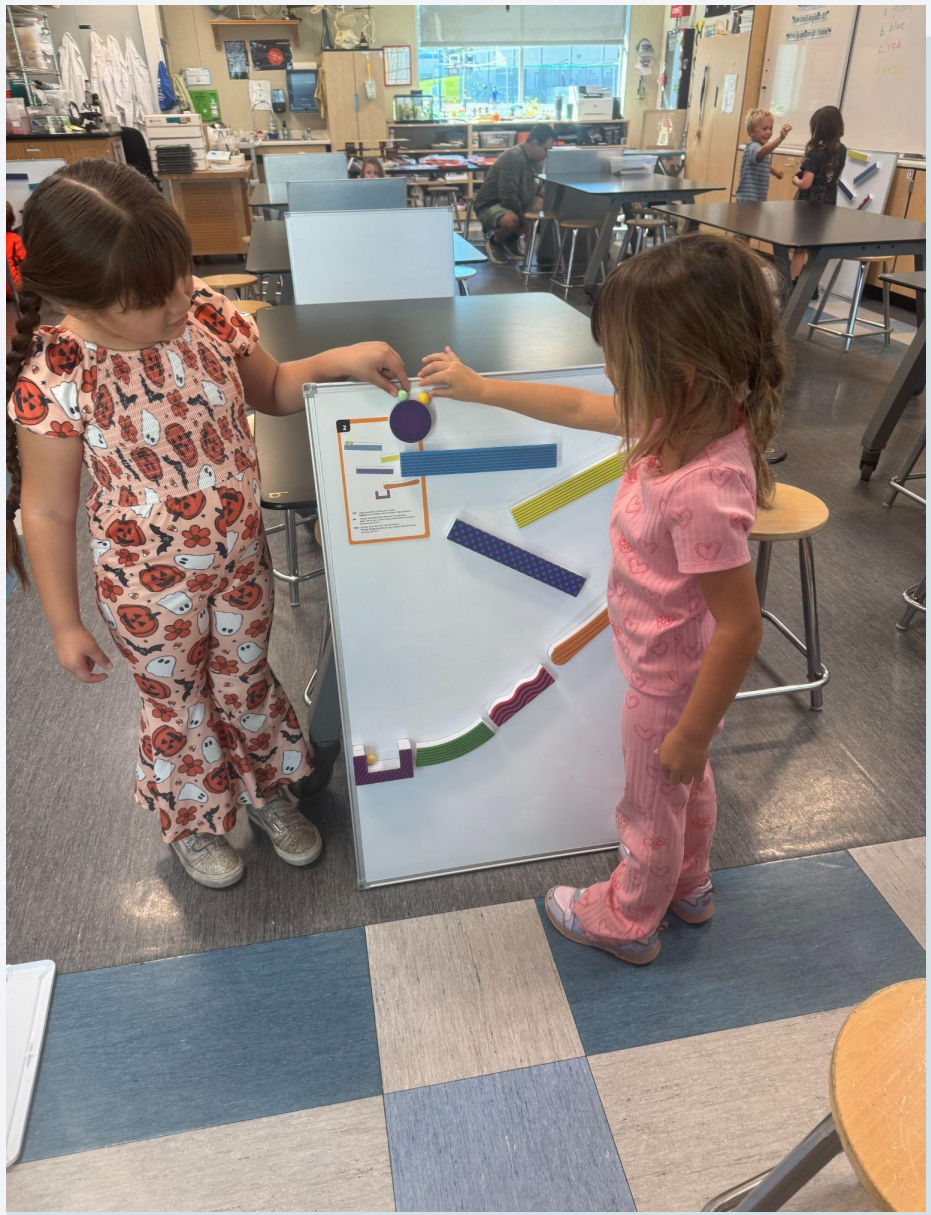
LAGUNA BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TOP OF THE WORLD ELEMENTARY

Reaching New Heights in Science

Our science improvement story



Laguna Beach USD Governing Board Meeting · November 12, 2026

OUR SCIENCE STORY BY THE NUMBERS

Up 8 percentage points in one year

2024–25
72%

→

2025–26
80%

+8
percentage points

Fifth graders Proficient or Advanced in science, the largest one-year gain since the test began in 2019



BENCHMARK COMPARISON (2025–26, GRADE 5)

+2.9

Orange County

43.7% → 46.7%

+1.9

California

33.4% → 35.3%

STATEWIDE RANKING

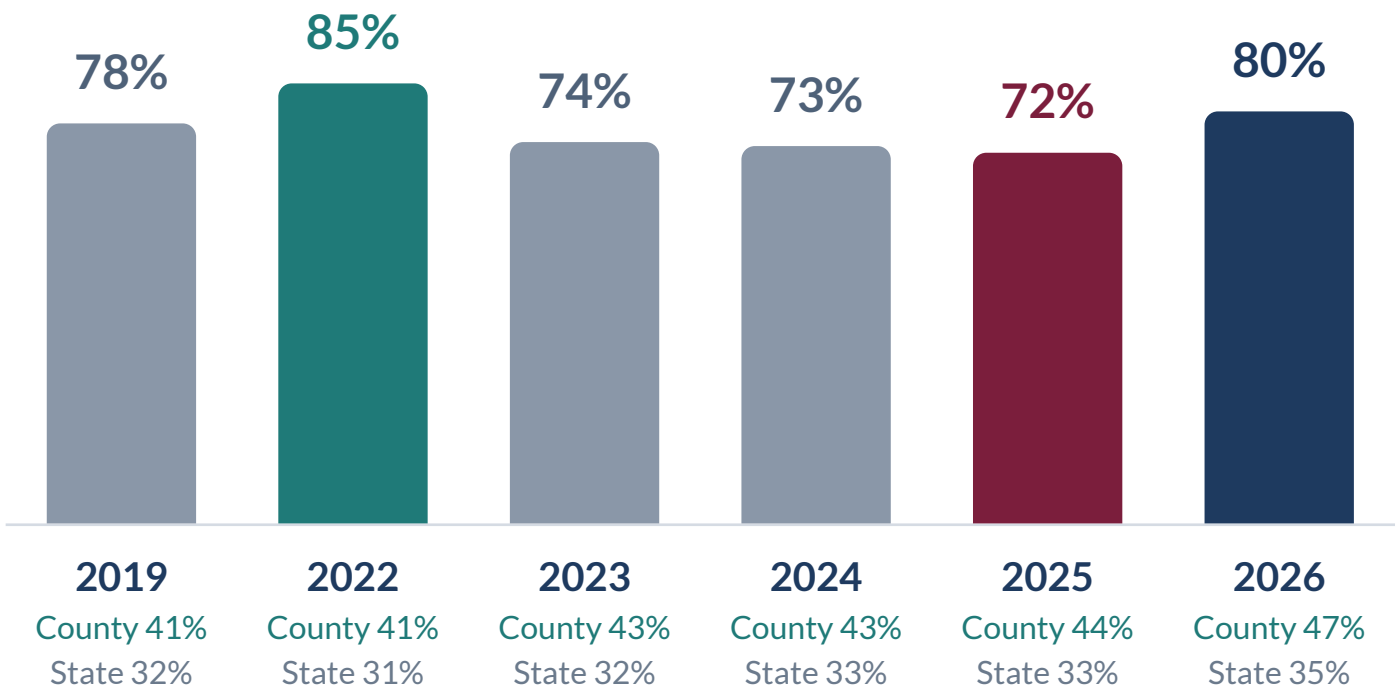
Top 2%

Source: CDE CAASPP CAST, grade 5, spring 2025 and 2026. 85 students tested in 2026 (93 in 2025)

OUR JOURNEY · GRADE 5 SCIENCE SINCE 2019

A dip, a refocus and a strong rebound

TOW fifth graders Proficient or Advanced, compared with county and state



85%

our 2022 high point

72%

our 2025 low, while county scores rose

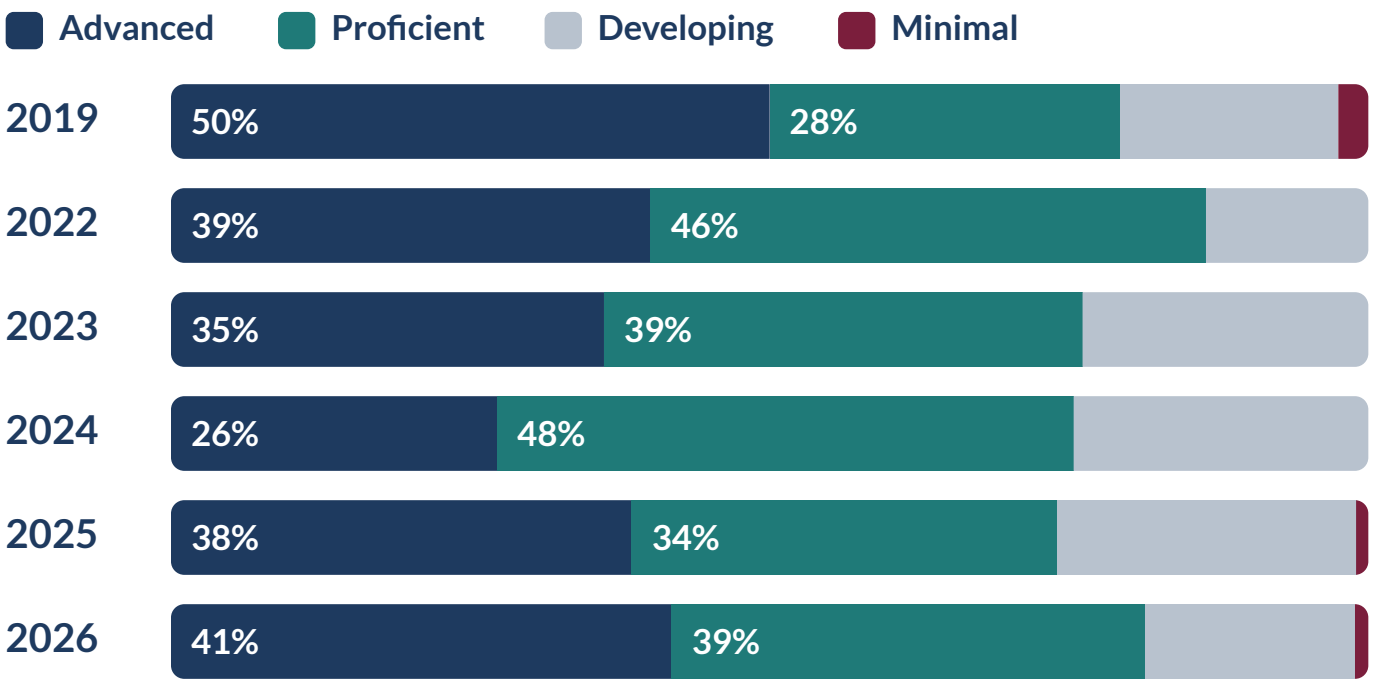
+8

percentage points in 2026, back to 80% proficient

Source: CDE CAASPP CAST results, grade 5, 2019–2026 (County = Orange County, State = California; % Proficient or Advanced). No state testing in 2020 or 2021. TOW: 85–112 students tested per year.

LOOKING DEEPER · ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

More students reaching the top level



Advanced is climbing

The share of fifth graders at the top level rose from 26% in 2024 to 41% in 2026.

TREND: up about 16 percentage points in two years

Very few at the lowest level

In 2026, just 1 of 85 fifth graders scored at the lowest level.

Statewide: 15% at the lowest level

Source: CDE CAASPP CAST results, TOW grade 5, 2019–2026 (85–112 students tested per year). 2026 labels: Advanced (formerly Exceeded), Proficient (formerly Met).

OUR APPROACH

What supports science learning at TOW

Weekly science lab
Students investigate, test ideas and collect and analyze data.

PLCs + common assessments
Teams review student learning.

MTSS and WIN time
Intervention and enrichment for every learner

5E Lessons Model + State Standards
In-class STEM, content and academic vocabulary, reading, assessment

Parent volunteers in the lab
Support for the students and instructors

Learning outdoors
Garden/Outdoor classroom, Green Ribbon School

Aligned to LBUSD's LCAP Goal 1: collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and stewardship

Aligned to California State Science Framework: PE's, SEP's, DCI's

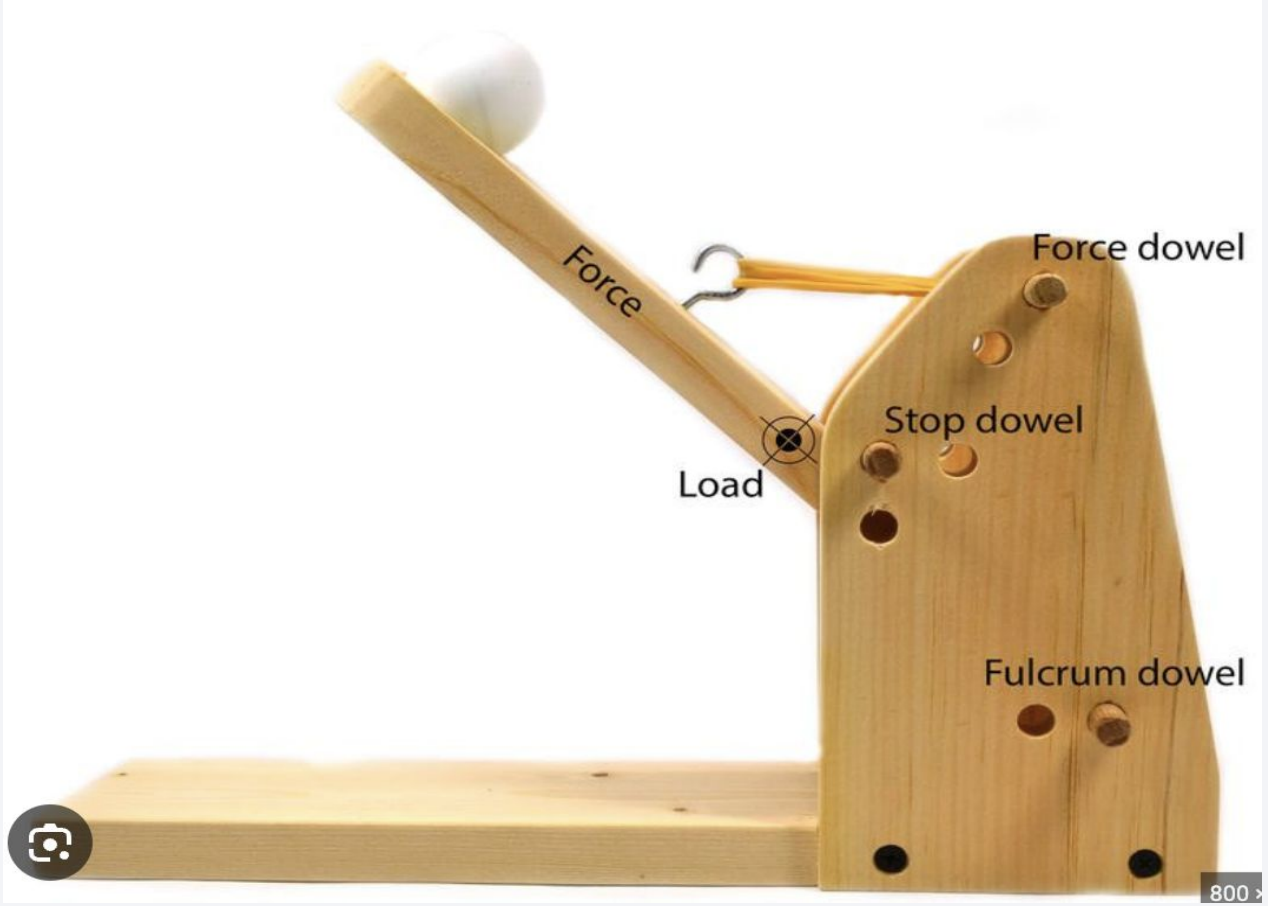




Hands-on Demonstration: Catapults



Launch in this direction



STUDENT VOICE · 2025–26 LCAP SURVEY

What students' experience aligns with our results

STUDENTS SAY…	…AND FIFTH GRADERS ACHIEVED
89% regularly have **challenging** learning	**41%** scored **Advanced**, up from 26% in 2024
95% say their learning is **relevant**	**80%** **Proficient or Advanced**, up 8 percentage points
97% say they get effective **academic support**	**1%** at the **lowest level** (state: 15%)



HABITS OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Students say teachers encourage their questions (**92%**), give meaningful feedback (**91%**) and offer choice in how they show learning (**89%**).

Source: LBUSD 2025–26 LCAP Stakeholder Survey, TOW student respondents, all subjects (% agree, March 2026)

OUR PLAN FOR 2026–27

What’s next for science at TOW

2026–27 GOAL
82% proficient

ACTION 1

Make science relevant every week

Tie lab investigations to inquiry and real-world problem solving rooted in our local community.

ACTION 2

Strengthen physical science

Forces, energy and matter are our lowest area: 31% above standard, versus 44% in Earth and space science.

ACTION 3

Connect the lab and the classroom

Investigations end with students writing a claim backed by evidence and reasoning, in grades 3 through 5.

ACTION 4

Stretch and support every learner

Keep growing the share at Advanced (41%) while supporting the 1 in 5 still developing.

Thank you

to the Top of the World team

Teachers · Support staff · Students · Families · PTA · Community Partners






Every student, every day.