

CST: Tips for Parents

Mikara Davis
Program Analyst
Independent Analysis Unit
May 14th, 2008
CIEE Committee Meeting



California Standards Tests (CSTs)

- The CSTs are developed by California educators and test developers specifically for California. They measure students' progress toward achieving California's state-adopted academic content standards, which describe what students should know and be able to do in each grade and subject tested.



Who Takes the CSTs?

- Students in grades two through eleven take multiple-choice CSTs for various subjects. Students in grades four and seven complete a writing assessment—the CST for Writing—as a part of the CST for English–Language Arts (ELA).
- Visit: <http://www.startest.org/cst.html>

Blueprints

- The state uses the state standards and creates a blueprint that guides the questions on the actual CST
- Visit:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/blueprints.asp> to look over the blueprints for the grade level of your child/ren
- Look over the standards of the years to come
- Use them to guide your extra curricular activities during the holidays and off track periods/summer vacation



Released Test Questions

- Each year the state releases questions that were on the test from previous years so that schools and parents can prepare their children for the format of the test
- Take a look at the released test questions
- Go over some of the questions with your child
- Visit: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp>



During Testing

- Make sure your child has 8 hours of sleep
- Eats a good breakfast at home or at school each morning
- Attitude of success breeds success, make sure your child is fresh and feels good
- Be at least 15-20 minutes early for school
- Come to school each day of testing
- Schedule all appointments if possible after the school day
- Send your child messages of encouragement
- Let your child know that there is nothing she/he cannot do!



How do I know if my child did well?

- You should receive a student report in the mail after your child's test scores come in, normally in August
- The report will tell you their raw score and their level
- There are five levels: Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced



How do I know if my child did well? cont'd

- The goal is for every child in the state of California to score Proficient or Advanced in all areas of the CST
- To be college ready, aim for Advanced which means your child has mastered their grade level standards in a very solid manner
- Proficient is good, yet, it often means there are still some conceptual gaps in the full mastery of the standards



What tests does my child take?

- If your child is in 2nd grade or above, she/he will take a test in English Language Arts and Math
- As your child increases in grade level, such as 4th and 5th grade more tests are required
- 4th and 7th graders will take a writing test in addition to the two core tests
- 5th graders will take a science test in addition to the two core tests
- 8th graders will take Algebra, Science and History in addition to the two core tests
- See: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp> for each test for each grade level
- Most tests are 60-70 questions long, normally divided into two parts and each part can be taken in one day and in one sitting



Suggestions for schools

- Make testing a positive endeavor (pep rallies, chants, positive messages around the school and classrooms)
- Allow each student to take their time when testing
- Use peppermint 😊
- Start each section of the test with a positive statement or chant



Suggestions for Schools

- Provide healthy snacks
- Have relaxing activities to do after testing each day
- Give attendance incentives to lessen the need for make-up tests
- Remind children that this is one positive step towards them reaching their goals (college and career)
- Tell all children that they are fully capable of mastering this test
- Do all you can to make the students and teachers feel great!



Questions/Comments

