

Dear SMA Parents and Guardians,

California is field testing a new website designation to help communities across the state access important information about K-12 districts and schools. Called the California School Dashboard, the site features easy-to-read reports on multiple measures of school success, including test scores, graduation rates, English learner progress and suspension rates. The Dashboard is part of California's new school accountability system based on 2013's Local Control Funding Formula. It is the next step in a series of major shifts in public education that have raised the bar for student learning, transformed testing and placed the focus on equity for all students.

To learn more about California's accountability and continuous improvement efforts, visit the CDE Dashboard Web page.

Why a new system and new tool?

The Dashboard is a key part of California's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. California's future success depends on tapping into the potential of all students, so they graduate ready for college, careers and life. For schools to reach this goal, teachers, parents and the community need clear and useful measures of progress. As an accountability tool, the Dashboard will help the state identify schools (including charter schools) and districts needing targeted assistance.

What's different?

In the past, accountability systems for districts and schools relied solely on test scores. But one test taken on one particular day does not provide a complete picture of all the ways schools are helping students succeed.

Think of it this way: You can't drive a car by only watching the speedometer. You also keep your eye on the road, check those mirrors, monitor the gas tank and pay attention if the engine light comes on. Similarly, the Dashboard provides information on different aspects of student performance, which will give a more complete picture of a school's progress. The Dashboard also reports on growth to show a school's trajectory over time.

What's next?

The Dashboard is deliberately designed to be a work in progress: Metrics and reports will be added over time. During the field testing phase, the state will be gathering feedback to make additional modifications.

The exciting changes taking place in education will take time to fully implement. While schools are making progress in many key areas there is always more work to do. The Dashboard is part of an ongoing conversation with our community on both how we're doing and how we can do better. Meeting goals will take a united effort, and I look forward to working with our families to ensure success for every student.