



## PREPARING STUDENTS TO TAKE THE CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TEST

*“If you don’t know where you want to go, you might wind up someplace else” Yogi Berra*

*Contributed by Dieanna Harper*

Choose from the suggested ideas and adapt to your grade level and/or school policies. It is never too early to start preparations for the California Standards Test.

**Plan your year to cover all of the tested material.**

- ☆ Refer to the California Department of Education website for sample questions
- ☆ Review the results from the last CST test and the Holt quarterly assessments, preferably with the department chair or literacy coach who can help with the analysis
- ☆ Focus instruction on the standards that are most tested and show the greatest need for improvement

**MAY IS CST TESTING MONTH IN  
PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL  
DISTRICT  
May 9-20, 2005  
Elementary Schools,  
Middle Schools, & High Schools  
(Including make-up days)**

**Carefully analyze how the material is presented and how the students are to respond.**

- ☆ Use frequent formative assessments, which include examples of the types of questions that will appear on the test
- ☆ Keep in mind that your students can know all of the content and still do poorly, if they are confused by the format of the questions

**Reassure your students that they can do well on the test by making the most of the testing time, and not panicking or giving up.**

- ☆ The content should be imbedded in your classroom lessons
- ☆ If you are comfortable and prepared your students will feel comfortable and prepared
- ☆ Conduct periodic timed writing tests and timed reading fluency activities

## Teach some test taking strategies

- ☆ Teach your students to rely on the text, not on personal experience, to answer test questions
- ☆ Remind students that on multiple-choice tests there is only one correct answer. All others are incorrect, even if only in some minor detail
- ☆ Therefore, if they use **POE, process of elimination**, the remaining answer will be the correct one



*Remember POE...Process of Elimination is a good test-taking strategy.*

## Preparing Students to Take the California Standards Test

**Merely giving your students a lot of tests is not good practice for the CST. What is good practice is to model for the students, the thinking processes required to choose the right answer.**

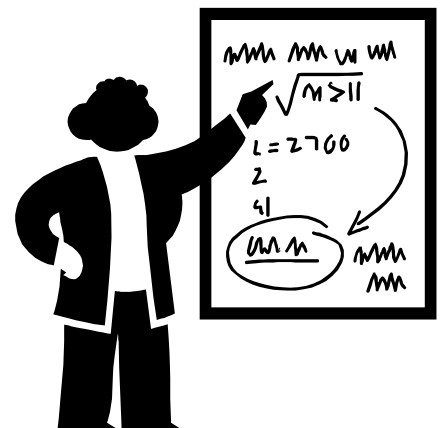
- ☆ Let the students see how you would attack the problem
- ☆ Post a list of the strategies you would use
- ☆ Have the students talk about how they would figure out the correct response
- ☆ For a challenge, have the students create questions of their own, modeled after the test question format

*Merely giving your students a lot of tests is not good practice for the CST.*

## Tips Teacher Preparation

**For teachers who are new to high stakes testing, begin by attending the staff meetings that cover test administration.**

- ☆ Find out the schedule as early as possible
- ☆ Arrange for a bathroom break before the testing period
- ☆ If possible, read through the administration manual before the day of the test. If it is not offered then ASK
- ☆ Yes, you do have to follow the script when administering the test
- ☆ Have all pencils sharpened and materials counted ahead of time
- ☆ During the test, monitor the students to see that they are writing and bubbling in the right section
- ☆ Mistakes happen at all grade levels, so always double check.



*...begin by attending the staff meetings that cover test administration.*

# Support For English Learners

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*Contributed by Joan Morris*

## Assessment Accommodations for English Learners

In addition to accommodations listed in the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, English Learners (ELs) are allowed the following test variations on the CAT/6, CST and CAHSEE assessments:

- To hear the test directions printed in the test administration manual translated into the student’s primary language and to ask clarifying questions about the test directions in their primary language. (This modification is also allowed in the Physical Fitness assessment.)
- To receive additional supervised breaks within a testing day or following each section (STAR) within a test part provided that the test section is completed within a testing day. A test section is identified by a “STOP” at the end of it.
- ELs may have the opportunity to be tested separately with other ELs provided that the student is directly supervised by an employee of the school who has signed the test security affidavit and the student has been provided such a flexible setting as part of his/her regular instruction or assessment. (This modification is also allowed in the Physical Fitness assessment.)

Also, ELs are allowed the following modification on the math, science, history-social science portions of the CST and CAHSEE tests; “Access to translation glossaries/word lists (English-to-primary language). Glossaries/word lists shall not include definitions or formulas.” It is important to note that because the CELDT and SABE/2 are tests specifically for English learners, there are no separate guidelines for administering the CELDT or SABE/2 to this population.

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# Improving Math Performance on High Stakes Tests

*Contributed by Devi Mattai*

- **Ensure an opportunity to learn the content.** Plan your year so that the big ideas for most or all of the objectives will be taught before the test is given.
- **Provide ongoing review and practice.** Short regularly spaced reviews are more effective than a huge practice effort the week before. Periodic review is a powerful tool for keeping students’ academic skills sharp.
- **Provide experience with different question formats.** Review the released items for your grade level and use the same question format regularly in class.
- **Teach test taking strategies.** Remember test-taking strategies require good concepts, skills, and number sense. Spend most of your time teaching mathematics rather than test skills.
- **Practice Tests.** Create your own practice tests. Any single practice test cannot insure an equally high performance on the actual exam. However there are many student benefits. Students who take practice tests become more confident in test situations, become better managers of time, and gain invaluable exposure to challenging problem mixes. Simulate the real test conditions as closely as you can.

**Life is good for only two things:  
discovering mathematics and teaching  
mathematics. Simeon Poisson**

## PRE-K-12 TEACHING AND LEARNING

**We are on the PUSD.US Website!**

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**Jacqueline Cochran**, Assistant Superintendent

### Before Test Administration

- Notify students of the test dates in advance.
- Explain the purposes for testing.
- Create an uncluttered testing environment.
- Use a variety of test formats during the school year.
- Become familiar with the materials and procedures to be used with the tests.
- Identify which students may need and/or be eligible for test accommodations.
- Read the Test Administration Manual carefully for instructions and information.
- Encourage all students to be present on test dates.
- Remind parents to make sure that their children are rested and eat breakfast.
- Encourage students to arrive at school on time.
- Encourage parents not to remove their child from school on test days for appointments.

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## TEACHER ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

### During Test Administration

- Adhere to time limits specified for tests.
- Read all directions clearly to students.
- Expect every student to read all test content material without assistance unless otherwise noted in the Test Administration Manual.
- Monitor to ensure that students begin marking answers in the proper area of the answer sheet.
- Anticipate and eliminate test disruptions.
- Remind students to read and pay careful attention to all directions.
- Remind students to read every possible answer--the best one could be last.
- Remind students to reread, when necessary, the parts of a passage needed for selecting the correct answer.
- Tell students not to expect to find a pattern in the position of the correct answer.
- Suggest that students skip difficult questions until all other questions have been answered. On scrap paper, keep a record of the unanswered items to return to, if time permits.
- Monitor students to make sure they record the answer in the correct place on the answer sheet.
- Suggest that students only change an answer if you are sure the first one you picked was wrong. Tell them to be sure to completely erase changed answers.
- Work as rapidly as possible with accuracy.
- Tell students to work as rapidly as possible with accuracy.
- After completion of the test, students should use any remaining time to check their answers.
- Encourage students to keep a good attitude. Think positively!

