



# Downey Unified School District

Gallegos Administration Center

11627 Brookshire Avenue, P.O. Box 7017, Downey, California 90241-7017

(562) 469-6500, FAX: (562) 469-6515

## Board of Education

### *President*

Tod M. Corrin

### *Vice President*

D. Mark Morris

### *Clerk*

Barbara R. Samperi

### *Members*

William A. Gutierrez

Donald E. LaPlante

Martha E. Sodetani

Nancy A. Swenson

### *Superintendent*

John A. Garcia, Jr., Ph.D.

April 29, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The California Department of Education has implemented a new state academic testing program which will begin in the spring of this year. This test is called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, or CAASPP. Starting shortly, students will take part in the first statewide administration of the CAASPP. Students in grades three through eight and grade eleven will take the computer-adaptive tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Following the spring 2015 testing, student score reports will be sent home to you in August and will include an overall score, a description of the student's achievement level for ELA and mathematics, and other information.

The system-wide changes we have begun in teaching and learning with the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are focused on helping students succeed in the long run, achieving their dreams related to college and/or career. This year's test results will establish a baseline for the progress we expect students to make over time.

Based on trial runs of some test questions in California and other states, many, if not most, students will need to make significant progress to reach the standards set for ELA and mathematics that accompany college and career readiness. No student, parent or teacher should be discouraged by scores, which will not be used to determine whether a student moves on to the next grade. Rather, the results will provide an opportunity to focus on the needs of students and support teachers and schools in their work.

It is important to note that these scores cannot be compared to scores that your child previously received on the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests. This test involves different types of test questions, and will not be reported using the STAR reporting categories. The new tests are too fundamentally different from the old exams to make any reliable comparisons between old scores and new.

California's new assessment system also represents the next step in our comprehensive plan to improve student outcomes. This plan recognizes that assessments play a role in promoting instruction that facilitates a focus on even better meeting the needs of each student.

In a state as diverse and complex as California, adjustments will always be needed to make lasting progress. Patience and persistence is greatly appreciated and it will help our schools continue to excel during this time of transition. Thank you for your patience as we roll out this new testing program and California's new assessment system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John A. Garcia, Jr.".

John A. Garcia, Jr., Ph.D.  
Superintendent