

**HIGHER  
STANDARDS.  
BETTER  
ASSESSMENTS.**

## Preparing students for life.



Our commitment at the Oregon Department of Education is to ensure that each and every student, no matter their zip code or school, have the knowledge and skills that will help them succeed beyond high school.

One way Oregon is honoring this commitment is by adopting higher standards for K-12 students in English Language Arts and Math. And because we raised the bar for what students should know and be able to do, we changed the way we measure student progress through our state assessments. Our state assessment in English Language Arts is called Smarter Balanced.

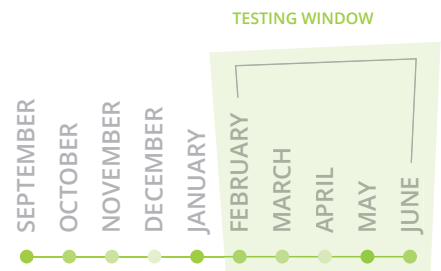
The Oregon Department of Education uses the information from the state Smarter Balanced assessment to implement a statewide plan to close opportunity and achievement gaps. The goal is to help more students meet the higher standards and improve graduation rates.

## What can students expect?

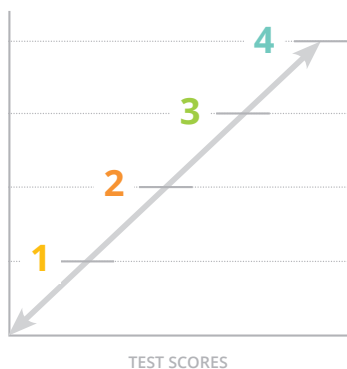
- Students take the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and Math tests once a year in grades 3-8, and again in grade 11.
- Students take the tests around spring after completion of the majority of the school year.
- Students take the tests on specific dates determined by each school – within a statewide testing window – to allow for locally-based flexibility.
- The tests are not timed. Students take the time they need to demonstrate what they know and can do.

TESTED IN GRADES

**3,4,5,6,7,8 and 11**



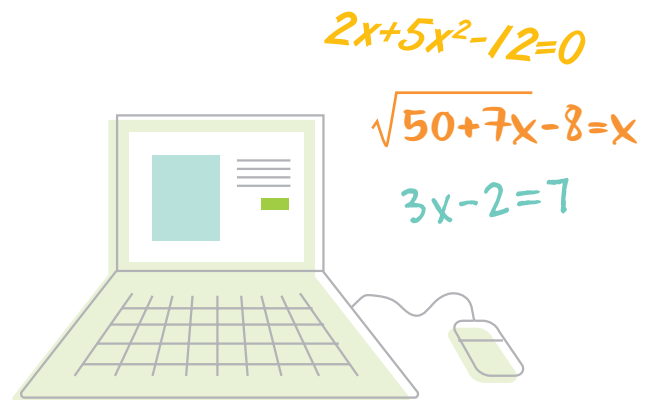
## How are the tests scored and what do the scores mean?



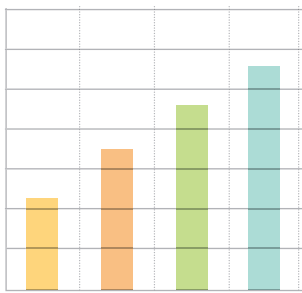
- The tests are one of many measures of students' academic achievement.
- Students are scored on a 4-point continuous scale that generally describes where he or she is.
  - Students who score a 3 or 4 are considered on track for their grade level and for success in college and career.
  - Scoring a 1 or 2 does not hold a student back a grade or indicate that a student won't attend college, but flags that a student will need extra help to ensure success from grade to grade.
- No student will be held back a grade or kept from graduating based on the results.

## How do the tests help students?

- Students learn to think critically and apply their knowledge to real-world problems.
- The tests go beyond multiple choice. Students explain their answers through writing essays and building equations.
- Along with other pieces of information like teacher observations and classroom work, the tests provide a snapshot of a student's achievement.



## How do the tests help schools?



- Statewide, the results identify schools and districts that need additional targeted supports to help students.



- At the school level, the tests give principals key data on that schools' strengths and challenges, helping to provide personalized support to better help students succeed.



- In the classroom, teachers can use the information to guide their instruction and provide greater supports and learning opportunities to help students achieve their educational goals.



## Why is it important that students take the Smarter Balanced tests?

- Taking tests is part of life.
- Tests are just one measure. Oregon's state tests are one piece of information to help understand a student's academic achievement.
- Schools and districts will miss out on information regarding which schools need extra help and resources.
- Students will not know if they need more help, or if they can take advanced courses.
- Teachers will miss out on having valuable information to help support students to learn skills they'll need for college and career.

