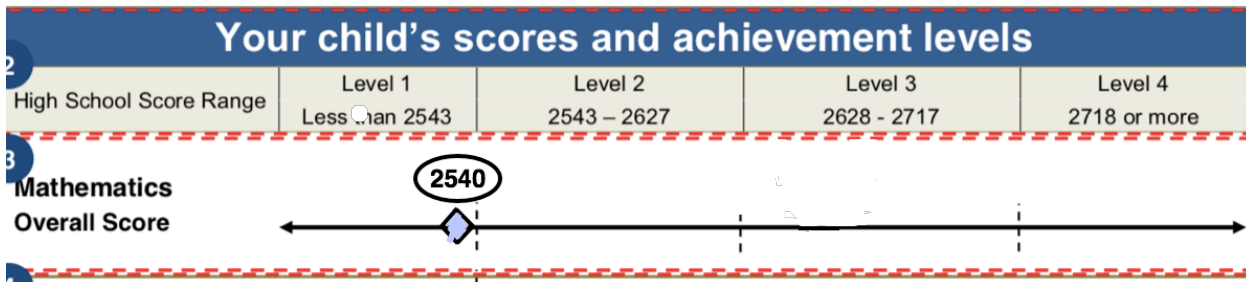
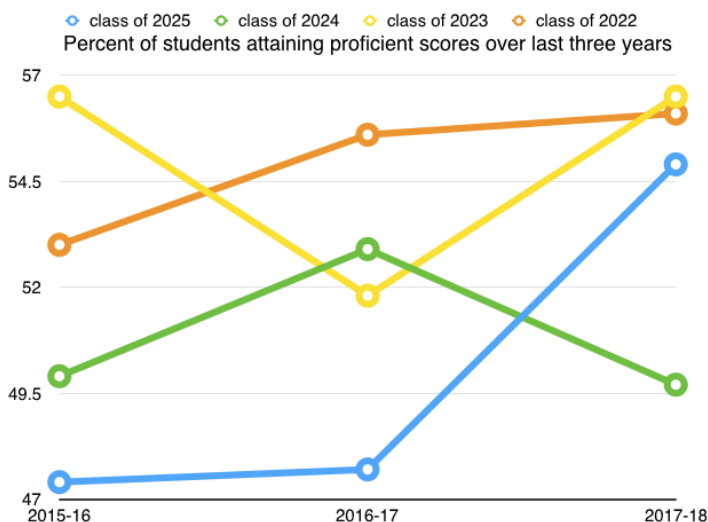


Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment: the dream and the reality



Imagine you are Joe. Your parents don't speak English too well. You have tried to do your work in school. Every year, from third through eighth grade, your family received a test report that shows scores about like the one above. The report talks a little about what this means but most of all it is clear how poorly you are doing. Unfortunately, the score comes from a test you took last year on a computer. It wasn't like a spelling test or something that you could see linked directly to what you did in class. You cannot explain why you once again seem to have failed. You just know 11th grade has gone the way that other years went. It may be time to give up on school.

Smarter Balanced summative assessment had real promise. With a computer interface that adapted to the student's answers, it could have given us valuable information on how to best teach each individual student. But the developers stopped short of the original vision.



The current test assesses systems rather than individual students. There is little to learn that is detailed or timely enough to help the classroom teacher. The best way to predict a student's score is to know their demographics. While some cohorts show growth, the overall change in scores appears to be almost random, going up one year and down the next for a given grade or set of students. The adjacent illustration is for the ELA part of the test. The math part is even more random appearing.

The necessity to teach to SBAC standards limits the capacity of teachers to teach to the unique and diverse strengths of each student. Especially as we look at education through an equity lens, the necessity to tailor curriculum to the needs and interests of specific student communities becomes paramount. We have identified the areas where we need to improve. Now, we should be finding ways to define unique strengths of each student, not to just chart the failures of some minority groups to achieve by a set standard.

Please support SB 428. We need to look for better ways to achieve accountability while not hurting our students. Thank you

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