



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

JACK O'CONNELL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

August 25, 2009

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE TO BETTER COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS AND EDUCATORS ABOUT STATE TESTING PROGRAM

Many parents and teachers have expressed questions and concerns about the California Standards Tests (CSTs), a component of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which measures how well the California public education system and its students are performing. In response, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the State Board of Education (SBE) have launched a new Web site to help parents and teachers gain a much clearer understanding of the CSTs. You can find the new CDE STAR Web site at <http://www.starsamplequestions.org/>. The Web site features dozens of actual test questions that students have faced at each grade level as well as a parent guide for each grade level.

To learn more about parents' and teachers' concerns, the CDE and the SBE held focus groups throughout the state and asked parents, teachers, and community members, "What information would be helpful to you, and what is the best way to communicate it?" Parents consistently indicated that they wanted the means to gather their own information about the STAR Program at times convenient for them. While the amount of information requested varied, it was clear that parents wanted access to as much information as possible, and they wanted the information to be easy to understand.

The feedback from the focus groups guided the development of the Web site and the parent guides. We hope that the information provided by this online resource will lead to increased collaboration between parents and educators and, ultimately, to increased student learning.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact John Boivin, Administrator, STAR Office, at 916-445-8765 or by e-mail at star@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack O'Connell".

JACK O'CONNELL

JO:jb

cc: District Standardized Testing and Reporting Coordinators