



March 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am reaching out with some important news about this year's statewide assessments for English language arts and mathematics. As you may know, Oregon adopted tougher national standards called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to elevate academic expectations for our students in grades K-12. With the CCSS, Oregon students are now gaining important critical-thinking, problem solving, and effective communication skills, and we, as educators, now have a template that clearly identifies what students should know by the end of each grade and what to do if they are not quite where they should be.

To accurately measure our students' learning as well as help our educators pinpoint areas in need of improvement, we use the Smarter Balanced State (also known as SBA) in English/Language Arts and mathematics, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. These tests provide an academic check-up and are designed to help teachers and parents know whether students are on track to be career- and college-ready by the time they graduate. Student performance on these assessments helps teachers and school leaders do a better job of making sure your child receives the best education possible.

Smarter Balanced assessments offer significant improvements over other types of assessments including writing at every grade, a variety of question types, and Performance Tasks that ask students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. SBA includes question formats that allow students to demonstrate a broad set of skills, like critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical writing rather than just regurgitating facts.

At *Ladd Acres*, students in grades **3-6** will take the Smarter Balanced tests sometime between April 8th and the June 1st. **There are listening portions to the test and require earbuds/headphones. Please check with your student and confirm if they have headphones here at school. If they do not, please send a pair to school no later than April 5th.** Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have about state testing this year. If you would like to quickly access more information about SBA, visit the Hillsboro School District website:

<https://www.hsd.k12.or.us/Page/2291>

Sincerely,

Francesca Sinapi

Principal, Ladd Acres Elementary

Engage and challenge all learners to ensure academic excellence

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