In October 2013, the state of California replaced the STAR testing program with the new Statewide Assessment System. SFUSD, along with all California school districts, is required to test its students with this new system starting this spring.

For Spring 2014 the new Statewide Assessment System includes field tests that will be online computer based assessments created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The Spring 2014 field tests are actually “testing the test” and the new Statewide Assessment System will not be fully implemented until the 2014-2015 school year.

Q: How are SBAC tests different from the STAR tests my child used to take?
The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests will measure the full depth and breadth of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts/literacy and mathematics. Critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are a major focus in these standards. The new tests will more accurately show us how well a child is learning the standards.

Q: Who has to take the new Statewide Assessment System tests?
For the spring 2014 field test, all students in Grades 3 through 8 will be tested in English Language Arts and/or math. At every high school site, 40% of all 11th graders will take the field test (participation for 11th grade students will be determined by the California Department of Education).

Q: Are there some students in these grades who don’t have to take the test?
English language learner students who have been in the country for less than a year have the option to be exempted from testing in ELA. Also, students taking the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) are exempt from the SBAC field testing.

For Students with Disabilities, their IEPs will determine if they will take the field test as it is or with accommodations. Students with an IEP will take the same on-line assessment; however, the individual student profile (as determined by the IEP team) will determine which accommodations will be available during the field test. Some Students with Disabilities may need their IEP updated by March 15 to indicate the use of new accommodations.

Q: How will the new tests be administered?
The new Statewide Assessment System field tests will be administered using a computer connected to the Internet. There is no paper-and-pencil version. Each student will require up to four hours of testing time in front of a computer for the field test though this testing does not have to occur all in one sitting.

Q: What if my child’s school doesn’t have enough of the right technology?
We expect the majority of schools will be able to successfully administer the tests with their existing computers, and schools who need supplemental technological support will receive it. Most elementary, middle and K-8 schools will require one computer for every 10 students enrolled in Grades 3 through 8. SFUSD is working to ensure each school site has what it needs to administer the new test. In some cases this may require providing temporary access to the technology needed during the testing time this spring.
Q: When will these tests be administered?
The California Department of Education (CDE) has set San Francisco’s field testing window from April 7-May 16, 2014.

Q: How will the district make sure there is no cheating?
The test security protocol for test coordinators, teachers, and proctors, will be similar to those previously in place as part of the STAR program, including security agreements and affidavits. To ensure computer security, the test has its own secure browser that also disables the use of other system applications during the test.

Q: What technology skills do students need for the Statewide Assessment System?
The Statewide Assessment System is not a test of computer skills. However, students will need basic computer skills, such as keyboarding, editing tools, drag-and-drop, since some questions will require these. Teachers are using existing curriculum that has computer-based activities to ensure all students have basic computer skills.

Q: Will my child’s test scores be sent to me just like STAR test results?
This spring, the focus of the Field Test is “testing the test,” this means that at this time the state does not plan to share student results.

Q: What other standardized tests will students be taking?
The state legislation that created the new the new Statewide Assessment System requires additional assessments to be included in the new Statewide Assessment System. For spring 2014 these additional assessments will be administered via paper and pencil. The additional assessments include:

-STATE MANDATED SCIENCE TESTS
Students will be assessed in Science in grades 5, 8 and 10 using the California Standards Test (CST) or California Modified Assessment (CMA). The testing window is April 7-May 8, 2014. These scores will be sent home to families in the fall.

-CALIFORNIA ALTERNATIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CAPA)
Students in grades 2-11 with severe cognitive disabilities will continue to take the CAPA for ELA, Mathematics and Science as appropriate.

-EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)
Students in grade 11 will take the EAP in ELA and Mathematics. The testing window for the writing portion of the assessment is March 3-March 13, 2014. The multiple-choice portion of the test for both ELA and Mathematics will be administered April 7-May 8, 2014.

-CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM (CAHSEE)
The CAHSEE remains a high school graduation requirement.

Q: Where can I learn more?
SFUSD Assessing Student Learning web page:

The Common Core: http://www.corestandards.org/