Preparing and Supporting Your Child for the Smarter Balanced computer assessment

Students use technology all the time so taking the tests online will be familiar to them, however we encourage you to take the practice and training tests together to see what this year’s test questions and performance tasks will look like. You will find that these tests will challenge students to explain their thinking and decision-making, rather than simply identifying answers.

Other ways to prepare and support*:

- Discuss the tests with your child. Make sure he or she is not scared or anxious to take the tests.
- With older children, explain that the tests were created to help him or her better prepare for college and career.
- Tell your child that the test was designed with higher expectations. Assure them that you and their teacher will be there to help them prepare.
- Explain to your child that the tests may be more challenging the first few times they take them.
- Bring your child’s teacher into the discussion when reviewing the Smarter Balanced practice and training test questions.
- Make sure your child gets a good night’s sleep and a nutritious breakfast before testing.

* Source: National PTA “Parents’ Guide to New Assessments in California

What can I do at home?

At home, ask questions such as “Can you explain how you know that?” The purpose of this question is to have your children show how they came up with their answers (on homework). Instead of reading homework assignment instructions to your child, have them explain the instructions to confirm their understanding. This will help build the independence and confidence necessary to succeed not only on the new tests but throughout school and life. Encourage your child to use technology to read, listen and write, this will benefit them when it is time to take the computerized tests.