



High School to Community College

New Efforts to Build Shared Expectations

HIGHLIGHTS

- Many students who graduate from high school are unprepared for the academic rigors of community college work. 4
- Local variations in community college placement practices and “basic skills” curricula send mixed signals and make the problem difficult to measure.. 6
- K–12 standards and tests offer potential tools for aligning expectations between the two systems..... 9
- Many efforts are targeted at building the capacity of educators in both systems to support students as they make the transition..... 15

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Californians are becoming increasingly concerned about whether the majority of the state’s young people have the skills and knowledge they need for adult success. In looking at strategies for improving students’ prospects, the work of both high schools and community colleges is coming under greater scrutiny.

But K–12 schools and community colleges operate under separate governance systems, pursue distinct missions, and gauge their success based on different measures. For these reasons, they are seldom looked at together. Yet these two sets of public institutions share responsibility for the futures of a vast number of California’s young people, including 30% or more of new high school graduates who each fall enroll at one of the state’s 110 community colleges. For both systems, the pressure to improve all students’ academic achievement is increasing.

This report focuses on where California’s K–12 and community college systems meet and explores some of the potential opportunities currently under discussion for building better bridges between them. The report emphasizes the issue of students’ readiness for college-level academic work in English language arts and math.

Strengthening practices and policies related to student transitions could help California make faster progress toward its goals for well-educated young people who are better prepared for productive citizenship in the 21st century.

California's high schools and community colleges connect through their students



California high school graduates who go on to attend community college are the primary focus of this report. (See Figure 1.) Almost 107,700 students who graduated from a California public high school in 2006–07 enrolled immediately at one of the state's community colleges.

As Figure 1 shows, these students were the largest group of public college-goers among their fellow graduates. These young people enter the California Community Colleges with many different goals and backgrounds. They may hope to transfer to a four-year public university. They may aspire to earn an associate degree, such as in nursing, or pursue a vocational certificate. Graduates may have completed a traditional college-prep

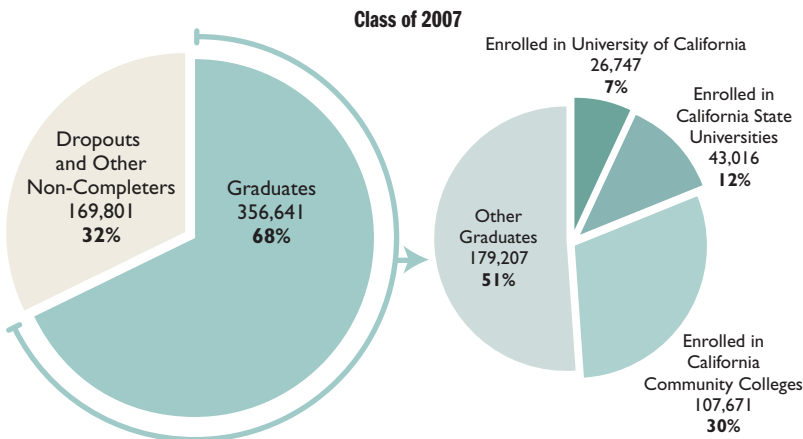
curriculum in high school, a program in Career Technical Education (CTE), or a combination of the two.

Recent high school graduates are only a fraction of all the students the community colleges serve. Only about 16%—or about 276,821—of all community college students who were enrolled in fall 2007 were 18 and 19 years old and held a high school diploma, as Figure 2 shows.

The colleges also serve students who did not graduate from high school. Students who did not pass the California High School Exit Exam or dropped out can also take community college courses. In addition, the system serves high school students who take concurrent enrollment courses.

The data make clear that the vast majority of community college students are 20 years of age or older.

figure 1 | Postsecondary pathways: Close to a third of California's public high school graduates in 2006–07 enrolled in a California community college in fall 2007

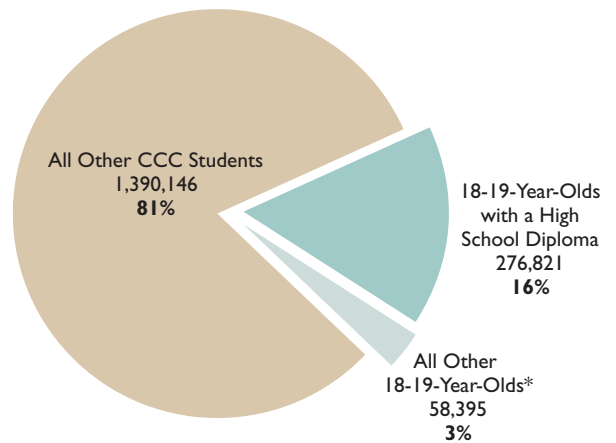


Notes: Percentages in the *overall* pathways pie chart are based on data used to estimate the four-year graduation rate for California public schools. About 526,000 students were enrolled in 9th grade in 2003–04, and nearly 357,000—about 68%—left high school four years later designated as graduates. These graduates do not include students who completed: 1) the General Educational Development Test to receive a California High School Equivalency Certificate (GED); 2) the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE); 3) an Adult Education High School Diploma program; or 4) a Special Education certificate of completion.

The percentages in the *high school graduates* pie chart are estimates based on postsecondary enrollments reported by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC).

figure 2 | A relatively small portion of students who enroll in a California community college are 18 or 19 years old

Fall 2007 California community college enrollments by age



* This category includes students whose status is unknown or who were enrolled in high school, did not graduate from high school, completed high school through an alternate path (e.g., passed the GED, received a Certificate of California High School Proficiency, etc.), or received an associate or bachelor degree.

Note: These data are based on unduplicated community college enrollments (or an “unduplicated headcount”) in fall 2007. The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office provided these data in response to a request by EdSource.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE), CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (CPEC), EdSource 11/08
 “ENROLLMENT OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN AGE 19 AND UNDER IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.”

DATA: CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE, MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS) DATA SYSTEM, EdSource 11/08

A CLOSER LOOK—STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY

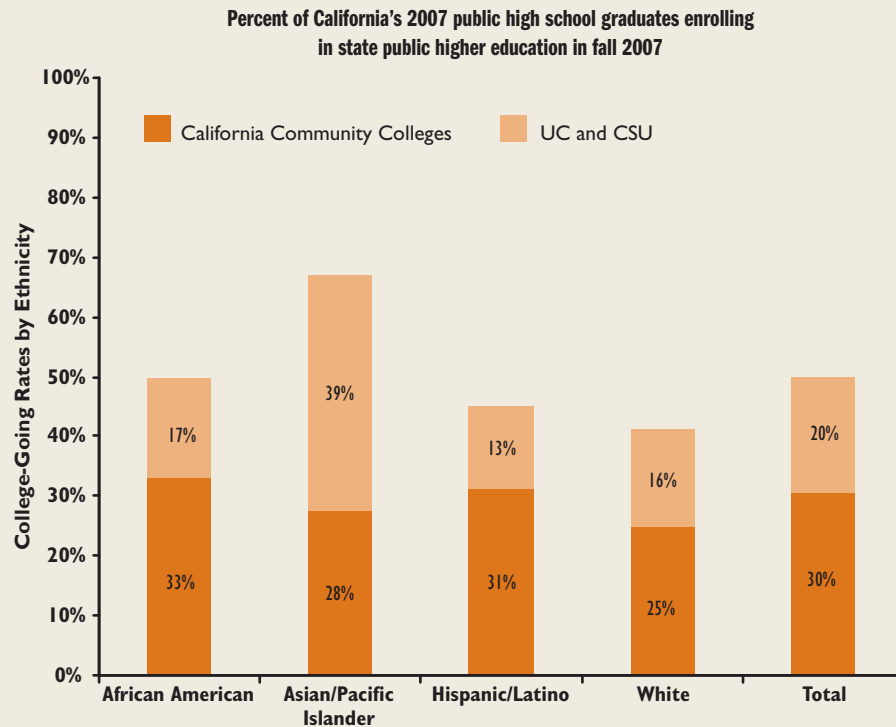


All ethnic groups enroll in community colleges at high rates

This report periodically takes “A Closer Look” at student data. These sections show how the story told in this report varies among California students based on ethnicity.

The California Community Colleges were an important resource for students of all ethnic groups who graduated from one of the state’s high schools in 2006–07, as the chart to the right shows. In particular, note that:

- The majority of African American, Latino, and white high school graduates who enrolled immediately in a public institution of higher education in fall 2007 did so at a community college.
- Asian/Pacific Islander high school graduates enrolled in the University of California (UC) at the highest rate of all ethnic groups (25%), but a larger percentage (28%) went to a community college after graduation.



DATA: CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (CPEC)
“ENROLLMENT OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN AGE 19 AND UNDER IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS”

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A glossary of community college organizations mentioned in this report

- The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC): The state-level voice for community college faculty on professional and academic issues.
- The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges (BOG): A 17-member appointed body that sets policy for the community college system.
- The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges: The chief executive officer appointed by the BOG to oversee the community college system.
- California Community College Assessment Association (CCCAA): An organization of community college testing professionals.
- California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (CIO): The state-level organization that represents chief instructional officers across the system.
- California Community Colleges Chief Student Services Officers (CSSO): An organization that represents chief student services officers across the system at the state level.
- California Community Colleges System Office: The state-level office for the system that includes the Executive Office and divisions of Academic Affairs; College Finance and Facilities Planning; Communications; Economic Development and Workforce Preparation; Government Relations; Internal Operations; Legal Affairs; Student Services and Special Programs; and Technology, Research, and Information Systems.
- Consultation Council: The formal entity through which stakeholders within the community college system provide advice on policy to the BOG. The council includes 18 members from various groups and representative organizations.
- Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS): This organization gathers faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California.
- Research and Planning Group (RP Group): An organization of community college research and planning professionals that includes the Center for Student Success through which the RP Group conducts research and evaluation projects.

Many high school graduates arrive at community college unprepared for college-level work



The California Community Colleges serve an open-access mission, unlike the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC). But new community college students must be prepared academically if they expect to succeed in college-level courses.

Recent high school graduates who enroll in a community college vary considerably in their prior academic preparation. Many also may not fully understand the academic standards to which they will be held if they aspire to take college-level courses there. One of the “top 10” student misconceptions about college cited by the Stanford Bridge Project in 2003 was that “community colleges don’t have academic standards.” The Bridge Project—which focused on K–16 reform in six states, including California—also found that many students enroll in community college without knowing that they may have to take a placement test.

California high school students graduate with varying levels of academic preparation

Students graduate from California high schools with a range of skills. Students who are not prepared for college-level work are not kept out of the community colleges. Instead, their colleges may recommend, based on the results of placement tests, that students enroll in English or math courses that are below college level.

For the purposes of this report, it is helpful to think about three groups of incoming community college students, loosely defined:

- Students who are ready for transfer-level English and math courses.
- Students who are still mastering content and skills in English and math consistent with a rigorous “university prep” high school curriculum.
- Students who are still mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Ultimately, community colleges hope students aspiring to higher education

will be able to “think abstractly in order to solve problems” and “handle complex concepts and ideas,” as the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) noted in a 2004 report, *Issues in Basic Skills Assessment and Placement in the California Community Colleges*. A 2002 report by the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS), *Academic Literacy*, cited similar “habits of mind.”

Since 2006, high school students have been required to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), which assesses the minimum academic skills required for a high school diploma. In English, the CAHSEE tests material through grade 10 and includes an essay. In math, the exit exam tests material through Algebra I. However, students can pass the math section without answering the Algebra I items correctly and pass the English section without succeeding on the essay. About 66% of students in the class of 2009 passed both the English and math sections on the first attempt in grade 10, according to the most recent independent evaluation of the CAHSEE by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO). HumRRO also found that about 7% in the class of 2007 had not passed the exam by the end of grade 12.

Students must also meet certain minimum course-taking requirements in English and mathematics (and other subject areas) to graduate from a California public high school. Every graduate is expected to have passed at least three years of high school English and two years of high school math, including Algebra I. (Districts may set higher requirements.)

Many students take English and math courses beyond the minimum required

by the state for high school graduation. In California, the course-taking requirements for eligibility to CSU and UC—the “a–g” requirements—are a particularly important threshold. These include four years of high school English, at a level approved by UC, and three years of mathematics (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II). Students must complete these courses with a grade of “C” or higher. In 2006–07, 35% of California high school graduates met these and other course requirements to be eligible for admission to CSU or UC.

A case study: student transitions in San Francisco

Clear data are not available to summarize the academic preparation of those high school graduates who go directly to community college statewide. A central challenge is that community colleges differ in how they organize their curricula and assess students’ preparedness to take courses. For instance, colleges may draw slightly different lines between which courses they define as “basic skills” and which courses are applicable toward transfer or an associate degree. Nevertheless, an example from one community college sheds some light on the issue.

For the past decade, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) has published an annual *High School Report*. It shows academic outcomes for students who graduated from San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and enrolled at CCSF the following fall. The outcomes in the most recent report include:

- How these students perform on CCSF placement tests;
- How often they pass their courses during the first year; and

- Whether they persist in their studies to the second semester and to the second year. *High School Report IX* shows that 30% of SFUSD's graduating class enrolled at CCSF in the fall of 2006. Of recent SFUSD graduates who took a CCSF placement test in mathematics:
 - 27% placed into transfer-level math, such as Calculus, Trigonometry, or Advanced Algebra in fall 2006. This was an improvement over fall 1998 when only 14% did so.
 - 44% placed into Elementary Algebra, Geometry, or Intermediate Algebra courses. These courses apply toward an associate degree at CCSF but do not transfer to UC or CSU.
 - 30% placed into some form of Basic Mathematics, below algebra—an improvement over fall 1998 when 35% did so. These basic skills courses cannot be applied to a degree. Of recent SFUSD graduates who took a CCSF placement test in English:
 - 8% placed into transfer-level Reading and Composition in fall 2006—about the same percentage as in fall 1998.
 - 34% placed into Advanced Intermediate Reading and Composition or Intermediate Training in Expository and Argumentative Reading and Composition. These courses transfer to CSU but not to UC.
 - 58% placed into a course in Basic Composition and Reading or a course in Pronunciation, Spelling, and Reading Skills.

Important Issues beyond the scope of this report

Some issues that are beyond the scope of this report affect the academic success of young people in community college, including the following:

English as a Second Language (ESL)

California has a large English learner (EL) population. Whether incoming students are assessed for placement in English or ESL affects the challenges they may face if placement is inappropriate. About 15% of California high school students were classified as ELs in 2007–08, according to the California Department of Education. Community colleges also serve ELs who did not attend high school in California. (Note that community colleges provide adult education programs in some places in California, and K–12 provides them in others.)

Resources for more information on this topic

- *ESL Students in California Public Higher Education* (Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates ESL Task Force, 2006) www.asccc.org
- *Findings in ESL* (F.P. Chisman, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2008) www.caalusa.org
- *Language Minority Students and California Community Colleges* (G.C. Bunch, 2008) ucaccord.gseis.ucla.edu

Financial aid

Student access to financial aid is particularly important for low-income students. Many community college students balance academics with busy, often full-time work lives. For these students, the availability of aid often determines whether they can stay in college long enough to earn a degree or certificate.

Resources for more information on this topic

- California Student Aid Commission, www.csac.ca.gov
- *California Community Colleges: Making Them Stronger and More Affordable* (W. Zumeta & D. Frankle, The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2007) www.highereducation.org
- *Financial Aid at California Community Colleges: Pell Grants and Fee Waivers in 2003–04* (L.K. Berkner & J. Woo, MPR Associates, 2008) www.mprinc.com
- *Green Lights & Red Tape* (D.F. Cochrane with H. Hernández-Gravelle, The Institute for College Access & Success, 2007) www.ticas.org

Career Technical Education (CTE)

New approaches and policies related to CTE in K–12 and the community colleges are reshaping the connections between the two systems. For example, the CTE Pathways Initiative will provide \$58 million to connect high school and community college CTE programs in 2008–09. Of these funds, Senate Bill (SB) 70 provides \$20 million and the Quality Education Investment Act (SB 1133) provides \$38 million.

A resource for more information on this topic

- The Statewide Career Pathways program through which the Academic Senate helps local community college and high school faculty establish linkages and articulation agreements between their courses and curricula. www.statewidepathways.org

Transfer to a four-year university

The transfer mission of the California Community Colleges provides many students an affordable path to a public four-year university. This report focuses on issues related to the academic preparation required for such college-level work rather than what is known about student transfer per se.

Resources for more information on this topic

- Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (California Community Colleges System Office) www.cccco.edu
- *Beyond Access: How the First Semester Matters for Community College Students' Aspirations and Persistence* (A.K. Driscoll, Policy Analysis for California Education, 2007) <http://pace.berkeley.edu>
- *California Community College Transfer Rates: Who Is Counted Makes a Difference* (L.J. Horn & S. Lew, MPR Associates, 2007) www.mprinc.com
- *California's Community College Students* (R. Sengupta & C. Jepsen, Public Policy Institute of California, 2006) www.ppic.org
- *Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in the California Community Colleges* (N. Shulock & C. Moore, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, 2007) www.csus.edu/ihe/

California's three public, postsecondary systems play different roles

California's Master Plan for Higher Education, established in 1960, set up three coordinated systems of public higher education in the state: the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC).

The plan codified different functions, responsibilities, and prospective student pools for each. UC and CSU have *selective* admissions policies:

- The research-oriented **UC system**, which was given sole authority under the original plan to independently confer doctoral degrees, draws from the *top eighth* of high school graduates in the state.
- The **CSU system**, which focuses on undergraduate and master's level instruction, draws from the *top third* of graduates. Legislation signed in 2005 (Senate Bill 724) also authorizes CSU to independently confer doctor of education degrees in educational leadership.

In contrast, the **California Community Colleges** are open-access institutions that fulfill an array of missions. This broad role enables UC and CSU to be selective in their admissions and UC to maintain a research focus. Currently, the community colleges' responsibilities include:

- Two-year associate degrees in a variety of fields;
- Transfer to a four-year university (which might also lead to an associate degree);
- Certificate programs in the arts, sciences, occupational, and technical fields;
- Basic skills courses;
- Adult education courses (on some campuses); and
- Programs that allow high school students to earn college credit, such as dual enrollment programs.

The Master Plan has been reviewed several times since 1960. For example, a 1972 review made recommendations about how the State Scholarship and Loan Commission (now the Student Aid Commission) might become better integrated "as a facet of the state's comprehensive plan for higher education."

For more information on the Master Plan, see: www.ucop.edu/acadinit/mastplan/

This percentage was higher than in fall 1998 when 52% did so. These basic skills courses cannot be applied to a degree.

The report also indicates that SFUSD graduates passed their first-year courses at CCSF in 2006–07 slightly more than 60% of the time. About 76% persisted to fall 2007.

Variations in how colleges approach basic skills instruction reflect a strong tradition of local determination

The CCSF *High School Report* offers a concrete example of what one college identifies as the academic needs of its incoming students. The placement testing results reported by CCSF are not unusual. Colleges often find that 75% or more of entering freshmen (of any age) who take a placement test are not

prepared for college-level work in English and/or mathematics, according to a 2004 article by Robert M. Johnstone, currently dean of Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness at Skyline College.

California community colleges take different approaches to organizing instruction for students who need more preparation, such as:

- The number of "levels" of basic skills courses that campuses might offer, and
- The assessment and placement policies used to direct students to those courses.

Colleges vary in how many "levels" of basic skills instruction they offer

As part of a January 2008 report to the Board of Governors of the colleges, the system's

Academic Affairs Division surveyed campuses about how many "levels" of basic skills courses in reading, writing, and mathematics each offers, as defined locally. Out of the then-109 colleges, 91 responded. (Woodland Community College in Yolo County became the system's 110th college in 2008.)

With respect to credit basic skills courses, the survey found:

- **Reading:** Responding colleges most commonly (30%) offer four or more levels of credit basic skills courses in reading. However, 18% offer only one level, 25% offer two levels, and 18% offer three.
- **Writing:** Responding colleges most commonly (32%) offer two levels of credit basic skills courses in writing. However, 20% offer only one level, 19% offer three levels, and 23% offer four or more.
- **Mathematics:** Responding colleges are more evenly split in how they organize their credit basic skills curricula in math: 27% offer two levels of credit basic skills courses, 26% offer three levels, and 27% offer four or more. Only 9% offer one level.

(Note that in each of these three subject areas, a few campuses did not report offering credit basic skills courses.)

This variation in local curricula means that recent high school graduates who need basic skills instruction may encounter different course-taking paths—with different implications for how long it will take to achieve their academic goals—depending on where they enroll. It can also affect students if they move to another campus. (For more information on credit and noncredit basic skills courses, see the box on page 7.)

Community colleges differ in their approaches to assessment and placement

The policies used by California's community colleges to determine whether students need further academic preparation in reading, writing, or mathematics also vary based on local decisions.

The California Education Code establishes that placement tests "shall be used as an advisory tool to assist students in the selection of an educational program" and "shall not be used to exclude students from

admission.” (See section 78213 of the Education Code for the full requirements.) Regulations further specify how these tests may be approved for use by the Chancellor’s Office. Colleges must show that these tests, and the cut-scores used to inform placement recommendations, provide accurate information about whether students can succeed in the local curriculum. However, a single placement test cannot be the sole criterion for making a placement recommendation: campuses must use multiple measures. These commonly include measures such as academic transcripts and personal interviews and information, according to a 2004 report by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC).

These assessment and placement regulations are influenced by the 1991 settlement of a legal case brought by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). The case charged that prior assessment and placement practices inappropriately denied many Latino students access to higher-level courses. The settlement also affected the regulatory parameters for how districts may set course prerequisites. Prerequisites must be validated to ensure their academic necessity, can be established only for individual courses, and may be challenged by individual students.

The variability of placement tests used across the system is a topic of much recent discussion. The community colleges used 92 different testing instruments in reading, writing, math, and English as a Second Language (ESL) in 2005–06, according to a recent report by the Consultation Council Task Force on Assessment. These included commercial tests and “homegrown” assessments developed by individual campuses to meet local needs.

However, the task force also argued that there is less variation in practice than these numbers suggest. It noted that colleges are moving toward greater uniformity in the placement tests they use, especially toward certain computerized, commercial assessments. A recent study by Richard S. Brown and David N. Niemi also found that just two commercial test batteries accounted “for more than half of all placement testing in California community colleges.”

Credit and noncredit basic skills

Community college basic skills courses in reading, writing, and mathematics are offered on either a credit or noncredit basis. Neither variety applies toward transfer to a four-year university or an associate degree. A June 2008 report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) notes that credit course units are considered for financial aid. In addition, credit courses are funded at a higher per-student rate. The LAO report also observes that, “unlike credit courses, students taking noncredit basic skills courses do not receive grades and are typically permitted to join or leave a class at any time during the semester.”

According to a recent survey of the community colleges, the majority of 91 responding campuses do not offer noncredit basic skill courses in reading, writing, or mathematics. Only 31% of responding colleges reported any such courses in reading, only 29% in writing, and only 33% in math. The system’s Academic Affairs division published the survey results in a January 2008 report to the Board of Governors.

Community college leaders debate how to encourage more consistency in approaches to assessment and placement

The range of placement policies across colleges has nevertheless prompted various concerns within the system. For example:

- In a May 2004 letter to the chancellor, the Research and Planning (RP) Group argued that “community college students are not well served” by the “great inconsistency in measures, processes, and placement outcomes from college to college.” The letter expressed concern that “the existence of 109 assessment processes has made it difficult, if not almost impossible, to consider aligning placement in community college basic skills courses with the exit standards of the secondary system.”
- The ASCCC’s 2004 report surveyed colleges about their placement and assessment policies. In response to a question about problems with their current policies, 23 of 75 responding colleges expressed concern that student placements are not accurate and 33 cited inadequate counseling support.

In March 2007, the Board of Governors (BOG) moved to evaluate the possibility of establishing a common assessment across the system. One motivation behind the board’s motion was the “testing burden” placed on students who enroll in more than one college, given that individual colleges do not always accept the placement recommendations of other campuses.

The Consultation Council Task Force on Assessment convened to provide the BOG with recommendations on this possibility. The task force included representatives from across the system, including faculty, the system office, a college CEO, a chief instructional officer, and others. The BOG accepted the task force’s report in January 2008.

The report described resistance among the community colleges to the idea of a common, mandatory assessment, noting that “local determination of what best supports student success is a deeply ingrained concept” within the system. As an alternative to a mandatory policy for the system as a whole, the task force recommended exploiting locally driven movement toward greater uniformity in assessments (discussed above) as a basis for improving the acceptance of placement test scores among different colleges and developing new tools for sharing and comparing assessment data.

Recently, the chancellor convened an Action Planning Group for Assessment and Placement to evaluate:

- Recommendations for developing a common placement test for the system, and
- Possible changes to state regulations or statute to make immediate enrollment in needed basic skills courses mandatory for new students.

One focus of the group is a recent recommendation by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) to use items from the K–12 California Standards Tests (CSTs) as the basis for a new, common placement test. (The LAO recommendation is discussed later in this report.)

A CLOSER LOOK—STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY



African Americans and Latinos are more likely to take basic skills courses and less likely to pass them

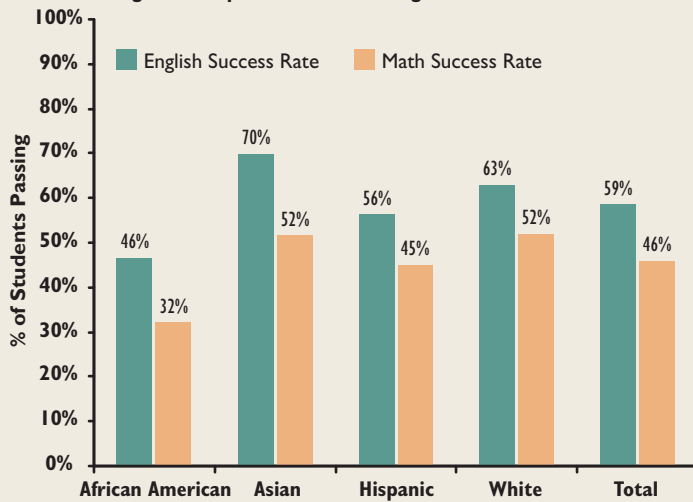
Recent high school graduates' enrollment and success in basic skills English and mathematics courses at the California Community Colleges vary by ethnicity.

Consider the example of community college students who were 18 or 19 years old and held a high school diploma in fall 2007. Data from this term raise particular concerns about the academic success of African American students, especially in mathematics. These African American students passed basic skills math courses only 32% of the time and basic skills English courses 46% of the time. (See the chart below.)

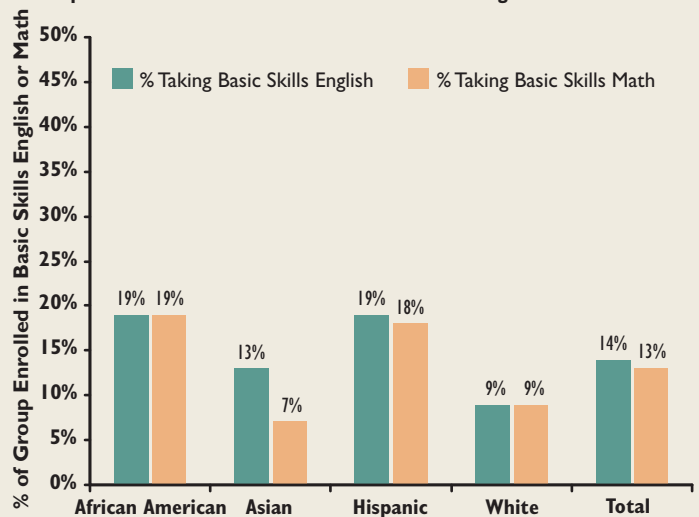
These low success rates are even more troubling because, in both subject areas, African Americans were among the most likely recent high school graduates to take a basic skills course in fall 2007. (See the chart below.) In particular, note that:

- African Americans and Latinos enrolled in a basic skill course at higher rates than their Asian and white peers in both English and math.
- Asians enrolled in a basic skills course in English more frequently than in math.

Success rates* of 18- to 19-year-old community college students with a high school diploma in basic skills English and math courses in fall 2007



Percent of 18- to 19-year-old community college students with a high school diploma enrolled in at least one basic skills course in English or math in fall 2007



* Success rates show the percentage of students who passed a course. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of enrollments with a grade of A, B, C, CR (credit), and P (pass) by the number receiving an A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC (no credit), W (withdrew), I (incomplete), P, NP (not passed), or DR (dropped).

Note: These data are based on total basic skills course enrollments, not on an unduplicated student headcount.

Note: These data show independent headcounts of students who took at least one basic skills English or math course in fall 2007. They are not adjusted for students who took courses in both subjects in the same term. Whatever overlap may have existed among students in the two groups—if any—is not indicated here. In addition, these data do not reveal how many students may need basic skills courses.

DATA: CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS) DATA SYSTEM

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Any policy recommendations regarding regulations or statute emerging from this Action Planning Group must be discussed with the Consultation Council and then presented to the Board of Governors.

Statewide needs for basic skills instruction across the community colleges are difficult to estimate

Estimating the number of recent high school graduates who need basic skills instruction across California's community college system is difficult. The System Office for the

colleges does not collect statewide data on the outcomes of campus placement assessments.

But the System Office does collect data that includes student enrollments in courses each college defines as "basic skills." In researching this report, EdSource took a closer look at basic skills enrollment data for 18- and 19-year-olds who held a high school diploma and were enrolled in a California community college in fall 2007. The Chancellor's Office provided these data, which come from the Management Information Systems (MIS) data system.

Overall, these data show:

- 14% of 18- and 19-year-old high school graduates who enrolled in a California community college in fall 2007 took a credit or noncredit basic skills course in English, and
- 13% took a credit or noncredit basic skills course in mathematics.

However, these enrollment data do not provide a reliable snapshot of the estimated academic needs of recent high school graduates. First, they do not shed light on students' goals when they enroll in community college and the

extent to which basic skills courses fit into them. In addition, this single enrollment snapshot cannot clarify, for example, whether some 19-year-olds may be entering their second year of study having already completed the basic skills courses to which they were directed. In other cases, new students may not have access to the needed courses.

Whether incoming community college students take basic skills courses immediately is another consideration when interpreting these data:

- *Beyond the Open Door*, an August 2007 report by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy (IHELP), notes that “students are not required to enroll immediately in remediation or to enroll in remediation at all.”
- The Academic Senate expressed concern in fall 2004 that the colleges, unlike CSU and UC, do not “impose deadlines for

addressing remediation in language and mathematics skills.”

Responding to the same issue, the LAO in its 2008 report said that all students should be required to take any recommended basic skills courses immediately upon enrolling in a community college.

The issue of when students who need basic skills instruction take these courses raises important questions about student success. For instance, a student might enroll in a college-level history course without sufficient academic skill in writing. But broad student access to such course offerings is another important value for the colleges. How community colleges are financed is also a consideration. Because community colleges are funded based on student enrollments—or full-time equivalent students (FTES)—some fear that preventing or limiting access to many courses would have

adverse effects on colleges’ abilities to pay for these courses.

However, data on the academic preparation of high school graduates entering CSU make clear that many new community college students likely also need additional preparation if they hope to receive an associate degree or transfer. In fall 2007, 46% of first-time freshmen at CSU needed further preparation in English and 37% needed additional help in math. These statistics are based on results from CSU placement tests and on the extent to which students were exempted from testing. These CSU students who need additional preparation completed a college prep curriculum in English and math in high school and were selected from among the top third of high school graduates in the state. The California Community Colleges, which have a broader access policy, welcome many students without this level of prior academic preparation.

Some look to the California Standards Tests as a tool for aligning K-12 and community college expectations



Some community college leaders and policymakers see the California Standards Tests (CSTs), which elementary and secondary students take each year, as a potential resource for strengthening the transition from high school to community college. Although the way in which CSTs are structured in high school presents some challenges, recent research and policy decisions are giving this idea greater momentum.

The academic content standards and California Standards Tests are centerpieces of California’s K-12 reforms

California’s standards-based reforms in K-12 place high expectations on public school teachers and administrators. For example, the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE), states: “In standards-based education, teachers will be expected to help their students master areas of the curriculum that were previously attempted only by gifted students.”

California’s academic content standards are the main centerpiece of this ambitious

vision. The SBE adopted standards in English language arts and mathematics in the late 1990s:

- In high school English language arts, California developed content standards for grades 9–10 and 11–12. The standards focus on reading, writing, the conventions of written and oral communication, and speaking and listening.
- Beginning with Algebra I, the mathematics standards are organized by course or specialized subject area rather than grade level. Standards are established for Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and other specialized content areas.

California’s academic content standards have been acknowledged nationally for their rigor. By themselves, however, the standards are not powerful policy tools for leveraging classroom instruction in high schools. As in all grades, the state content standards are voluntary guidelines intended to orient instruction and curricula. And unlike the elementary and middle grades—for which the state adopts textbooks and other instructional materials—high schools select their own materials, certifying their alignment with the state’s academic standards.

In contrast, all schools are *required* to administer the CSTs annually, toward the

figure 3 | High school CSTs in English language arts are administered by grade level—but in mathematics, they are primarily end-of-course tests

Percentages of all students in each grade taking CST, 2008*					
Grades	7	8	9	10	11
English Language Arts (ELA) —The ELA CSTs are <i>grade-level</i> tests. All 11th graders take the same English CST, for example.					
English Language Arts	99%	98%	97%	97%	96%
Mathematics** —Starting with Algebra I, the math CSTs are primarily <i>end-of-course</i> tests. Only students who take Algebra II in a given year, regardless of their grade level, take the Algebra II CST, for example. Some students repeat the same math course in more than one year. The red boxes indicate the timetable recommended by the state, beginning with Algebra I in grade 8. Students take the Summative High School Math CST <i>after</i> they have completed Algebra II even if they are not enrolled in a higher-level math course.					
Mathematics	91%				
General Math		43%	15%		
Algebra I	5%	51%	53%	27%	14%
Geometry		4%	23%	33%	18%
Algebra II		0.1%	4%	22%	24%
Summative High School Math			0.1%	4%	21%

* These percentages are based on enrollment figures provided by the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, which counts enrollments on the first day of the annual testing period. This differs somewhat from enrollments reported elsewhere by CDE, which are based primarily on student headcounts from early October.

** Some students take Integrated Math CSTs. Those results and more detailed information on STAR are available from <http://star.cde.ca.gov>.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE); ACCESSED 9/23/08

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end of the school year. Although these tests are seen as relatively low stakes for individual students, they are high stakes for schools and districts. School and district performance is judged for state and federal accountability purposes by how well students do on these tests, which are aligned with the academic content standards. As a result, high schools have a strong incentive to align their curricula with the standards as well.

Because virtually all students in grades 9–11 take CSTs—and because the content standards on which they are based are shared across K–12—some see these tests as a potential resource for creating better alignment between high school and community college expectations, and for helping community colleges communicate their academic expectations more effectively to high school students and teachers. Figure 3 shows how the CSTs in English language arts and mathematics are organized in the upper grades and the percentage of students in each grade who took them in 2008.

The Legislative Analyst's Office and Cal-PASS suggest CSTs could inform community college placement

Recent reports by the LAO and the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) provide two visions for how high school CSTs might inform community college placement.

The LAO's *Back to Basics* report, released in June 2008, cites the CSTs as a resource that could be used to develop common math and English placement tests for use across the community colleges. The report argues that former CST items could provide an economical basis for such tests because the state owns the rights to the CST questions used across grades 2–11. These common tests would use CST items to determine the grade level at which incoming community college students are able to demonstrate proficiency and would use the same academic standards that form the foundation for state assessments in K–12. The LAO suggests state legislators could make certain basic skills funds contingent on a college's

willingness to accept the results of these tests and “translate CST scores into their own test results.”

This recommendation is currently under consideration by the Action Planning Group for Assessment and Placement, convened recently by the community college chancellor and mentioned earlier. However, a recent report by the California Community College Assessment Association—an organization of community college testing professionals—voiced concerns about the LAO recommendation, saying that the CSTs were not designed for student placement.

A July 2008 study by Cal-PASS focuses on the potential value of existing CSTs rather than the development of a new assessment. Its approach also differs from the LAO's recommendations by focusing on test results among 11th graders, rather than CST items from across grade levels.

Drawing from its longitudinal student database (see the box on page 11), Cal-PASS researchers studied whether CST scores in grade 11 can help counselors advise

Cal-PASS supports regional collaboration between K–12 teachers and postsecondary faculty

The California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) is a system of regional partnerships through which K–12 teachers and postsecondary faculty—informed by longitudinal data—work together to improve student transitions.

Cal-PASS is founded on regional data-sharing agreements among local education institutions, such as universities, community colleges, and K–12 schools and districts. Cal-PASS reports that 30 four-year universities, 108 community colleges, and more than 5,000 K–12 schools in California are members of these regional groups. Through these partnerships, Cal-PASS has compiled a database with more than 235 million student records that include data on demographics, coursework, CST scores, and awards such as diplomas.

Regional collaboration takes place through Professional Learning Councils (PLCs). Cal-PASS reports that more than 1,000 faculty across the state currently participate in 55 PLCs. The PLCs are subject-matter specific and meet once a month. K–12 teachers and postsecondary faculty discuss data that follow local students as they move from one institution to another, such as data showing the math and English courses taken by high school graduates when they enter community college. The PLCs use these data to identify problems and evaluate new approaches to improve student transitions. Cal-PASS also funds minigrants to support these interventions.

Out of \$26.2 million that the 2008–09 Budget Act directs to the Board of Governors of the community colleges for local assistance in telecommunications and technology services, \$2 million is specified for the “ongoing support and expansion” of Cal-PASS. Other funds come from various foundations.

As a condition of state funding, the 2008–09 Budget Act requires Cal-PASS to conduct an annual program evaluation “that sufficiently documents the value and productivity of the program” and report the results to the Chancellor’s Office. Cal-PASS must also submit a financial audit and information on institutional participation in the program.

For more information, see: www.cal-pass.org

students about the level of English or math they might successfully undertake in community college. The researchers relied on the following data:

- In English, the Cal-PASS analysis focused on 4,700 students with grade 11 CST scores who also received a grade in an English course at one of 47 community colleges by the end of fall 2006.
- In math, the analysis focused on approximately 3,700 students with grade 11 CST scores who also received a grade in a math course at one of 31 community colleges.

In practice, however, the sample sizes in math were actually smaller because CSTs in math are tied to student course-taking rather than grade level. Students in grade 11 may take one of a range of math CSTs depending on their level of attainment.

The study found that grade 11 English and math CST scores—when combined with information about junior-year grades in these subjects—could shed light on the level of community college English or math course for which a student is prepared. High schools could use this information to provide students with early feedback about their college readiness. And community colleges could become more empowered to consider the state’s K–12 academic standards and assessments as part of their placement recommendations.

Similar to the LAO’s recommendations, the Cal-PASS report notes that the ultimate usefulness of grade 11 CSTs for these purposes is contingent on local action and validation. “The value of using high school test scores and grades in placement would improve greatly with increased alignment of math and

English course content between high schools and community colleges, and among colleges,” the report says. Some colleges are currently exploring the study’s application to their own campuses, according to Cal-PASS.

Legislation modifies the Early Assessment Program (EAP) to enable participation by community colleges

Legislation signed by the governor in September 2008 takes another approach to leveraging the CSTs. Senate Bill (SB) 946 formally modifies the Early Assessment Program (EAP) so that community colleges may also participate beginning in 2009–10.

The original EAP linked the K–12 academic content standards and CSU’s college readiness expectations

Offered for the first time in spring 2004, the EAP is a partnership between CSU, the California Department of Education (CDE), and the State Board of Education (SBE). It provides high school students with early feedback during the summer before their senior year about their preparedness for college-level classes at CSU. By giving students one year to become better prepared (if needed), EAP developers hoped to reduce the proportion of incoming CSU students who need further academic preparation in English and mathematics.

The EAP has three components:

- “Augmented” versions of three CSTs (see the box on page 12), taken in grade 11, which are intended to provide students with early feedback about their academic readiness;
- Assistance for students in grade 12 who are not yet prepared, including additional coursework in English language arts and online services in mathematics; and
- Professional development for high school teachers to build their capacity to improve students’ college readiness. (These efforts are discussed later in this report.)

Students who do well on an EAP test are considered on track to be ready for college and are exempted from placement testing in English and/or math at CSU. In mathematics, students can also receive a “conditional” exemption from placement testing that is

Early Assessment Program—Key Terms

This report uses the following terms when discussing the Early Assessment Program.

1) The term “CST” refers to the three state tests through which 11th graders might participate in the Early Assessment Program. These include:

- The Grade 11 English Language Arts CST (an end-of-grade test);
- The Algebra II CST (an end-of-course test); and
- The Summative High School Math CST (a test taken by students in the years after they complete Algebra II, even if they are not enrolled in a higher-level math course).

2) The term “augmented CST” refers to expanded versions of these three tests, including additional test items that are aligned with both the K-12 and CSU readiness standards.

- In English, the augmented Grade 11 English Language Arts CST includes 15 additional questions and an essay.
- In mathematics, the augmented Algebra II and Summative High School Math CSTs each include 15 additional questions covering topics in Algebra II and Geometry.

3) Only some of the items on the augmented CSTs are used to determine whether students are on track to be ready for college. The term “EAP test” refers to this subset of items. In both English and math, a student’s EAP score is based on:

- The additional items added for the augmented CST, and
- About 40 questions from the original CST.

For more information, see: www.calstate.edu/eap/

contingent on an additional year of mathematics during their senior year of high school.

The decision to augment three CSTs for the EAP avoided the need to develop yet another set of academic assessments and standards to which students and teachers would need to

respond, according to a recent book chapter by David Spence, former executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer of the CSU system. As Spence recounts, the EAP development process uncovered that the CSTs did not always emphasize the same topics as CSU’s placement expectations. The items added to the CSTs assess topics that “were part of the state-adopted, school academic standards, but [that] had not been test items on the CSTs,” Spence writes. “To assert that the [CSU] readiness standards are aligned with the [K–12] school standards understates the relationship because these readiness standards are one and the same with a subset of the school standards,” he adds.

The EAP’s grade 12 assistance and professional development components are geared toward helping students and teachers better understand the English and math content that CSU expects should be taught and assessed, and the level of performance teachers ought to expect from their students.

For example, college and high school faculty and administrators collaborated to develop an Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) for students in grades 11 and 12. The course is aligned with the academic content standards for these grades. The CSU Chancellor’s Office reports that 187 schools had committed to offering the ERWC as a stand-alone course as of April 2008. (This does not include schools that may have adapted portions of the ERWC for use across their English curricula.) Students passing the ERWC satisfy one year of the four-year course-taking requirement in English—the “b” requirement—for eligibility to CSU or UC.

The ERWC is designed to help high school students develop as readers and writers of exposition, analysis, and argument—skills that will be expected frequently in college courses. The course responds, in part, to a common criticism that high school English curricula pay inadequate attention to helping students work with nonfiction and critical texts. (The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates voiced similar concerns in a 2002 report, *Academic Literacy*, directing these concerns toward the high school English language arts content standards.)

So far, the overall proportions of first-time CSU freshmen needing additional academic preparation in English and math have remained roughly the same since before the EAP began. The first group of freshmen who might have taken the EAP as high school juniors (in spring 2004) entered CSU in fall 2005. But the overall remediation rates for CSU first-time freshmen in mathematics, though lower than 10 years ago, have remained at about 37% since fall 2003. During the same time, remediation rates in English have remained between 45% and 48%.

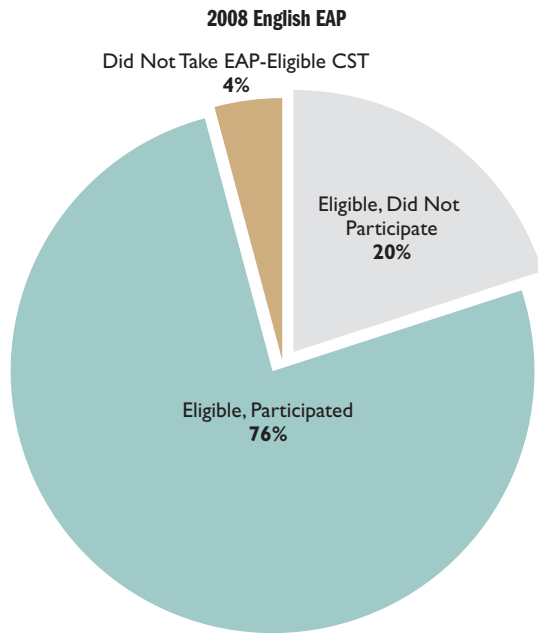
Full implementation of the EAP concept remains a concern. One criticism focuses on the timeliness and effectiveness of the early feedback provided to students. For example, EAP results are released in the late summer with other CST results—a late timeline for informing decisions about student placements in the senior year.

[Senate Bill 946 enables community colleges to participate in the EAP beginning in 2009–10](#)

Legislation signed by the governor in September 2008—Senate Bill (SB) 946—explicitly identifies the EAP as a model on which the community colleges should build, beginning in 2009–10. Sen. Jack Scott, who will become chancellor of the California Community Colleges in January 2009, introduced the bill. In part, the law is intended to send the message that community colleges have the same academic standards for transfer-level work as CSU and to enable students to prepare further in their senior year while still assured of their eligibility to attend community college.

SB 946 does not require community college districts to participate in the program. Districts can participate voluntarily, and the Chancellor’s Office will coordinate the program. Participating districts will use the existing EAP tests—which are premised on shared standards between the K–12 and CSU systems—to exempt students from placement testing. As at CSU, participating community college districts will appoint an EAP coordinator to conduct outreach to local K–12 schools and students about the program and improved college readiness, coordinated with local CSU campuses. The law

figure 4 | In English, about three-quarters of 11th graders participated in the Early Assessment Program

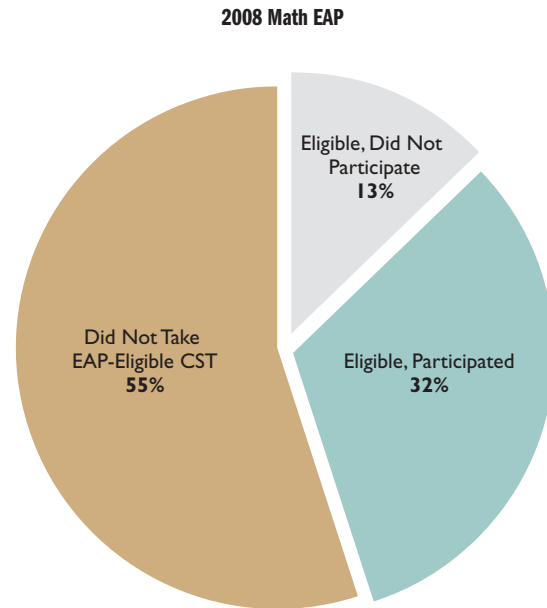


Note: This chart uses the total 11th grade enrollment reported by the STAR program in 2008.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) STAR PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)

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figure 5 | In mathematics, most 11th graders did not take an EAP-eligible CST—but the majority who did participated in the program



Note: This chart uses the total 11th grade enrollment reported by the STAR program in 2008.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) STAR PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)

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also encourages participating community college districts to work with the Academic Senate toward the goal of “sequencing their precollegiate-level courses and transfer-level courses in English and mathematics to the elementary and secondary education academic content standards.”

Whether and how many community colleges will volunteer to participate in the pilot program remains to be seen. Although a prior attempt in the Los Angeles Community College District to explore the EAP faced problems when student results proved difficult to obtain, SB 946 provides a policy structure for making results available. The system’s January 2006 *System Strategic Plan*—which set systemwide goals to help the colleges meet California’s projected need for broader postsecondary access and success—cited the EAP as an opportunity for the colleges. However, the plan also expressed reservations about how the EAP might affect the system’s tradition of local determination. (One of the principles guiding the strategic plan was “the flexibility to address the broad diversity of

community circumstances and institutional responses across California.”)

The current expectations of community colleges are better aligned with the EAP in English than in mathematics

Recent research presents a mixed view of how well the augmented CSTs developed for the EAP align with the placement tests community colleges already use to assess incoming students.

A June 2007 study by Richard S. Brown and David N. Niemi (mentioned earlier), published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, examined the 16 placement tests that are most frequently used across the California community colleges, the most common of which are commercially developed. Analysts evaluated these tests to compile a body of de facto standards to which colleges hold students. The study then considered the depth, breadth, and balance with which the augmented CSTs assess content areas currently valued by the colleges.

The study found that the augmented English language arts CST is well aligned with the de facto expectations of community colleges. The study found less alignment in mathematics. The augmented math CSTs did not cover some topics valued by the colleges, which “tended to be either lower-level mathematics concepts such as whole numbers or fractions” or “topics beyond the level of Algebra II, such as trigonometry.”

Brown and Niemi also describe alignment between high school and community college assessments as “a necessary but insufficient condition to adequately prepare students for the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.” They stress that students must also be adequately prepared to succeed on these tests.

In mathematics, many potential community college students do not take EAP-eligible CSTs

The EAP provides California’s community colleges with an existing model for communicating academic expectations to high school students and considering the

K–12 academic content standards and CSTs. However, the program as it currently exists is also limited in important ways as a community college tool in mathematics. These limitations have two sources in state education policy:

- Differences in how high school CSTs in English and mathematics are organized, with student course-taking being a limiting factor in mathematics; and
- Differences between the missions of the community colleges and CSU.

In contrast with English, student course-taking is a limiting factor for the EAP in mathematics

The high school CSTs in English and mathematics are organized differently. There is only one English language arts CST in grade 11, and nearly all 11th graders take the test. In principle, all of these

students can take the EAP test in English, whether they plan to go to CSU or a community college. Overall, slightly more than three out of four 11th graders participated in 2008. (See Figure 4.) Expansion of the EAP for use by the community colleges could help stir even greater participation among students who do not currently imagine attending a four-year university but may be considering community college.

In contrast, less than half of 11th graders were sufficiently far along in their study of mathematics to take an EAP-eligible CST in math in 2008 because of how the high school math CSTs are organized and variations in when students take them. Consider:

- The Algebra II CST is an end-of-course exam: only 11th graders enrolled in the Algebra II course take this CST. Only

24% of 11th graders took the Algebra II CST in 2008.

- The Summative High School Math CST targets the state's most accelerated math students. Students take the Summative High School Math CST beginning in the year *after* they have completed Algebra II. Any 11th grader who takes this CST has completed Algebra II by no later than the end of grade 10. Only 21% of 11th graders had done this in 2008.

In total, only 45% of 11th graders took an EAP-eligible CST in math in 2008. (See Figure 5.) The majority of 11th graders were not eligible to take one of these tests and were further behind in math. These students were more likely to rely on a community college for access to postsecondary education and were more likely to need basic skills instruction.

A CLOSER LOOK—STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY



African American and Latino 11th graders were far less likely to take the Summative High School Math CST

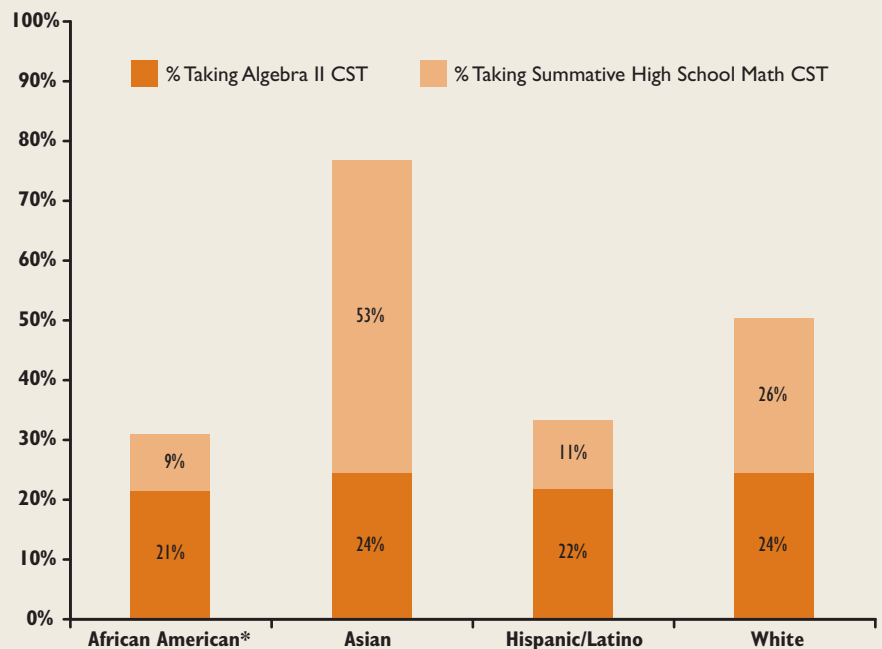
In mathematics, there is a substantial gap in the extent to which California 11th graders of different ethnic groups take EAP-eligible CSTs. (See the chart.) EdSource estimates that:

- 77% of Asian and 50% of white 11th graders took an EAP-eligible CST in math in 2007–08.
- In contrast, only 33% of Hispanic/Latino and 31% of African American 11th graders did so.

The primary driver behind this gap is the widely differing rates at which these 11th graders took the Summative High School Math CST in 2007–08, as the chart shows. Only an estimated 9% of African American and 11% of Latino 11th graders took this CST compared with 26% of whites and 53% of Asians. African Americans and Latinos currently complete Algebra II by the end of grade 10 at substantially lower rates than their peers.

In English, most students of all four groups participated in the EAP in 2008. Among those who took the grade 11 English language arts CST, 75% of African American, 88% of Asian, 77% of Latino, and 80% of white students took the EAP test.

Percent of 11th grade students taking an EAP-eligible CST in math in 2008



* In total, an estimated 31% of African American students took an EAP-eligible CST in mathematics in 2008. The percentages shown here do not add up to 31% due to rounding.

Note: These percentages show the estimated proportion of students who were eligible for the 2008 Math EAP out of enrollment reported by the CDE's DataQuest website. The earlier pie charts use enrollment data reported by STAR. But because STAR does not report enrollments for each grade level by ethnicity, this table uses enrollment data from DataQuest.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) DATAQUEST AND STAR PROGRAM

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In support of their open-access mission, community colleges reach out to students with math skills below Algebra II

California Community Colleges in particular need to consider how often students take EAP-eligible CSTs in math because the system has a different mission and prospective student pool than CSU.

According to California's Master Plan for Higher Education, the community colleges are the only public postsecondary system to serve an open-access mission. Whereas CSU draws from only the top third of high school graduates in the state and requires students to have completed Algebra II, the community colleges are especially important for the majority of students who have not taken

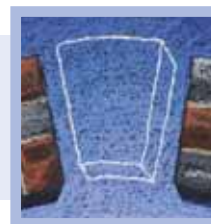
Algebra II by grade 11 and may need more extensive instruction in math. That these students can still receive early feedback about their academic preparation in English through the EAP should not be understated, however.

The good news is that the percentage of 11th graders taking either the Algebra II or Summative High School Math CST has improved over time, from 35% in 2003 to 45% in 2008. Continued improvements, especially if sustained for students of all ethnic groups (see the box on page 14), would further expand the proportion of 11th graders who take EAP-eligible CSTs in math.

Looking forward, potential changes in California's policies regarding Algebra I may play a role. In July 2008, the State Board

of Education established a policy that the Algebra I CST should become the "sole test of record" in 8th grade math for federal accountability purposes. Currently, an 8th grader can take either a general math CST (which covers 6th and 7th grade standards) or the Algebra I CST (or higher), depending on the level of math the student has reached. If the new policy—which is facing legal and political challenges—is implemented, schools will face significant pressure to push all 8th graders to take Algebra I. What this would mean for students' subsequent participation in higher math courses is unclear, but certainly one goal of the policy is for a higher proportion of students to take Algebra II by 11th grade.

Working toward shared expectations for student success requires capacity building for both K-12 and the community colleges



The goal of improving students' academic preparation raises questions not only about alignment between K-12 and the community colleges, but also about the capacity of schools and colleges. Shared expectations and standards make a difference only if California's educational institutions and faculty are capable of meeting those goals. Ongoing efforts to improve the capacity of educators are taking place on a number of fronts.

The capacity of high school educators is a crucial ingredient in improving students' college readiness

The results of the 2008 EAP—see Figures 6 and 7 on page 16—show that:

- Of the 76% of 11th graders who took the English EAP test, only 17% were assessed as on track to be ready for college and exempted from placement testing at CSU.
- Of the 32% of 11th graders who took the math EAP test, only 13% were exempted from placement testing at CSU; another 42% received a conditional exemption.

(Students may ultimately be exempted from CSU placement testing in other ways, such as by receiving an adequate score on a relevant advanced placement exam. In addition, EAP participants who do not achieve

an exemption as 11th graders still have an additional year to prepare for college.)

These numbers reveal the scale of the challenge facing California's K-12 schools, which are increasingly expected to prepare all students for some form of postsecondary education. Although California's ongoing policy dialogue about how to strengthen the classroom practices, career paths, and professional development of the state's educators is beyond the scope of this report, broad improvements in student achievement require the coordinated efforts and professional growth of these educators.

California schools aspire to high academic standards with fewer staff than the national average

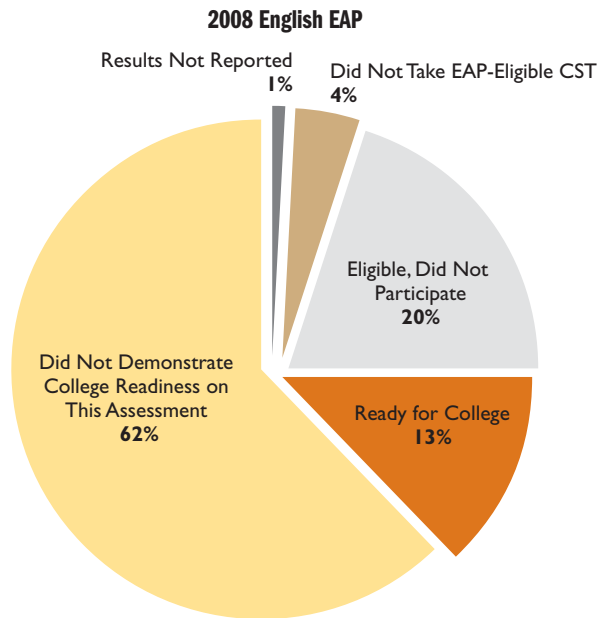
School-site staffing in California is lean by national standards. California ranks 51st

among states (including the District of Columbia) in the number of guidance counselors employed per 1,000 pupils, and 49th in the number of school site leaders per 1,000 pupils, according to the NCES Common Core of Data for 2005-06. For example:

- California schools have 1.1 guidance counselors for every 1,000 pupils, but schools nationwide have 2.1 per 1,000—almost twice as many as in California.
- California schools have 2.2 school-site leaders per 1,000 pupils, but schools nationwide have 3.4 per 1,000.

In addition, NCES Schools and Staffing Survey data for 2003-04 show that the average class size for teachers in California's public secondary schools—30.5 students—was higher than in any other state. The national average was 24.7 students.

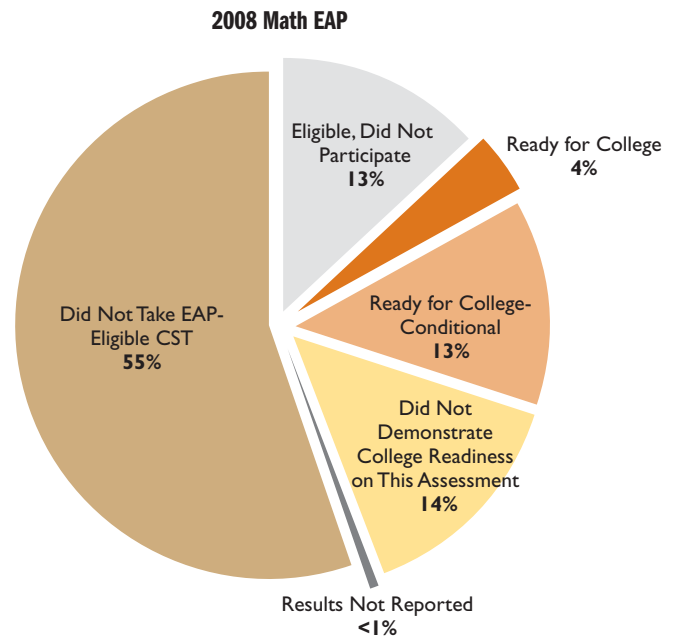
figure 6 | In English, most 11th graders did not earn an exemption from CSU placement tests through the Early Assessment Program (EAP)



Note: This chart uses the total 11th grade enrollment reported by the STAR program in 2008.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) STAR PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP) EdSource 11/08

figure 7 | In math, few 11th graders achieved an exemption from CSU placement tests through the Early Assessment Program (EAP)



Note: This chart uses the total 11th grade enrollment reported by the STAR program in 2008. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) STAR PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP) EdSource 11/08

Qualified teachers, however defined, are not equally distributed across schools and subject areas

Teachers' preparation provides another important framework for thinking about whether the state has the capacity to improve students' college readiness in English and mathematics. The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL) notes that California has generally made "great strides" in reducing the number of underprepared teachers in the state's classrooms—that is, teachers who do not yet have a preliminary or clear credential—according to *The Status of the Teaching Profession 2007*. (A preliminary credential, which is good for five years, is granted by the state to new teachers who have met certain education requirements. A clear credential is issued when a novice teacher completes a beginning teacher induction program. It must be renewed every five years.)

Adequate teacher preparation may be defined in different ways. Under the federal No Child Left Behind law, for instance, a

"highly qualified" teacher is one who has a bachelor's degree and either holds a credential in the subject taught or is enrolled in an alternative credentialing program—such as an internship—for up to three years.

However defined, shortages of fully prepared teachers appear to pose a particular problem for some localities and subject areas. For example:

- In July 2008, CFTL reported that more than 20% of California's high school math teachers either lack a clear or preliminary teaching credential—including individuals in internship programs—or are teaching "out of field" (their credential is not in math). (For more on challenges involved in recruiting and retaining teachers in mathematics and the sciences, see the January 2008 EdSource policy brief, *Math and Science Teachers: Recruiting and Retaining California's Workforce*, at: www.edsource.org/pub_mathscienc1-08_teachers.html)

- The UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) and the UC All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity (ACCORD) observe that California high schools serving higher concentrations of students who are under-represented on UC campuses—including African American, Latino, and Native American students—were substantially more likely to staff more than 20% of their college preparatory courses with teachers working outside their subject areas of expertise in 2005–06.

The EAP provides high school teachers with professional development in English and mathematics

The EAP includes a professional development component for high school teachers that focuses on academic topics—such as expository reading and writing—that are important for high school students' eventual placement and success at CSU, or for transfer-level courses at a community college.

A CLOSER LOOK—STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY



Substantial differences in college readiness exist among student groups based on EAP results

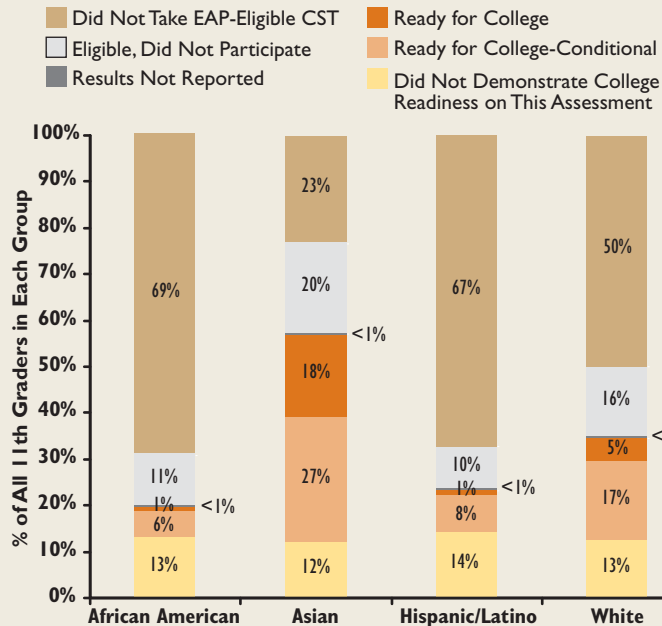
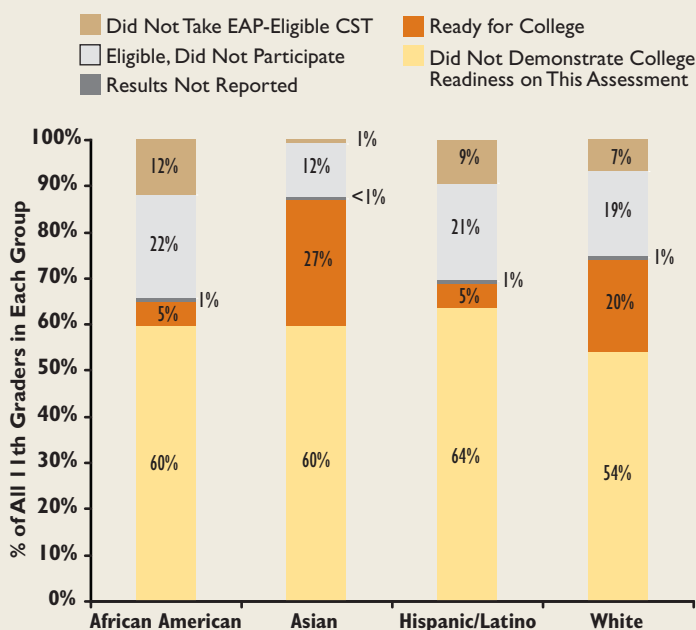
The college readiness of California 11th graders, as measured by the EAP, varied substantially among students of different ethnic backgrounds in 2008.

■ **In English:** African American and Hispanic/Latino students were less likely to be assessed as ready for college (and thus achieve an exemption from CSU placement testing) than their Asian and white peers. (See the chart below.)

■ **In math:** Although most Asian and white students who took the EAP demonstrated either full or conditional college readiness, most African American and Hispanic/Latino students who took the test did not. (See the chart below.) African American and Latino 11th graders were also substantially less likely than their Asian and white peers to take an EAP-eligible math CST in 2008.

2008 English EAP

2008 Math EAP



Note: This chart shows the estimated proportion of students who were eligible for and participated in the English EAP out of the 11th grade enrollment reported by CDE's DataQuest. The earlier pie charts use overall enrollment data reported by STAR. But because STAR does not report enrollments for each grade level by ethnicity, this table uses enrollment data from DataQuest.

Note: This chart shows the estimated proportion of students who were eligible for and participated in the Math EAP out of the 11th grade enrollment reported by CDE's DataQuest website. The earlier pie charts use overall enrollment data reported by STAR. But because STAR does not report enrollments for each grade level by ethnicity, this table uses enrollment data from DataQuest.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) DATAQUEST AND STAR PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)

EDSOURCE 11/08

In English, CSU and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) collaborate to offer high school teachers 20-hour professional workshops on how to teach the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC). These workshops, which are funded by CSU over several months, provide teachers with course materials and eligibility to offer the 14-module ERWC in their schools. In total, more than 2,400 teachers from about 780 schools and other K-12 agencies (such as county offices of education) participated in ERWC professional

development from 2004-05 through 2007-08, according to the CSU Chancellor's Office. Most of these schools came from among California's approximately 1,200 regular high schools. Faculty from postsecondary campuses also participated. (Note that some ERWC teacher participation data for 2007-08 are missing because of differences in how professional development for the ERWC was offered in Los Angeles Unified School District. The CSU Chancellor's Office says that the actual number of K-12 teachers who participated in ERWC development from 2004-05 through 2007-08 is

somewhat higher than the 2,400 teachers mentioned earlier.)

Teachers from across subject areas—including English teachers hoping to prepare for the ERWC—may also participate in CSU's 80-hour Reading Institutes for Academic Preparation (RIAP). This professional development focuses on supporting the academic literacy of students for college and work, in part by using the same approaches that are central to the ERWC. In total, more than 2,400 teachers from 698 K-12 schools and other agencies participated in RIAP from 2002-03 through 2007-08, along with some postsecondary faculty.

Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC)

The Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) system began in 2007 and was developed through consultation with external advisers in response to Assembly Bill 1417. Each college's ARCC report summarizes outcomes on a broad range of measures and enables colleges to judge their performance in key areas compared with campuses with similar characteristics.

The ARCC model reflects both state-level calls for public accountability and the system's tradition of local determination. In a recent presentation, Patrick Perry—vice chancellor for technology, research, and information systems for the colleges—and colleagues described ARCC as intended to provide “local accountability” so that local boards and community members are empowered to “improve their community college's performance.”

No state funding is tied to the outcomes reported in a college's ARCC, nor does the state intervene on individual campuses, as occurs under the K-12 accountability system. However, the Chancellor's Office is authorized to withhold certain funds if a college does not provide the necessary data.

For more information on ARCC, see: www.cccco.edu

In mathematics, CSU and CCSESA offer professional development to middle and high school teachers, combining an online learning component with a subsequent one-day, face-to-face workshop. The current online learning program debuted in February 2008. According to the CSU Chancellor's Office, the one-day mathematics workshop has reached more than 1,300 participants during the past three years, from 2005–06 through 2007–08.

Cal-PASS provides one model of regional professional development to improve student transitions

Cal-PASS (see the box on page 11) provides another model of professional development that brings K-12 teachers and postsecondary faculty together regionally—through Professional Learning Councils (PLCs)—to form shared expectations about student transitions and use student data to identify problems and evaluate new approaches.

One challenge for Cal-PASS is bringing local innovations and interventions developed by PLCs to more students. Cal-PASS officials cite the Algebra Standards Deconstruction Project as one example of an innovation that others might use to support teaching in mathematics. As Cal-PASS documented in its summer 2006 newsletter, faculty from one San Diego County PLC

discovered that two-thirds of students were “enrolled in math courses at the community college or university [that were] at or below math course levels they had passed in high school” and that “students completing algebra at each of the segments tended to repeat algebra at the next segment.”

The group used the K-12 academic content standards as a starting point for responding to the problem. K-12 and community college math faculty from PLCs in San Diego, San Bernardino, and Sacramento analyzed the standards in Algebra I and Algebra II to develop a shared understanding of what it should mean to teach to the standards in practice. The California Content Standards Deconstruction guides are the result. For every standard, the guides address questions such as:

- Prior knowledge students must already understand;
- New knowledge students are expected to master;
- The kinds of results teachers might assess to gauge student understanding; and
- Model assessment items.

To date, guides have been produced in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Cal-PASS reports that faculty in English and Biology plan to develop similar tools.

Recently, state education policymakers have begun to more proactively use Cal-PASS

as a resource. In July 2008, the U.S. Department of Education approved California's Career Technical Education State Plan, which the state submitted to meet the requirements of the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act so that the state can receive federal funds. The plan outlined how California will use federal monies to improve CTE programs. Community colleges and local education agencies receiving certain Perkins funds—such as funds for Tech-Prep programs that bridge high school and community college—must join Cal-PASS to meet the law's longitudinal data reporting requirements. In a summer 2008 newsletter, the executive director of Cal-PASS noted that this arrangement prevented the state from having to develop “a costly new data tracking system” to meet the requirements.

California Community Colleges work to build their capacity through the Basic Skills Initiative

In 2006, the CCC Board of Governors approved a regulatory change, recommended by the Academic Senate, raising the minimum course requirements for an associate degree. Beginning in fall 2009, all incoming students who aspire to earn the two-year degree will be required to pass both Intermediate Algebra and transfer-level Freshman Composition, or their equivalents. The regulations also provide that students may fulfill these requirements through assessment. This regulatory change makes these minimum course requirements a systemwide expectation.

The change also raised concerns—including among the Chief Instructional Officers (CIO) and Chief Student Services Officers (CSSO) of the colleges and some faculty—that higher academic standards would put postsecondary completion out of reach for many students if the colleges did not also improve their capacities to provide effective basic skills instruction. The Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), a systemwide effort to improve basic skills education, was in part a response to these concerns. The initiative also addresses the system's priority, articulated in its 2006 System Strategic Plan, to “ensure that basic skills development is a

major focus and an adequately funded activity of the Community Colleges.”

An extensive literature review of effective practices in basic skills education—*Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges*—is central to the initiative’s work to date and provides a basis for local initiatives going forward. The Center for Student Success—through which the Research and Planning Group for the college system conducts research and evaluation projects—prepared the review. Published in its second edition in July 2007, the review served as the basis for regional meetings with local faculty and administrators about the goals of the BSI.

The literature review presents 26 effective practices in four categories:

- **Organizational and administrative practices**, such as integrating academic and student support services and ensuring that students complete basic skills instruction early.
- **Program components**, such as making orientation, assessment, and placement for new students mandatory; integrating counseling with academics; and conducting regular program evaluations whose results are used for continuous improvement.
- **Staff development practices**, such as making faculty development in teaching and learning for basic skills instruction a priority connected to a college’s mission; and supporting relationships among colleagues so faculty can find intrinsic reward in basic skills teaching.
- **Instructional practices**, such as employing “a variety of instructional methods,” including active learning, learning communities where cohorts of students take multiple courses together, or contextual learning opportunities that make academic learning relevant for practical life.

The literature review noted how few community college students currently benefit from such practices, stating that “except for course instruction, the common denominator across all developmental programs employing a combination of these effective practices is the limited

Other initiatives aim to document examples of how community colleges might improve basic academic skills

The Basic Skills Initiative is not the only effort to improve basic skills instruction in California’s community colleges. Outside organizations are also partnering with colleges to improve and share local practices. Consider two examples.

Strengthening Pre-collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC): This three-year partnership between the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was launched in 2005. SPECC provided 11 colleges about \$300,000 each in grant funding over three years to support faculty inquiry groups. These groups worked to develop and evaluate improved approaches to teaching and learning in basic skills courses on their campuses using evidence and data. The colleges established a data-sharing relationship within Cal-PASS to facilitate this work.

SPECC’s 2008 report, *Basic Skills for Complex Lives*, argues that improving colleges’ capacity to help students be successful in basic skills courses requires faculty development that is ongoing, collaborative, and evidence-based. It also argues that basic skills courses must do more than focus on mastery of academic content and skills. These courses must also help basic skills students, who “often do not think of themselves as ‘college material,’” see themselves as learners who can achieve their academic goals and use academic skills and knowledge to get things done in the world. Online case studies offer examples of how faculty inquired into basic skills teaching and learning on their campuses and what they learned. SPECC organizers report that student outcomes were mixed among campuses, but they also note that participating colleges began with varying degrees of capacity. Some colleges used SPECC to expand on existing capacity, and other colleges used the project to help build it. (For more information, see: www.carnegiefoundation.org)

Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE) Initiative: A partnership between the James Irvine Foundation and MDRC (a social policy research organization), SSPIRE brings teams from nine colleges together to focus on integrating basic skills instruction with student support services, such as counseling. The nine colleges each received grants of up to \$250,000 over three years to implement new approaches to this kind of integration. As with the SPECC initiative, all participating colleges are members of Cal-PASS. MDRC plans to publish a series of papers that will document lessons learned through these colleges’ efforts when the initiative concludes in 2009. (For more information, see: www.mdrc.org)

number of students served in any one year.” The review introduced a template for individual colleges to use in assessing where, how, and how broadly their campuses can employ these practices. Community colleges were required to do such a self-assessment in order to qualify for a share of \$33.1 million in basic skills funding provided by the Legislature in 2007–08 through Assembly Bill (AB) 194. In addition, each college was required to:

- Formulate and submit (by May 2008) a one-year action and expenditure plan detailing how the college proposed to improve its institutional capacity and

student outcomes in basic skills, including five-year goals; and

- Collect baseline data for use in evaluating its plan over time.

Updated plans were due in October 2008 as a condition of funding for 2008–09.

The BSI literature review also included a cost/revenue model that its authors hope will make effective basic skills programs a more attractive long-term investment for local colleges. Nancy Shulock and Colleen Moore argue in their October 2007 report, *Invest in Success*, that state finance policy for community colleges does not provide incentives for expanding more costly programs, such as

integrating instruction with counseling and support services for greater numbers of students. All programs are funded at the same rate, based on the number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) enrolled. Shulock, Moore, and colleagues have also argued that state “categorical programs create administrative silos, which serve as barriers to collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs in addressing the whole student.”

The BSI cost/revenue model proposes that colleges can produce long-term gains in FTES by investing in effective basic skills programs because such programs will help more students persist in their studies successfully over time. Current state policy on how such enrollment growth is funded complicates this model considerably, however, as its authors acknowledge. The Chancellor’s Office sets

a “cap” on how much enrollment growth is funded in a given year. Any college that pursued long-term investments in basic skills programs and succeeded in producing substantial growth in FTES would currently not receive funding for growth in excess of the cap.

Looking ahead, the Center for Student Success has developed a new literature review focused on student transitions from high school to college, scheduled for publication in November 2008. In addition, the System Office recently requested applications from colleges and districts, which were due in October 2008, to compete for a \$1.6 million grant for 2009, renewable over five years. The college or district that receives this grant will work with system stakeholders to develop a permanent infrastructure for professional development in basic skills instruction.

(Previously, the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, received competitive grants of \$700,000 and \$1.6 million from the System Office in 2007 and 2008, respectively, to work with the Academic Senate in supporting professional development and basic skills data collection on campuses throughout the system.)

In addition, AB 194 requires the Chancellor’s Office to develop basic skills accountability measures and report to the governor and Legislature by November 2008. The Academic Senate is leading in the development of a rubric for this purpose. These outcomes will augment each campus’s annual Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) report. (See the box on page 18.)

California looks ahead to new possibilities for more effective student transitions



California policymakers and educators are working to develop new ways to support student transitions from high school to community college and empower students to meet high academic expectations and achieve their goals. Some examples discussed in this report include the expansion of the EAP for use by the community colleges, the Basic Skills Initiative, and regional efforts such as the Cal-PASS Professional Learning Councils. But this is only the beginning of the story. Which practices and strategies will take hold, which can be made available to more students, and what results the public should expect remain open questions. That said, a few broad implications deserve reflection.

The California Community Colleges face unique challenges and opportunities

The California Community Colleges serve a unique open-access mission. As a result, the colleges also face some unique challenges in providing high school students (and their teachers) with early feedback about their readiness for community college work.

For example, differences in the pace at which high school students currently take higher math courses means that many potential community college students do not take EAP-eligible CSTs in mathematics.

This does not mean the EAP cannot encourage greater alignment between K–12, the community colleges, and CSU, as is the goal of SB 946. Most 11th graders take the EAP test in English, and the current EAP in math may be well suited to the colleges’ transfer mission. But the EAP also shows that transplanting a program designed for use by a selective system (such as CSU) to an open-access system (such as the community colleges) can leave unanswered questions about how to reach all prospective students.

But community colleges also have many opportunities to connect with their local communities and reach out to K–12 students. Consider two examples:

- **Dual enrollment programs** enable high school students to take college-level courses for college credit, with the ultimate aim of increasing student participation and success in postsecondary education. One example of dual enrollment is the Middle College High School (MCHS), offered on 13 community college campuses in California. MCHS allows at-risk

students to attend a high school located on a community college campus, take college courses, and receive extra counseling.

- **Bridge programs** are another approach community colleges take to help students make the transition from high school to college. These may provide specialized instruction to students during the period between high school and college and extra support during college. One example, highlighted in the 2007 *Practices with Promise* report by the Campaign for College Opportunity, is the Digital Bridge Academy at Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz County. The program, which is directed toward students who are underprepared academically, includes a two-week “foundation course” and a “bridge semester” that brings together a cohort of students, with students expected to take a full course load and work toward their majors.

California's K-12 academic content standards and CSTs are a potential resource

Examples discussed in this report suggest that California's K-12 academic content standards and CSTs can be important resources for high school and community college faculty who hope to clarify shared academic expectations and develop new strategies for reaching them. These examples include state-level policy, such as SB 946, and regional collaborations, such as those that produced the Cal-PASS “deconstruction guides.” What roles the CSTs and academic content standards might play in other efforts around the state—such as the community college Action Planning Group for Assessment and Placement—remains to be seen.

Regardless of how existing K-12 resources are leveraged, two key issues are central to all these efforts:

- How to align and clarify what high school and community college educators should expect from one another; and
- How to develop the capacity of educators to meet those expectations.

These are two sides of the same college-readiness coin. Balancing coherent policies

LOOKING AHEAD—Other recently enacted legislation

- **The Early Commitment to College program (Senate Bill 890)**, created by state policymakers in the fall of 2008, is intended to encourage middle grades students from low-income families to prepare for college. Participating schools will provide students with information about college eligibility, transcript review, and course planning; visits to at least one community college and (where feasible) at least one four-year university during early high school; and information on college admissions tests and community college enrollment and financial aid in the later high school years. For their part, participating students sign a “save me a spot in college” pledge. They agree, for example, to graduate from high school having enrolled in college preparatory coursework, to submit the necessary information to be eligible for financial aid, and to meet the requirements for university admissions or enroll in a community college within 12 months after high school graduation. The program is voluntary for students and schools, with colleges, universities, and other state agencies and programs encouraged to support their efforts. The California Department of Education (CDE) will help administer the program and will report to the Legislature on its success by 2017 with recommendations about whether it should continue beyond 2019.
- **The Education Data and Information Act of 2008 (Senate Bill 1298)** requires the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California to maintain statewide student identifier (SSID) numbers for their students and use them to report data to the state. Doing so will enable the linking of student-level data from the K-12 system through postsecondary. SB 1298 also authorizes the state chief information officer, who is a member of the governor's cabinet, to collect and release the information in compliance with state and federal privacy laws.

and expectations with local flexibility and determination is a key challenge moving forward.

Can community college faculty and high school teachers learn more from one another about meeting high academic standards?

Policymakers for both the K-12 and community college systems expect more from California students—and from the systems themselves—than ever before.

Education policy and public rhetoric increasingly call for all students to have both access to some form of postsecondary education and a fair, legitimate chance of success. This ensures that California high schools and community colleges—and the creation of more effective bridges between them—will remain an intense focus of interest for the foreseeable future.

The state's community college faculty and high school teachers could potentially learn from one another as they try to meet these challenges. For example, high school teachers might find value in the work being

done by community college faculty involved in the Basic Skills Initiative. Similarly, community college faculty and leaders might discover worthwhile lessons in the long experience of K-12 educators, who have worked in a high-stakes environment to develop and reach common academic standards across a diverse state. Such potential for interaction and support reflects but a fraction of the uncharted territory that California educators have yet to traverse as they work to usher students toward greater academic success.

Whether, where, and how the various efforts described in this report will produce substantial changes in educational practices and outcomes across California's high schools and community colleges is an open question. The good news for students currently in California's public schools is that leaders and faculty in both systems are awakening to a shared problem and responsibility, and they are beginning to explore shared solutions. ■■

Appendix A

Early Assessment Program (EAP) eligibility and participation among 11th graders in 2008

Students	Math					English
	% Taking Algebra II CST	% Taking Summative HS Math CST	% Taking an EAP-Eligible CST in Math*	% of EAP-Eligible Students Who Participated	% of All Students Who Participated	% of Students Taking Grade 11 CST Who Participated in EAP
African American	21%	9%	31%	64%	20%	75%
Asian	24%	53%	77%	75%	57%	88%
Filipino	32%	32%	64%	76%	49%	90%
Hispanic/Latino	22%	11%	33%	71%	23%	77%
Native American/Alaska Native	19%	12%	31%	69%	21%	69%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	24%	16%	41%	73%	30%	81%
White	24%	26%	50%	69%	35%	80%
All Students	23%	20%	43%	70%	30%	79%

* Percentages in this column (% Taking Algebra II CST + % Taking Summative High School Math CST) may not add up due to rounding.

Notes: The figures in this table showing the percentages who took EAP-eligible math CSTs are calculated by dividing the number of 11th graders tested by 11th grade enrollments for each group. The math EAP participation and eligibility rates for "All Students" reported here are slightly different from those shown in the table of CSTs for grades 7-11 and the EAP eligibility, participation, and performance pie charts elsewhere in this report. The earlier CST table and pie charts use overall enrollment data reported by STAR. But because STAR does not report enrollments for each grade level by ethnicity, this table uses enrollment data from CDE's DataQuest website.

The English EAP participation percentages in this table pertain only to students who took the grade 11 English language arts CST. In 2008, 91% of 11th graders took the English CST, based on enrollment data from CDE's DataQuest website. Using STAR enrollment data, 96% took the CST.

In addition, this table excludes the "Declined to State" (or "Unknown") category. Although CSU provides the number of students in this category who participate in the EAP, the category does not match exactly with the "Multiple/No Response" enrollment category used by CDE. This makes eligibility and participation calculations inaccurate.

DATA: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) ENROLLMENT AND STAR DATA,
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)

EDSOURCE 11/08

Early Assessment Program (EAP) results in 2008 among EAP participants

EAP Participants	English (Grade 11 English Language Arts CST)		Mathematics (Grade 11 Algebra II and Summative High School Math CSTs Combined)		
	Ready	Not Ready	Ready	Conditionally Ready*	Not Ready
African American	8%	91%	3%	30%	67%
Asian	31%	68%	31%	47%	21%
Filipino	20%	79%	9%	49%	42%
Hispanic/Latino	8%	91%	5%	34%	61%
Native American/Alaska Native	14%	84%	9%	41%	50%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11%	87%	8%	41%	51%
White	26%	72%	15%	49%	37%
Unknown	21%	77%	15%	45%	40%
All Students	17%	82%	13%	42%	44%

* Students who are assessed as conditionally ready for college must take an additional year of mathematics in their senior year to be exempt from CSU placement exams in math.

Note: Percentages in English and mathematics may not add up to 100% due to rounding and missing results for a small number of students.

DATA: CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (EAP)

EDSOURCE 11/08

Appendix B

High school graduates in 2006–07 who enrolled immediately in a public college or university in fall 2007

Public* College-Going Rates by Institution and Ethnicity				
Students	University of California	California State University	California Community Colleges	Total**
African American	4%	13%	33%	50%
Asian/Pacific Islander	25%	15%	28%	67%
Filipino	11%	20%	34%	65%
Hispanic/Latino	4%	10%	31%	45%
Native American	5%	11%	32%	48%
White	6%	11%	25%	41%
All Students	8%	12%	30%	50%

* These college-going rates pertain only to public institutions of higher education. Private colleges and universities are excluded.

** Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

Note: This table excludes the “Declined to State” (or “Unknown”) category. Although the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) provides the number of students in this category who enrolled in college, the category does not match exactly with the “Multiple/No Response” enrollment category used by the California Department of Education (CDE). This makes college-going calculations inaccurate.

DATA: CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (CPEC)

EDSOURCE 11/08

18- and 19-year olds (with a high school diploma) who enrolled in a basic skills course in fall 2007 at a California community college, by subject area

Students	Number of Students Enrolled	English*		Mathematics*	
		Number Taking at Least One Basic Skills English Course	% Taking Basic Skills English	Number Taking at Least One Basic Skills Math Course	% Taking Basic Skills Math
African American	19,950	3,735	19%	3,730	19%
Asian	26,652	3,586	13%	1,827	7%
Filipino	11,144	1,526	14%	1,309	12%
Hispanic/Latino	96,530	18,616	19%	17,817	18%
Native American/Alaska Native	2,315	312	13%	267	12%
Pacific Islander	2,937	433	15%	383	13%
Other Nonwhite	5,499	665	12%	651	12%
White	94,346	8,544	9%	8,141	9%
Unknown	17,448	2,001	11%	1,861	11%
All Students	276,821	39,418	14%	35,986	13%

* The English and mathematics courses included here are those designated locally as “basic skills” under data element CB 08. (CB 08 is the variable the community college system uses to designate a course as basic skills or not.)

Notes: These data show independent headcounts—in English and math, respectively—of students who took at least one basic skills course in fall 2007. These counts are not adjusted for students who took basic skills courses in both subjects during the same term. Whatever overlap that may exist between the two subject areas is not indicated here.

These data pertain only to 18- and 19-year-olds with a high school diploma (i.e., not a GED, etc.). These data do not reveal how many of these community college students may need basic skills instruction.

DATA: CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS) DATA SYSTEM

EDSOURCE 11/08

Retention and success rates among 18- and 19-year-olds (with a high school diploma) in credit basic skills courses at a California community college in fall 2007, by subject area

English				
Students	Total Enrollments* in Basic Skills English Courses	Total Retained** (% of Enrollment)	Total Succeeded*** (% of Enrollment)	% of Retained Who Succeeded
African American	4,887	3,639 (74%)	2,271 (46%)	62%
Asian	4,916	4,229 (86%)	3,429 (70%)	81%
Filipino	2,043	1,696 (83%)	1,354 (66%)	80%
Hispanic/Latino	24,904	19,706 (79%)	13,999 (56%)	71%
Native American/Alaska Native	425	327 (77%)	216 (51%)	66%
Pacific Islander	552	422 (76%)	325 (59%)	77%
Other Nonwhite	865	707 (82%)	559 (65%)	79%
White	10,664	8,907 (84%)	6,704 (63%)	75%
Unknown	2,701	2,201 (81%)	1,577 (58%)	72%
All Students	51,957	41,834 (81%)	30,434 (59%)	73%

Mathematics				
Students	Total Enrollments* in Basic Skills English Courses	Total Retained** (% of Enrollment)	Total Succeeded*** (% of Enrollment)	% of Retained Who Succeeded
African American	3,846	2,702 (70%)	1,239 (32%)	46%
Asian	1,733	1,305 (75%)	896 (52%)	69%
Filipino	1,285	1,005 (78%)	667 (52%)	66%
Hispanic/Latino	17,766	13,547 (76%)	8,002 (45%)	59%
Native American/Alaska Native	263	195 (74%)	109 (41%)	56%
Pacific Islander	389	282 (72%)	168 (43%)	60%
Other Nonwhite	652	485 (74%)	307 (47%)	63%
White	8,118	6,475 (80%)	4,200 (52%)	65%
Unknown	1,868	1,451 (78%)	910 (49%)	63%
All Students	35,920	27,447 (76%)	16,498 (46%)	60%

* Total student enrollments are determined during a third-week census.

** "Retained" students are those who remain in the course to the end of the term (i.e., do not drop the course or withdraw).

*** Students "succeed" by passing the course.

Notes: The English and mathematics courses included here are those designated locally as "basic skills" under data element CB 08. (CB 08 is the variable the community college system uses to designate a course basic skills or not.)

These data pertain only to 18- and 19-year-olds with a high school diploma (i.e., not a GED, etc.). Retention and success rates are calculated only for credit courses: typically, students do not receive grades in noncredit courses.

TO LEARN MORE

Links of interest

- The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges: www.asccc.org
- Basic Skills Initiative, California Community Colleges: www.cccbsi.org
- California Community Colleges System Office: www.cccco.edu. This website includes more information about the Board of Governors, Chancellor's Office, Management Information Systems (MIS) data system, and Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC).
- California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS): www.cal-pass.org. This website includes downloadable versions of the mathematics "deconstruction guides" discussed in this report.
- CSU Early Assessment Program: www.calstate.edu/EAP/
- The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges: www.rpgroup.org. This website includes more information about the Center for Student Success.

Recent reports and studies on college readiness, basic academic skills, and placement and assessment in the California Community Colleges

College readiness and basic academic skills have been hot topics of discussion in recent years among California's public postsecondary systems. The following sources, cited in this report, provide an entry into some of this conversation, with a focus on California community colleges.

- *Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California's Public Colleges and Universities*. A 2002 report by the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates, which represents faculty from all three of the state's public postsecondary systems. www.asccc.org
- *Back to Basics: Improving College Readiness of Community College Students*. A June 2008 report by the Legislative Analyst's Office. www.lao.ca.gov
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