

## California

### California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

#### Part I: Policy Trends

<b>Type of test</b>	Comprehensive standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> <li>• Meet state and federal accountability requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes in exit exam policy since 2007-08 school year or any pending changes</b>	<p>Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, California <i>Education Code</i> (EC) Section 60852.3 provides an exemption from meeting the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) requirement as a condition of receiving a diploma of graduation for eligible students with disabilities who have an individualized education program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan. The IEP or 504 plans must state that the student is scheduled to receive a high school diploma, and has satisfied or will satisfy all state and local requirements for high school graduation, on or after July 1, 2009. <i>EC</i> Section 60852.3(b) states that this exemption will last until the State Board of Education (SBE) makes a determination whether or not it is feasible to have an alternative to the CAHSEE for students with disabilities. At the July 14, 2010 SBE meeting, the SBE determined that an alternative means to the CAHSEE for eligible students with disabilities is feasible and extended the implementation date from January 1, 2011, to July 1, 2012.</p>
<b>Status of state's decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b>	<p>Both the English language arts and math standards were adopted on August 2, 2010. It is unknown how this adoption will impact the CAHSEE at this time.</p>

<b>Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	No, universities and colleges do not use CAHSEE results for admissions decisions or course placement. California students must satisfy the CAHSEE requirement to receive a high school diploma. Students may be admitted to some of the state's community colleges and four-year colleges and universities without a high school diploma.
<b>Year first administered</b>	2001 for the original exam. The CAHSEE was revised in 2003 and the revised exam was first administered to the class of 2006 in 2004.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2006, except for students with disabilities who met the criteria for a local waiver or two one-year exemptions set forth in state law by SB 517 (for the class of 2006) and SB 267 (for the class of 2007). Students with disabilities are required to achieve passing scores on CAHSEE starting with the class of 2008. Students with disabilities are eligible for a local waiver if they take the CAHSEE with modifications and score 350 or higher. See Education Code Section 60851 (c) for more information about the local waiver process.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts and mathematics
<b>Types of questions</b>	Multiple-choice and a writing prompt
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The English language arts part of the exam addresses state content standards through grade 10. The mathematics part addresses state content standards in grades 6 and 7 and in Algebra I.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Students who progress through grades 10-12 at the normal pace have up to seven retake opportunities, in addition to the first administration in grade 10.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Post-grade-12 students who complete all graduation requirements except for passing the CAHSEE may continue to retake the exam up to 5 times per year as returning grade 12 students or up to three times per year as adult education students, with no limits on retesting opportunities until they meet the CAHSEE requirement.
<b>Does the state have reciprocity with other states?</b>	No

<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?</b>	Results from the first administration in grade 10 are used to meet the high school testing requirements of NCLB.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. Beginning with the February 2004 test administration, the definition of proficient performance for NCLB purposes was set at 380 (scaled score) for both English language arts and math—higher than the exit exam passing score of 350 for each part.
<b>Evaluations of state exit exam</b>	<p>The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) conducts annual independent evaluation studies of the impact of the CAHSEE and has released annual reports of its findings.</p> <p>Reports can be found at <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/evaluations.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/evaluations.asp</a>.</p>
<b>State test contractor</b>	Educational Testing Service
<b>Does the state provide all students with alternate paths to graduation?</b>	<p>Yes. Students can participate in the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) and the General Educational Development Test (GED®). The CHSPE is a voluntary test that assesses proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills taught in public schools. Eligible persons who pass the CHSPE are awarded a Certificate of Proficiency by the California State Board of Education. The test is given in English only. California law requires that the Certificate of Proficiency be equivalent to a high school diploma. A student who receives a Certificate of Proficiency may, with verified parental approval, leave high school early. The Certificate of Proficiency, however, is not equivalent to completing all course work required for regular graduation from high school. If a student is planning to continue his or her studies in a college or university, they should contact the admissions office of the institution they plan to attend so that the student may understand that institution's admission requirements, including whether or not the Certificate of Proficiency will be sufficient for admission.</p> <p>The GED testing program is an international partnership involving the GED Testing Service, each of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, the Canadian provinces and territories, the U.S. insular areas, the U.S. military and federal correctional institutions, and the Veterans Administration hospitals.</p> <p>GED Testing Service establishes the test administration</p>

procedures and passing standards. All jurisdictions administer the GED tests and award their high school credentials to adults who meet the GED tests' passing standards and any other additional jurisdictional requirements.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners**

No. There are, however, accommodations for English language learners taking the exit exam. English learners may hear test directions translated into their native language. English learners may have additional supervised breaks, may be tested separately with other English learners, and may use English-to-primary language glossaries/word lists.

The document containing the accommodations for English learners is Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2009), and can be found on the state Web site at:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/accomod.asp>.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities**

Yes. There are two options currently available to students with disabilities:

**Local waiver request.** Students must be permitted to use any modifications specified in their individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Modifications fundamentally alter what the test measures and can affect the comparability of scores. Students who take the exam with modifications and receive the equivalent of a passing score are eligible to request a waiver of the CAHSEE requirement from their local school board. If the waiver is granted, and the student has met all other graduation requirements, the student is eligible for a high school diploma.

Testing variations, accommodations, and modifications are available to those students who require them. Some variations are available to all students, whereas accommodations and modifications are available only to those students who have IEPs or Section 504 Plans. Testing variations include changes to the ways in which testing material is presented to the students and changes in the ways in which the students respond to the test items.

The available listed testing variations, accommodations, and modifications can be found in a document titled Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide

Assessments (October 2009), on the state Web site at:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/accomod.asp>.

The second option is the CAHSEE exemption. Refer to the major policy changes response for more information about the CAHSEE exemption.

Recent legislation (Assembly Bill 2040, Nunez, 2008) requires the SBE to determine the feasibility of creating alternative means for assessing eligible students with disabilities' levels of competence in the content standards required to pass the CAHSEE and develop regulations for the alternatives by October 1, 2010. At the July 14, 2010 SBE meeting, the SBE determined that an alternative is feasible. This alternative is scheduled to be implemented beginning July 1, 2012.

For English language arts, 3,005 students received a waiver. For mathematics, 4,645 students received a waiver.

The waiver figures for 2009-10 will not be available until late March 2011.

**Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?**

California Education Code states that students with disabilities may take the exam with accommodations/modifications, and the local education governing boards decide whether to grant waivers for eligible students.

Local education boards make decisions on local waivers. Local education authorities are required to report waiver data annually to the California Department of Education and the state board of education.

The local school districts determine if students are eligible for the CAHSEE exemption.

Students elect to participate in the GED® or the CHSPE. Students must meet the eligibility requirements of these tests in order to participate.

**How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?**

Parents/guardians notify the school administration to initiate the local waiver process. The parents/guardians and/or the district initiate the CAHSEE exemption process. The parents/guardians or the student initiate the GED® and the CHSPE.

**When calculating the**

Yes, the graduate count includes CAHSEE waivers and

**graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?**

exemptions. These students are coded as graduates and are used in the graduation rate calculations for AYP purposes.

**How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?**

NA at this time.

**Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and written technical assistance in the form of district and test site coordinators' manuals
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance
- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes grants to districts and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.

There are many programs designed and implemented by the state that are based on California's academic content standards. While the CAHSEE is fully aligned to the state's academic content standards, these programs were not specifically designed to prepare the students for the state's high school exit exam, but rather to teach the state's academic content standards. These programs also play a major role in student performance on the state's other assessments.

The state also provides:

- Test items from prior years;
- Exam preparation materials for students;
- Online availability of the CAHSEE study guide;
- A compendium of remediation strategies submitted by school districts that can be used by school districts and schools to replicate successful remediation programs;
- Exam blueprints posted on the state department of

education Web site and releases of items from the math and English language arts portions of the exam; and

- Teacher guides to assist teachers in teaching to the academic content standards.

These services for Remedial Supplemental Instruction for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates were curtailed in 2009-10 due to the implementation of Senate Bill 4 of the 2009-10 Third Extraordinary Session (SBX3 4). SBX3 4 enacts numerous significant changes to law, which included budgeting flexibility to local educational agencies (LEAs). With this flexibility, LEAs could use their Remedial Supplemental Instruction Program funding for any educational purpose. This flexibility will remain until 2012-13, or until this bill is amended.

**Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam**

The state provides funds to districts for:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content areas
- Additional professional development for teachers to meet the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment.

**Does the state provide funding for remediation?**

For 2008-09, the state awarded \$72 million in apportionments to local school districts to assist them in developing programs to help students pass the CAHSEE in grade 11 or grade 12. The enacting legislation indicated that the funding could be used for:

- Individual or small group instruction
- Hiring additional teachers
- Purchasing, scoring, and reviewing diagnostic assessments
- Counseling
- Designing instruction to meet specific needs of eligible pupils
- Appropriate teacher training to meet the needs of eligible pupils

For the 2009-10 school year, there was \$52 million in apportionments provided to school districts. As stated above, however, these services were curtailed in 2009-10 due to the implementation of SBX3 4, which allows budgeting flexibility to LEAs. With this flexibility, LEAs could use their CAHSEE

Intensive Instruction and Services funding for any educational purpose. This flexibility will remain until 2012-13, or until this bill is amended.

**Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?**

As previously mentioned, SBX3 4 allows local education agencies spending flexibility for funds provided by the state for remediation. This flexibility will remain until 2012-13, or until this bill is amended.

**Are students required to participate in remediation?**

This is a local decision; state law requires only that remediation be offered to eligible students.

**Part II: Student Performance**

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09</b>			
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>English/ Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Both Subjects</b>
All students	79%	80%	69.9%
White	91%	90%	83.2%
African American	69%	64%	53.3%
Latino	71%	72%	60.1%
Asian	89%	95%	86.1%
Native American	78%	75%	64.8%
English learner learners	40%	53%	30.6%
Special Education	37%	38%	21.1%
Economically Disadvantaged	70%	72%	58.8%
Migrant	60%	70%	NA
<b>Passing score</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>

Note: Data were retrieved from the state department Web site at <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/> on July 14, 2010. The information in the both subjects column was taken from Table 3.16 in the Independent Evaluation of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): 2009 Evaluation Report found at the CAHSEE Independent Evaluation page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/evaluations.asp>.

**Denominator used when calculating these rates:** The number of students tested

**Cumulative pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2008-09</b>			
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>English/ Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Both Subjects</b>
All students	95.8%	95.4%	93.4%



White	98.9%	98.4%	97.9%
African American	93.3%	89.5%	87.5%
Latino	93.3%	93.1%	89.9%
Asian	96.6%	98.7%	96.2%
Native American	97.1%	95.5%	94.6%
English language learners	82.8%	87.7%	78.4%
Special Education	68.8%	65.5%	NA
Economically Disadvantaged	92.9%	92.9%	89.5%
Migrant	NA	NA	NA
<b>Passing score</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>

Note: The information provided was taken from Tables 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11 in the Independent Evaluation of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): 2009 Evaluation Report found at the CAHSEE Independent Evaluation page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/evaluations.asp>. Note that students in Special Education are only included in the Special Education row.

**Denominator used when calculating these rates:** The number of students tested

**State Graduation Rates- Not currently available**

**Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes.**

California uses the Leaver Rate.