CALIFORNIA'S EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM:

ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND THE OBSTACLES TO SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

MARCH 2012

PACE Policy Analysis for California Education

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Acknowledgments

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) is an independent, non-partisan research center based at Stanford University, the University of California Berkeley, and the University of Southern California. PACE seeks to define and sustain a long-term strategy for comprehensive policy reform and continuous improvement in performance at all levels of California's education system, from early childhood to postsecondary education and training. To accomplish this goal, PACE bridges the gap between research and policy, working with scholars from California's leading universities and with state and local policymakers to increase the impact of academic research on educational policy in California.

Between 2009 and 2011 PACE managed the California Diploma Project (CDP), which brought together representatives from the multiple segments of California's fragmented education system to strengthen the alignment of standards and expectations. Much of the work of the CDP focused on the Early Assessment Program (EAP) as a key lever to expand opportunities for California students. This report describes the EAP, discusses the work of the CDP, and recommends steps that California can take to further strengthen alignment within the educational system. The CDP was supported by grants from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation.

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Any errors of fact or interpretation in the report are the responsibility of PACE and its Directors, and not of our funders.

Founded in 1983, PACE:

- Publishes policy briefs, research reports, and working papers that address key policy issues in California's education system.
- Convenes seminars and briefings that make current research accessible to policy audiences throughout California.
- Provides expert testimony on educational issues to legislative committees and other policy audiences.
- Works with local school districts and professional associations on projects aimed at supporting policy innovation, data use, and rigorous evaluation.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

Increasing college completion rates is a goal of most policymakers and education leaders across the country. Currently, 56 percent of California high school graduates attend some postsecondary institution upon graduation (Johnson, 2009). Many of these students drop out before completing a degree, and rates of completion vary across all segments of higher education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, graduation rates within six years are 79 percent for University of California (UC) and 46 percent for California State University (CSU) (as cited in California Postsecondary Education Commission, n.d.). Of the 60 percent of California Community College (CCC) students who declared their goal as obtaining a degree, certificate, or transfer to a four-year institution, only 24 percent succeeded in earning an associates degree, a certificate, or in transferring to a four-year institution within six years (Shulock and Moore, 2007).

One cause for low college completion rates is the students' lack of college preparation. Students who graduate from high school unprepared for credit-bearing coursework are required to take remedial courses at their institution of higher education before they can start earning credit towards a degree. Higher education institutions thus provide this remediation in order to prepare freshman students for the academic rigors of college. Currently, more than 60 percent of new college students entering the CSU system require remedial coursework in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing before they can enroll in credit-bearing courses (CSU, n.d.). In the CCC rates of remediation are much higher: over 83 percent in mathematics and 72 percent in English (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office [CCCCO], 2009). The need for remediation is evident in the UC system that provides remediation to 26 percent of freshmen in college-level writing (Legislative Analyst's Office [LAO], 2011). This high level of remediation is costly both for higher education institutions and for students, as remediation lengthens the time to completion and reduces the probability that students will graduate with college degrees.

The reasons that students graduate from high school unprepared for college-level work are complex, but a lack of alignment between California's K-12 standards and post-secondary education expectations is one key reason why so many students arrive at college unprepared to succeed in college-level work. For example, the majority of the CSU's incoming college students have a grade point average greater than 3.0, a measure of relative success in high school, yet the majority of these students lack the academic preparation to succeed in college-level work and must take some sort of remedial coursework (Knudson, R., Zitzer-Comfort, C., Quirk, M., and Alexander, P., 2008).

One way that this misalignment of standards is being addressed in California is through the Early Assessment Program (EAP). The EAP identifies whether college-bound high school students are prepared for credit-bearing college coursework, serving as an early warning system that gives unprepared students an opportunity to address deficiencies while still in high school.

The EAP is the result of an intersegmental

effort originally led by the California State University (CSU), the California State Board of Education, and the California Department of Education (CDE) to coordinate and articulate consistent standards between secondary and post-secondary institutions. EAP has been lauded as a necessary tool that breaks down barriers between K-12 and higher education, encourages a college-going culture, and helps students reorganize their senior year to increase college-readiness.

Development of the EAP marked a major milestone in California's effort to establish consistent standards of college-level expectations. It brought together multiple educational sectors to discuss educational goals and outcomes, to define college-readiness, and to formulate a program to strengthen system alignment. Differences persist among the multiple educational sectors on how best to determine factors that indicate future college success, but EAP provides a much more consistent message to high school students about the expectations and skills needed to do college-level work.

The EAP is important scaffolding for the dialogue defining college-readiness. At the same time, however, higher education segments emphasize that there are other skills and expectations, beyond math and literacy, needed for students to be sufficiently prepared for the rigors of postsecondary work.

This report discusses EAP providing a history of its development, reviewing successes, and examining challenges. We also look at the future of the EAP and how this innovative program is being considered a national model for assessing high school students' college-readiness. Lastly, this report discusses the future of the EAP in the context of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and provides recommendations on ways to improve the implementation of the EAP.

II. What is the EAP?

Providing remedial education is an expensive cost borne by institutions of higher education, students, and taxpayers. Among its 23 campuses, CSU enrolls more than 40,000 freshmen a year, and provides remedial education to more than 60 percent of those new students (CSU, n.d.), at an estimated annual cost of $30 million.

In an attempt to significantly reduce costs in the 1990s, CSU examined the issues of remediation (Kirst, 2010; Goen-Salter, 2008). Understanding that remediation is a problem that overlaps educational sectors and thus cannot be addressed by one segment alone, CSU initiated a collaborative effort with the California State Board of Education and the California Department of Education (CDE) to create the EAP (Kirst, 2010). CSU faculty and K-12 educators collaborated to develop the EAP test questions and writing prompts. Administration of the EAP began in 2004.

As a founder of the EAP, CSU was initially the only institution of higher education to use it as a diagnostic tool to measure college-readiness, waiving placement tests for qualified students. In 2008, Senate Bill 946, authored by Senator Jack Scott was passed. SB 946 authorized CCC to use EAP test results for assessment and placement purposes beginning in the 2009-2010 academic school year. The bill established EAP as a voluntary program for CCC participation, but it did not allocate any new funding to cover implementation costs. The bill assigned several key administrative EAP roles to the CCCCO including: receiving the EAP test results; providing data to participating community colleges; providing technical assistance to community colleges; and submitting a report to the Legislature on EAP implementation by 2015. Given their autonomy and local governance structures, all CCC campuses and districts select their own placement tests for incoming students. They can use the EAP test results instead of their own placement exams if they choose to participate in the program. Today, 49 community colleges use EAP results and 13 more community colleges are in discussions about using them to waive placement exams (CCCCO, 2011).

Program Overview

The EAP aims to address the underlying issues that contribute to the misaligned standards between secondary and post-secondary education. There are three components within EAP:

1. **College-Readiness Indicator** – EAP provides rising high school seniors with test results that signal their readiness for college-level work in English and mathematics.

2. **Student Support** – High school students who are underprepared for college-level work in English can improve their college-readiness during their senior year by enrolling in Advanced English or in a course developed as part of the EAP program called the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC). CSU faculty, K-12 English teachers, and content specialists developed ERWC specifically to prepare students for college-level English. Students who do not have ERWC available at their high school have access to online learning tools on the EAP website. The EAP website also

provides online learning tools in mathematics to help students deemed "not ready" or "conditionally ready" increase their college-readiness in math.

The EAP online resources help bridge the gap for students who are close to passing EAP. In 2010, CSU reports that the CSU Math and English Success websites received approximately 175,000 visits, which is a 17 percent increase from the prior year (CSU, 2011). The availability of online resources opens up another route for students seeking to prepare themselves for college-level coursework.

3. **Professional Development** – The CSU has embedded the EAP expectations into their teacher pre-service training programs. CSU faculty have also created professional development programs for high school math and English teachers to help them better prepare students for the expectations of college-level work. This includes courses to support the teaching of the Expository Reading and Writing Course and an online tool to help teachers improve students' writing skills.

EAP is a voluntary program designed to send an early signal to rising high school seniors about their college-readiness in mathematics, reading, and writing, enabling them to take necessary actions during their senior year to correct deficiencies. Students choose whether or not to participate in the EAP, although some districts have policies that direct all eligible students to take the exam. Students must also elect to make their EAP results available to CSU or CCC. School districts may elect to implement curriculum and teacher professional development designed to address deficiencies identified on the EAP.

EAP is not tied to college admissions; rather, it is a diagnostic tool to indicate whether students have mastered the academic skills needed for college-level, credit-bearing coursework. EAP may also help to determine placement in mathematics and English courses.

EAP augments the California Standards Test (CST), which high school juniors take during the spring semester. The augmented CST was developed to minimize additional testing burdens on students and consists of 15 additional multiple-choice questions in English, 15 additional multiple-choice questions in mathematics, and a 45-minute essay writing assignment. The math component is only available to students who have taken or are enrolled in Algebra II or higher-level math courses. The essay component is forty-five minutes long with a format and scoring rubric identical to CSU's English Placement Test.

Students receive their scores in August, before or shortly after the start of their senior year and may use the school year to take action to increase their college-readiness. EAP scores are determined by combining the student performance on the CST, on the augmented test questions, and on the essay. Students who score "ready for college" are exempt from taking CSU and participating CCC placement exams in math, reading, and writing and can enroll in credit-bearing courses upon enrollment in college. Students who receive scores "not ready for college" or "conditionally ready" have the opportunity to take action during their senior year to increase their college-preparedness. The CSU and participating CCC also waive placement assessment exams of students who are deemed "conditionally ready" in math if the student pursues the necessary action to improve their college-readiness during their senior year. Because the EAP is a voluntary program, students have the option of deciding whether to release their test results to the CSU, to CCC, or to both.

III. EAP as Focal Point of the California Diploma Project: California's Implementation of the American Diploma Project

Achieve is a national nonprofit education reform organization created in 1996 by governors and business leaders, to raise academic standards across the country. Achieve's research identified an expectations gap between the demands of secondary and post-secondary education, and subsequently founded the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network in 2005 to make college-and career-readiness a priority across the country. The ADP Network consists of 35 states that educate approximately 85 percent of the nation's public school students (Achieve, 2009). Through the ADP Network, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, graduation requirements and assessment and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers. In 2008, California joined the ADP Network and implemented the California Diploma Project (CDP) so as to close the expectations gap and to better align California's college-readiness standards.

CDP, managed by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), assembled a coalition of policy, education, and business leaders interested in more effectively preparing students for college and careers. The CDP's stated mission is to:

- Define course content to prepare high school students for college and the workforce;
- Ensure that EAP is accessible and responsive to students across the multiple education sectors;
- Define standards and expectations among the multiple educational sectors to continue to support student needs; and
- Expand the understanding of the importance of aligned standards and assessments.

As a result of this work, California's education leaders reached consensus and signed a CDP statement of agreement that EAP can serve as a common indicator of readiness for non-remedial, credit bearing baccalaureate-level work in all of the colleges and universities in California. The signatories to the agreement were then-State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, University of California President Mark Yudof, California State University Chancellor Charles Reed, California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott, then-President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities Jonathan Brown, ConnectEd President Gary Hoachlander, and California Business for Education Excellence President Greg Jones. This agreement established for the first time a fixed point in the policy and lexical chaos surrounding "readiness" in California, and made a significant step toward aligning expectations between K-12 and higher education. The statement that they signed is included as Appendix A in this report.

IV. Research Evaluating EAP's Successes and Identifying Challenges

In 2009, CDP sought the assistance of Achieve to analyze the content and validity of the Early Assessment Program and to determine the degree to which the EAP measures college-readiness among students. To do this, Achieve brought together a group of experts to analyze EAP's assessments in English, Algebra II, and Summative Mathematics. Examined criteria included content centrality, performance centrality, source challenge, and level of cognitive demand. The analysis benchmarked the EAP against California grade level standards, the CSU's entry-level mathematics exam and English Placement Test, the Statement of Competencies in Academic Literacy and Mathematics from the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS), and the ADP benchmarks.

In a 2009 report, *An Analysis of the Early Assessment Program (EAP) Assessment for Algebra II, Summative High School Mathematics, and English*, Achieve concluded that the EAP assessments address essential knowledge needed to perform credit-bearing coursework as outlined by CSU faculty. Furthermore, they found that the EAP augmentations provide rigor, are a reliable test of college-readiness, and concluded that use of EAP could be reasonably expanded beyond the CSU. Achieve made further recommendations to strengthen EAP as a measure of college-readiness.

The EAP test covers two levels of mathematics: Algebra II and Summative Mathematics. The mathematics components assess a range of knowledge in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. Achieve's analysis concluded that EAP tests critical knowledge needed to perform college-level mathematics and that the EAP items in mathematics require students to make connections across mathematic domains.

Achieve's recommendations for improving the mathematics component of EAP (2009, p. 18) are to:

- Develop and include a select number of more cognitively-demanding selected-response items in order to assess thinking at the strategic level;
- Explore the addition of a limited number of constructed-response items;
- Screen items for complicated or lengthy arithmetic that present an inappropriate source of challenge for students without calculators; and
- Select items that would balance coverage to include other important, college-ready content that is in the CST blueprint.

The EAP also includes three English language arts components with reading items, writing items, and the writing essay. Achieve's analysis concluded that EAP tests critical knowledge to perform college-level coursework in English; that there is rigor in the reading passages; and that the writing essay assesses critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the reviews concluded that the EAP writing test is a "fair and honest" assessment of a student's ability to analyze an argument and write an expository passage.

To enhance the English portion of EAP,

Achieve recommended (2009, p. 31):

- Selecting questions on reading passages that are as text dependent as possible in order to test students' abilities to derive meaning from the college-level passages provided;
- Convening faculty representatives across the three higher education segments to conduct a cross-segment analysis of the direct writing assessment and identify opportunities for alignment; and
- Communicating a cross-segment outreach effort to educators, students, and communities regarding the expectations that students must meet in order to demonstrate college-readiness for credit-bearing courses in English.

Achieve's recommendations to broaden the scope of EAP have been echoed by other educational leaders who want to improve and expand the use of the EAP to improve K-12 alignment with higher education in California. These considerations will be discussed in greater detail in Section V of this report.

EAP Effectiveness in Reducing Remediation Rates

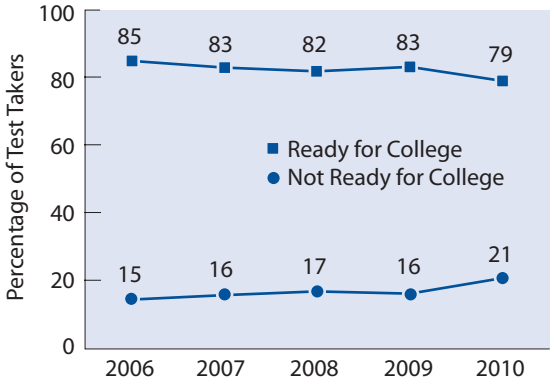
While EAP is a voluntary program, student participation has grown consistently (Figure 1). The participation rate for the English component is significantly higher than participation in mathematics as the pool of eligible students is smaller for the latter; only students who have completed or who are enrolled in Algebra II or higher-level math can take the math assessment.

FIGURE 1: Participation Rates of High School Juniors in CST and EAP

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
Subject	CST	EAP	CST	EAP	CST	EAP	CST	EAP	CST	EAP
English	418,154 95%	312,167 71%	440,763 95%	342,348 74%	446,153 96%	352,943 76%	447,783 96%	366,949 79%	451,575 96%	378,870 81%
Math*	184,709 42%	137,067 31%	201,827 44%	141,648 31%	209,873 45%	147,885 32%	220,321 47%	169,478 36%	231,357 49%	178,667 38%

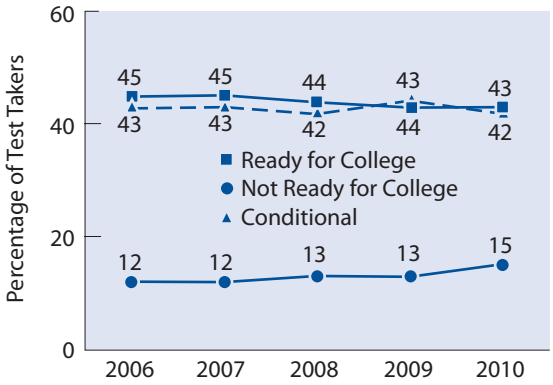
Data: California State University retrieved from www.calstate.edu/eap, data is calculated based on total enrollment in Grade 11. (*Total 11th grade participation in Algebra II and summative math).

FIGURE 2: English Test Results 2006-2010



Data: Early Assessment Program retrieved from *www.calstate.edu/eap*

FIGURE 3: Math Test Results 2006-2010



Data: Early Assessment Program retrieved from *www.calstate.edu/eap*

Figure 2 shows the trend of test results from 2006-2010 for test-takers of the English portion of the EAP. From 2006-2009, the percentage of students scoring "ready for college" in English remained relatively flat; however, there was slight improvement in 2010 when 21 percent of juniors who took the English portion of the EAP demonstrated college-readiness, an increase from 16 percent the previous year.

Figure 3 shows the trend of test results from 2006-2010 for test takers of the math portions of EAP (Summative Math and Algebra II). The percentage of students demonstrating readiness in math remained flat between 2006 and 2009, with a slight improvement the following year. In 2010, 15 percent of juniors who took the math portions of the EAP demonstrated college-readiness, an increase from 13 percent the previous year.

While rising participation and passing rates have been lauded, one of the stated goals of the EAP, significant reduction in remediation rates statewide, has not yet been realized. The goal of the program initially was to reduce remediation to 10 percent of incoming freshman by 2007 (Knudson, Zitzer-Comfort, Quirk & Alexander, 2008; Goen-Salter, 2008). To verify this, researchers from University of California, Davis and California State University Sacramento (CSUS) examined how participation in EAP affected new college students' needs for remediation (Howell, Kurlander, and Grodsky, 2009). The authors acknowledge that the strength of EAP is in providing an early signal to high school students about their academic preparation, yet conclusive data was needed to determine if, in fact, students who received EAP results were taking action to minimize their need for remedial education once in college. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study and looked at data for students at CSUS, whom they found to be representative of the general CSU student population based on socioeconomic and ethnic/racial composition. The study found that participation in EAP reduces the probability of freshman students taking remediation in college by 6.2 percent in English and by 4.3 percent in math. However, some have suggested that the slight improvement in the reduced remediation rate is due to the professional development component of the EAP (Gewertz, 2011), and not necessarily because students are taking action their senior year as a result of their EAP scores.

While this is the first study that has examined data to validate the effectiveness of EAP to reduce remediation, the conclusion that remediation rates have gone down has not been embraced by all the higher education community. William Tierney and Lisa Garcia question the study's findings based on the research methodology; they contend that EAP information about test results is not enough to reduce remediation rates (Tierney and Garcia, 2011).

Another study by researchers at four CSU campuses examined the professional development component of the EAP and the effectiveness of the ERWC curriculum. Specifically, the research team conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine the effectiveness of the ERWC curriculum and the English proficiency rates of students whose teachers participated in the EAP professional development (Fleming, Grisham, Katz, and Suess, 2005). This study looked at data from 2004-05, the first year the EAP ERWC curriculum was piloted, to determine if the professional development and the curriculum were an effective strategy to increase student preparation in English. The researchers found that students who experienced the ERWC curriculum improved their proficiency in English more than students who were not exposed to the ERWC curriculum (Fleming, Grisham, Katz, and Suess, 2005). Furthermore, the study found that ERWC's professional development had a positive impact on high school teachers' understanding of the skills students must possess in writing and reading so they can be academically successful at the college level.

While caution must be taken when considering the implications of studies with small sample sizes, this early research suggests that the EAP is successful on the individual level. However, on the aggregate level, the trends indicate that the EAP's results in improving college-readiness remain flat. Reducing remediation rates of incoming freshmen continues to be the primary goal of the program, but remediation levels have not diminished since the implementation of EAP. Therefore, more research is needed to examine the efficacy of the

EAP and how to best use this program to aid in effectively preparing students for success in college.

The U.C. Davis School of Education has received funding from the federal Institute of Education Sciences to answer a number of important questions about the EAP. The project, led by Michal Kurlaender, is reviewing data from all 23 CSU campuses to determine if the EAP is reducing remediation rates; whether the EAP has a differential impact on students of color and/or poverty; whether the EAP "early signal" changes college application behavior; whether the EAP changes students' behavior in their senior year; and whether the EAP has an impact on overall outcomes at the high school level. The CCC is also conducting regional pilot studies at Santa Rosa Junior College, Sierra College, and Antelope Valley College to help improve the understanding and implementation of the EAP among community colleges and local feeder high schools.

Regional Initiatives that Utilize EAP Anticipated to Yield Additional Data

The EAP is being used by several regional intersegmental consortiums to measure how well they prepare students for college, and to address regional shortfalls in college access and success. Regional initiatives in Long Beach and the Inland Empire show that various, and often competing, educational segments can work collaboratively to address mutual concerns and to improve student outcomes. As statewide remediation rates have remained largely unchanged since the implementation of EAP, there is hope that these regional initiatives will be successful in reducing the need for remediation, documenting in turn how EAP can be used in collaborative efforts to achieve positive outcomes for students.

The Long Beach College Promise

The Long Beach College Promise is a partnership between the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), and CSU Long Beach (CSULB) based on a joint commitment to develop a well-educated workforce to sustain and advance the Long Beach economy. This collaborative initiative, launched in 2008, is designed to increase the number of students in the region who succeed in college and complete college academic programs on time with a highly valued degree, credential or certification. The Long Beach Promise is premised on students entering college better prepared for credit-bearing work. It provides financial incentives to attend college in the region (one semester free of tuition at LBCC), guarantees admission at CSULB to LBUSD students who complete minimum college preparatory or minimum community college transfer requirements, and provides outreach to students and their families starting in middle school to ensure that college entrance requirements are fulfilled and students remain on track for success. Replicating the EAP framework, Long Beach's collaborative effort recognizes that cooperation is required from all segments to align the educational pipeline in order to improve educational outcomes for students. One of the project's goals is to eliminate the need for remediation for LBUSD students who are admitted at CSULB.

The Long Beach College Promise recognizes that college-readiness is a strong determinant of college success and that some students need additional incentives and encouragement to remain on the path to college preparation. The College Promise specifies that by 2012 all LBUSD students will participate in EAP. The EAP is voluntary, but the expectation that all students take the EAP is part of the culture within Long Beach Unified and all students are scheduled to take the test. Participation therefore is structured to require students who do not wish to take the EAP to opt-out, rather than putting the onus on students to opt-in to take the EAP. Long Beach Unified students who do not score "ready for college" on the EAP are required to take remedial courses during their senior year, instead of electives.

Directing participation of all students in the EAP is a systematic approach to identifying those who are in need of additional academic support their senior year. This effectively delivers a consistent message to secondary students and educators about the expectations in the K-12 and higher education systems. Mandated participation by all students has the potential to impact EAP data as students have various postsecondary paths; not

all aspire to obtain college degrees, and not all may take the exam seriously.

Long Beach Unified School District students who take and pass remedial courses in their senior year are automatically eligible to take credit bearing courses at Long Beach Community College or CSU Long Beach. The significance of this arrangement is that the faculty at CSU Long Beach and Long Beach Community College are trusting Long Unified high school teachers to provide effective remediation to prepare students for college level work. Providing such remediation has traditionally been the domain of higher education. Early data show promising results from the Long Beach Promise, although it is still much too early to measure the true effectiveness of this program and draw conclusive results. The Silicon Valley Education Foundation reports the following (2011):

- In 2010, 500 students were granted free tuition to LBCC.
- From 2007 to 2009, the college-going rate of LBUSD graduates rose from 68 percent to 74 percent.
- In 2010, about a third of the 5,600 LBUSD high school graduates enrolled in LBCC.
- In 2011, CSULB enrolled 650 LBUSD graduates compared with 450 the prior year.

Thus far, the Long Beach College Promise provides encouraging results and is an example of how the EAP can be used as a strategic part of regional collaborative efforts to address college-readiness.

Inland Empire: Federation for a Competitive Economy (FACE)

The Inland Empire[1] lags behind much of California in academic achievement and economic opportunity. Riverside and San Bernardino Counties have low levels of college education among their workforce, with 20 percent of Riverside County adults 25 years or older possessing a college degree, and 18 percent of San Bernardino County adults possessing a college degree, much lower than the statewide average of 30 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

To address the burgeoning issues hampering the region's economic productivity as well as the cost and consequence of remedial education, business leaders and education leaders from the region's K-12 community and higher education segments joined forces to establish the Federation for a Competitive Economy (FACE). FACE is a collaborative in the Inland Empire that includes leaders from the region's business, higher education, and K-12 communities. The focus of FACE is to improve education in the Inland Empire so the region can retool and improve its economy.

As an intersegmental collaborative, the work of FACE has been informed by the work of the Long Beach Promise. Participating entities include UC Riverside (UCR), CSU San Bernardino (CSUSB), Cal-Poly-Pomona, community college districts including the San Bernardino Community College District and Riverside Community College, and the County Offices of Education in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

FACE has prioritized the expansion of the EAP in the Inland Empire in order to improve alignment across segments and thus provide clearer and more accurate messages to students, parents and educators to increase the likelihood of student success. Since college-readiness and completion are a top concern for FACE, the use of EAP as a focal point has universal appeal to the multiple stakeholders in the region. FACE has also identified the skills assessed by the EAP as skills needed for entry-level jobs: reading comprehension, mathematics and algebraic thinking, and basic writing skills.

FACE has articulated four goals:

1. Expand the number of Inland Empire community colleges implementing EAP in cooperation with the CCCCO;
2. Work with the region's County Offices of Education, Cal-Poly-Pomona, and CSUSB to increase awareness among students and educators about EAP and why it matters; expand EAP implementation in regional school districts by creating a culture of

[1] For purposes of this paper, the Inland Empire is defined as Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and excludes eastern Los Angeles County.

expectation that all students will take the test (by instituting an opt-out rather than an opt-in policy); and develop clear and accurate messages for students, parents, and educators about the importance of EAP and what it takes to be college-ready.

3. Improve EAP results, particularly in mathematics, through targeted Algebra Academies and increased teacher professional development opportunities.

4. Support UCR's study of EAP for possible use as an indicator of college-readiness and as a tool for reducing the need and associated cost of remedial education at 2 and 4-year institutions in the Inland area.

The EAP implementation, expansion, and research from this regional initiative is anticipated to yield rich data that can inform other regional and statewide efforts to more effectively use the EAP to improve college-readiness and college success.

The regional initiatives in Long Beach and the Inland Empire are demonstrating how educational, business and community leaders can work collaboratively to address regional workforce development needs and to improve student outcomes through improved alignment between K-12 and postsecondary institutions. The EAP can be a valuable tool in these efforts to strengthen and align the educational pipeline.

V. Opportunities and Challenges for Expanding EAP Use and Effectiveness

California State University (CSU)

Because CSU founded the EAP, the program is currently used most extensively by this organization. However, the CSU is still grappling with the challenge of increasing college-readiness before students enroll. As stated earlier, a major goal of the program, to reduce remediation, has not yet been realized. Despite increasing participation in EAP, the lack of K-12 curriculum alignment and the lack of student follow-through to improve college-readiness are two issues that are stymying progress.

The CSU's most prominent challenge is determining how to continue to improve the alignment of curriculum and assessment standards at the K-12 level. More effort is clearly required to ensure the K-12 system fully understands the expectations of higher education and is willing to make the cultural shift, signifying acceptance of the responsibility to prepare students for college-level work.

There are a number of ways that student readiness for college-level work could be improved. For example, the CSU has provided professional development to high school English and math teachers. To date, 6,006 educators have participated in ERWC and 1,592 educators have participated in EAP math teacher training (CSU, 2011), yet more teachers need to participate in the professional development component of EAP.

Increased student follow-through, once they get the early signal about their college-readiness, could also be highly effective. The need for remediation could be reduced if more students used EAP results to take action to improve college-readiness during their senior year. In 2010, the CSU initiated Early Start, a program that utilizes EAP as its platform to further reduce remediation and increase student success. The stated goal of the program is to prepare students sooner for college-level work. Starting in 2012, Early Start will require high school students who score "not ready for college-level work" to take remediation prior to their first year at a CSU campus. Early Start will implement several components to achieve this goal: expanding existing student programs, such as Summer Bridge[2], to help students learn needed skills to ease their transition from secondary to postsecondary education; increasing usage of online learning tools; and renewing regional partnerships and collaboration among the CSU campuses, community colleges, and K-12 systems.

Requiring high school students who are not ready for college-level work to take remedial actions during their senior year is an important breakthrough as historically EAP has never required follow-up actions from students. Simply providing students and educators with information about the status of college-readiness has not proven to be enough of a motivating factor to change behavior and impact remediation rates. However, it remains to be seen how much remediation rates will change since students can still be admitted to the CSU even if they require remediation freshman year. Once this program is fully implemented in 2012, the CSU will have to consider how much

[2] Summer Bridge programs are residential programs for incoming college freshmen that provide students with an orientation to college life, review basic skills, and provide academic advisement and other support as they prepare for the rigors of university work.

remediation is unacceptable before students are denied admission to a CSU campus.

Another important step would be improving communication about what college-readiness means so the message is clearly understood by high school teachers, college faculty, parents, and students. While both the K-12 system and the CSU have made great strides in getting messages to students about the advantage of taking the EAP, there is still progress to be made to ensure that students know what to do with the results, and that teachers are aware of the professional development options to help students increase college-readiness in their senior year.

Furthermore, California as a state could clarify the goal of college-readiness relative to the K-12 experience. For example, the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) sets a much lower bar of expectations regarding the knowledge and skills that students must possess to graduate from high school, which starkly contrasts with academic expectations of higher education as represented in the EAP. When the CAHSEE was established, the rigor of the test was intended to increase over time. Increasing the level of expectation for students graduating from high school is one way to clarify and strengthen alignment between K-12 and higher education expectations.

Finally, the CSU is currently investigating ways to give students more precise feedback about the status of their college-readiness by modifying the English component in EAP and adding a "conditionally ready" test result, similar to the math components (CSU, 2011). How these changes, if implemented, will impact student readiness and remediation rates remains to be seen.

California Community Colleges (CCC)

A recent breakthrough in California's efforts to improve alignment between K-12 and higher education is CCC participation in the EAP and the growing acceptance of using EAP test results for course placement at community college campuses. Since the implementation of Senate Bill 946, an increasing number of community colleges are accepting EAP test results in lieu of requiring students to take their current placement tests. As of this writing, 59 of California's 112 community colleges accept at least one component of the EAP test results as a waiver to their college's assessment (e.g. English, Math, or Math Conditional). Sixteen of the 59 community colleges are engaged in discussions about utilizing additional components of the EAP test results, and nine additional community colleges are having discussions about initiating EAP participation (CCCCO, 2011).

The expanding use of EAP among the CCC is an important step in increasing the consistency of expectations for college-readiness between K-12 and California's higher education systems. Local autonomy has led many of the CCC to establish their own placement tests, with varying expectations and requirements for credit-bearing work. Variability in CCC assessment tests sends mixed signals to prospective community college-bound students and to the K-12 system. The use of EAP by CCC as well as CSU clarifies and unifies messages about college-readiness. The EAP can also act as a lingua franca for students who may enroll simultaneously or sequentially in more than one community college; without the EAP "ready for college" passport, they might assess at college-level in one community college and at a remedial level at another college just miles away.

Despite this successful start in EAP implementation among the CCC, there is much room for progress. Currently 70 percent of all college students in California are enrolled in community colleges (Johnson, 2009). In order to maximize the benefit of the EAP for California students, progress needs to be made in recruiting the remaining 63 community colleges that do not use any portion of the EAP test results. Many of the community colleges that do not yet utilize EAP are intently watching the progress of the early implementers and awaiting data on how EAP implementation has served the needs of community colleges. There are several studies and pilot programs underway regarding EAP use at the community college-level. Results from these studies were not available at the time of this writing.

To improve the use of EAP among CCCs, the community college system will have to address several challenges. These include: the lack of funding to support EAP implementation; the CCC's traditional lack of uniformity among placement

standards; and the fear that prospective community college students will confuse the EAP with admission requirements and therefore discourage enrollments to the CCC. To further the usefulness of the EAP to the CCC, consideration might also be given to expanding the number of EAP questions in order to produce more diagnostic information to determine more precisely where students fit on the placement and remediation spectrum.

The law authorizing the CCCs to implement the EAP has two voluntary implementation levels. First, it gives statutory permission to community colleges to use EAP test results in place of their own placement exams. The second level is much more comprehensive and folds the community colleges into the existing EAP framework, aiming for better coordination among the educational segments, and authorizing an EAP coordinator within each CCC. The task of the specialized EAP coordinator is to provide outreach to local K-12 school districts, and to work collaboratively on curriculum alignment standards with K-12 communities and CSU campuses in the region. The EAP coordinator plays a crucial role in facilitating collaborative work on the alignment of standards throughout the educational pipeline and in disseminating information to K-12 schools, students, and families about the rigors and expectations of the community colleges. Yet, Senate Bill 946 provided no funding for EAP coordinators or other EAP implementation costs, and with CCCs facing additional budget cuts, the lack of funding for EAP coordinators remains a significant obstacle (CCCCO, n.d.). The CCC is seeking grants and pursuing funding from private sources to support the implementation of regional EAP pilot programs (CDE, 2011); thus far, such support funding has been provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation.

Another challenge to effective implementation is that, because each community college has the authority to administer its own placement exams, the CCCs continue to send K-12 students conflicting messages regarding their academic preparedness for college-level work (Bueschel and Venezia, 2006). The CCC does not operate as a coherent system, but rather as 112 independent colleges. The "Open Access" orientation of the CCC results in the campuses educating a diverse population seeking two-year and four-year college degrees, certificates, career preparation, and recreational learning. Because of this "Open Access" orientation to admissions and college recruitment, many prospective students are confused and unaware that in order to enroll in credit-bearing, non-remedial courses, they must pass placement exams or meet certain academic standards (Venezia, Bracco, and Nodine, 2010). Many students mistakenly think that graduating from high school is sufficient preparation for college-level work, and they do not realize that the California High School Exit Exam tests at the 10th grade English proficiency level and at the 9th grade math proficiency level (LAO, 2008). Not having a consistent message about college-level academic expectations contributes to the challenges community colleges face in using the EAP effectively to improve student outcomes.

The CCC also must overcome concerns expressed by some educators that students will mistake EAP for an admissions indicator (Neimand Collaborative, 2010), potentially discouraging students who lack proficiency from pursuing postsecondary education (Gewertz, 2011). Some worry about how the EAP will affect their current programs and their level of funding (Neimand Collaborative, 2010). CCC are attempting to address these fears through better communication about EAP so that students and educators understand that the EAP is a diagnostic tool, not tied to admissions, to determine if students can perform college-level work.

Finally, the usefulness of the EAP could increase for CCC if the test were expanded and cut-scores were differentiated to provide more nuanced information about students' performance levels and remediation needs. Currently, results on the English portion of the EAP only indicate whether students are ready for college or not; they do not give enough information to determine where students fit on the spectrum of remediation. Community colleges typically offer courses in a sequence starting at least two, and as many as six, levels below the EAP-equivalent of "ready for college". Given the brevity of the current test, there aren't enough items on the EAP to

derive a more precise understanding of student performance levels and remediation needs to make this placement. However, California is expected to transition into a computer–adaptive testing system as assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards are implemented. Development of adaptive online exams is a focus of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), one of two assessment consortiums developing assessment systems aligned to the Common Core State Standards. California is now a governing state in SBAC. Implementation of an online system for EAP could make differentiating among levels of student skill sets more feasible. A redesigned EAP that provides more precise information about how much remediation students require if they score "not ready for college" could be used for more granular placement purposes, increasing the programs' usefulness and leading to increased participation by CCC.

The community colleges would like to deepen their own placement instruments, but lack the resources to contemplate doing so. In addition, the colleges want to move to a common assessment in English and in mathematics. A more robust EAP, redesigned based on the new SBAC assessments, could help meet both needs.

University of California (UC)

The UC system currently remains on the sidelines regarding use of EAP—though the regional initiative in the Inland Empire discussed earlier includes research at the UC level to study EAP test results and effectiveness. Fundamentally, the UC remains skeptical that, when compared to its internal placement tools and practices, EAP adds enough value to warrant adoption of a common instrument to measure college-readiness. For example, the EAP focuses on Algebra II proficiency, yet in meeting UC admission requirements the vast majority of UC-bound students have completed higher level math courses. The UC system has also resisted participation in EAP out of fear that the college-readiness indicator will be confused with college admission, which is a particular concern for the more selective campuses (Neimand Collaborative, 2010).

Despite these barriers, many observers hope that a frank review of incoming UC students' academic needs will push the UC system to reconsider its position regarding EAP participation, and make the EAP a tool used by all segments of California's public higher education. While UC's policy is that students admitted for enrollment are prepared for credit bearing non-remedial baccalaureate level work, in fact, 26 percent of freshmen entering the UC system require remediation in writing (LAO, 2011). Remediation rates vary among UC campuses, from about 8 percent at UC Berkeley to 64 percent at UC Merced (LAO, 2011). This wide range reflects the degrees of selectivity among UC campuses and provides evidence of the need to have a common college-readiness standard.

If the UC system were to reach agreement with the K-12 and other higher education systems on how to define and measure college-readiness, then a much stronger message would be sent to students and secondary institutions throughout California about expectations for postsecondary-level work. Knowledge of these expectations would improve K-12 and higher education alignment and create clearer educational pathways for students.

K-12 Schools

There are several issues that impede the successful implementation of EAP at the K-12 level: a lack of funding; the need for better communication and better institutionalized relationships with higher education; competition for attention with other issues affecting education; and the challenges associated with raising the bar for what students are expected to accomplish.

Public education has been forced to address deep statewide and local budget cuts over a series of years and the ongoing statewide fiscal crisis makes successful implementation of any program problematic. Since EAP is a voluntary program, the EAP curriculum is not uniformly available statewide; it is only offered by high schools that have chosen to pilot and adopt the ERWC course materials. This is a direct result of the lack of funding to implement new programs (Neimand Collaborative, 2010). Research by Daves-Rougeaux and the Education Data Partnership point out that only 120 out of 1,206 high schools currently

offer the ERWC curriculum (as cited in Tierney and Garcia, 2011). In order for EAP to be more effective, additional professional development must be made available statewide to English teachers in ERWC and math teachers in EAP math (Kirst, 2010).

Secondly, for a long time secondary education has received mixed messages about what it takes for students to be academically successful in college (Bueschel and Venezia, 2006). There are misaligned perceptions between secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty on how prepared graduating high school students are for college-level coursework. For example, 10 percent of high school teachers believe their students are not prepared for college-level writing, as compared to 44 percent of college faculty (Sanoff, 2006). Similarly, 9 percent of high school teachers believe their students are not prepared for college-level math, as compared to 32 percent of college faculty (Sanoff, 2006). This misalignment of college-level expectations between high school teachers and college faculty contributes to students' confusion about the level of preparedness necessary to be ready for credit-bearing work in college.

In order for EAP to be used successfully, relationships between California's K-12 and higher education systems need to be fortified (Tierney & Garcia 2011). Stronger relationships would foster a better understanding of college-level expectations, increasing the awareness of skills students need to succeed in college-level work. With better understanding, high school counselors and K-12 teachers would more likely encourage students to take action based on their EAP results. High school counselors, teachers, and administrators need to understand the benefits of EAP in order to deliver the message to students and families about the importance of college-readiness and how remediation in college can hamper students' college success.

Effective EAP implementation is also hindered in the K-12 system by the many pressing educational issues competing for attention. In an era when the progress of students meeting state K-12 standards is measured by state and federal accountability systems, many secondary educators devote their attention to issues like meeting student proficiency targets, and they do not view aligning to college-readiness standards as imperative (Neimand Collaborative, 2010). An anecdotal report from one study in a predominantly low-income school district suggests that some educators may be more focused on high school graduation and college admission than on college-readiness (Tierney and Garcia, 2011).

Finally, a significant challenge to K-12 implementation of EAP is that it dramatically raises the bar for what students are expected to accomplish in high school. Increased student participation in EAP in most districts would result in a large percentage of students scoring "not ready for college," and that percentage would be much higher than the percentage of students not meeting the California High School Exit Exam requirement. The prospect of explaining to parents and others the positive impact of the EAP despite initially low passage rates is a big challenge for local educators, one that most of them would prefer not to take on.

The implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the development by SBAC of aligned computer-adaptive assessments may help to better align K-12 standards and college-level expectations, and lead more effectively to students being prepared for college success as well as for high school graduation.

Students

As mentioned earlier, the need for better communication to improve student understanding about the program is a major factor in EAP effectiveness. More than 80 percent of all students who take the CST participate in EAP. Although participation has increased since the inception of the EAP, many students still lack knowledge and understanding about EAP and do not know what to do with the EAP test results. Timing is also an issue as EAP results do not arrive before the start of the senior year for many students, making it difficult for them to make the necessary schedule changes. By the time students get their EAP "early signal," the school's course schedule is set, and students may not have access to the appropriate courses to improve college-preparedness, particularly at schools that do not provide the academic support specific to the EAP. Many students are also unaware

or confused by the requirement to proactively authorize release of their EAP score to CSU and CCC.

EAP test results are reported on the state STAR Student Report, which is a strategy meant to increase cost-efficiency. However, listing the EAP test results on the STAR report along with a great deal of other assessment information makes it hard to find for students (Kirst, 2010), and other than a referral to an EAP website address, no substantive information explaining the EAP is included in this report. Increased marketing and messaging to K-12 students and parents could increase awareness and understanding about EAP and resolve this issue.

Many students lack knowledge about what to do with the EAP test results and what to do if they are determined to be "not ready" or "conditionally ready" for college. One focus group of students in Los Angeles found that the overwhelming majority were not familiar with EAP; thus, they did not know what to do with the test score information (Tierney and Garcia, 2011). The key value of the EAP is that it provides an early signal to students about their college-readiness, giving them time to address areas of weakness. However, this opportunity is lost if students do not know what actions to take to improve their deficiencies. Adding to this concern, students may not be fully aware of the impact of remediation on their college trajectory or the increased cost that it entails (Tierney and Garcia, 2011).

Critics point to the limited time students have to take action based on the delivery of EAP results. By the time students receive the test results in August, it may be too late or too difficult to transfer into courses that will improve their college-readiness (Gewertz, 2011). Furthermore, this "early signal" comes years too late for students who are far behind. Shortcomings in proficiency should be identified and addressed at much earlier grade levels, thereby aiding many students who are significantly unprepared for college-level work. Earlier intervention would most benefit students who are community college-bound because, as a group, they are less academically prepared than their four-year college-bound peers (Venezia, Reeves, and Nodine, 2010.) Likewise, students who lack proficiency in English require early intervention, or they may fall too far behind, lacking the skills to enroll in courses that could significantly improve their reading and writing proficiency such as Advanced Placement or Honors English (Tierney and Garcia, 2011.)

Even if all students have a clear understanding of the EAP early signal, there remains limited access to the specific EAP curriculum that can prepare deficient students for college-level coursework (Kirst, 2010). As mentioned earlier, the ERWC curriculum is not available statewide. While online courses are available, there is little data to support how effective online options are at improving student preparedness for college-level coursework.

VI. The Future of the EAP through Common Core Implementation and Other Efforts to Better Align K-12 and College-Readiness

The expanded implementation of the EAP has resulted in large part because of the focused efforts of the California Diploma Project (CDP) to bring California's varied education segments to the table in order to focus on improving alignment and expectations between K-12 and higher education. In fall 2011, the CDP hosted a convening of its signatories to further discuss career-readiness and how SBAC will incorporate a meaningful standard of readiness for college, like the EAP, in the development of an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

The CDP has been instrumental in getting all three segments of California's higher education systems and the K-12 system to agree that EAP can serve as a common measure of readiness for non-remedial, credit-bearing baccalaureate-level work. Yet challenges remain, including agreement on course content and course sequencing, inter- and intra-segmental transfer policies in post-secondary education, and the integration of college and career ready standards. Keeping K-12 and all three segments of higher education engaged in the college-readiness dialogue is critical to the viability of any future policy solutions.

In addition to CDP, there are several entities emerging as catalysts to keep the various segments engaged in college-and career-readiness discussions. These include leaders of regional collaborative efforts in Long Beach and the Inland Empire; both of which are leading by example and are expected to yield data that will inform and motivate further alignment efforts. In addition, the Linked Learning Alliance and ConnectED, the California Center for College and Career, support expanding the "Linked Learning" approach to high school reform designed to prepare students for college and careers, and are deeply engaged in efforts to improve the practical alignment between high school outcomes and college success. Finally, many education stakeholders expect the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and associated curriculum, assessments and professional development will bring about fruitful discussions regarding K-12 and higher education alignment in California.

As discussed earlier in this report, leaders of regional collaborative efforts in the Inland Empire and Long Beach are promoting local efforts to align K-12 standards with college-and career-readiness; whether or not they are successful, the results from these pilot projects will have deep impact on statewide policy discussions. Particularly in this era of limited resources, programs that can demonstrate how to increase efficiency and achieve student success will greatly influence other local and statewide education policy decision makers. However, the formation of these regional models is the result of longstanding intersegmental relationships; replicating these models will require the willingness of all educational segments to collaborate in good faith.

The Linked Learning Alliance and ConnectED, a lead player in the movement to support the Linked Learning approach, are entities that have engaged all of California's education segments as well as business, labor, research, community, and other education stakeholder organizations in dialogue around high school reform efforts aimed at improving students' college and career

preparation. The Linked Learning Alliance and ConnectEd support and facilitate efforts to improve student preparation for college and career by integrating rigorous academics with career focused, technical education, work-based learning, and support for students. While the Alliance and ConnectEd support preparing students with the academic rigor in reading and math necessary to succeed in credit-bearing college coursework, the Linked Learning approach is also intended to give students broader skills with real world applications, such as cross-discipline problem solving, and other more complex criteria recognized as necessary for college and workforce success. The Linked Learning Alliance and ConnectEd will continue to be important drivers in the discussion about ways to measure these factors through augmentation or evolution of the EAP.

As regional pilots and advocates of the Linked Learning approach keep segments engaged in discussion about K-12 and college alignment, the work over the next few years is likely to be influenced deeply by the implementation of the CCSS and aligned assessments.

Common Core State Standards

The California State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in August 2010, joining 45 other states and territories that have adopted the Common Core. By 2014, California will implement CCSS by developing new curricular frameworks, adopting new instructional materials, providing professional development support for teachers and administrators in the new standards and curriculum, and by providing new assessments online (CDE, 2010).

The CCSS initiative reflects the expectation that K-12 must deliver rigorous content and core knowledge to students in mathematics and literacy for them to succeed in college and careers. CCSS builds on California's already rigorous standards, but it enhances them by specifically aligning K-12 standards in English and math with college and career expectations so that all students graduating from high school can be prepared for credit-bearing academic college courses and for 21st century workforce training programs. CCSS implementation marks a new opportunity to use the lessons learned from the EAP. The EAP is seen as national model as it signifies progress in the alignment of K-12 assessments with higher education placement policies; the EAP also brought a diverse group of educational segments together to discuss and agree on skills students require to be academically prepared for college-level work (King, 2011). CCSS suggests that each state must have a collaborative dialogue between its respective secondary and postsecondary institutions to discuss and define college-readiness based on their own needs and standards (King, 2011).

It is notable that EAP has received much more praise and recognition as a college-readiness model with high standards of math and English at the national level than within California itself (Neimand Collaborative, 2010). Despite this contradiction, California's EAP model is the best method currently available in the nation to assess and signal to students their preparedness for college-level coursework, providing them with an opportunity to correct deficiencies before they enter college.

While it is too soon to know precisely what assessment products will be produced by either assessment consortium, the lessons learned in California with the EAP have been reviewed carefully by leaders of both assessment consortia. PARCC has committed to make college-readiness central to its strategy; it is hoped that California will have great influence in ensuring a similar focus with SBAC. Consequently, the EAP framework is expected to be embedded in the new CCSS assessment system. As CCSS implementation occurs, it is very likely that new diagnostic tools could replace the EAP or allow for its evolution. This evolution could include components that measure student competencies in broader disciplines in addition to English and math, so that EAP would be more reflective of the deeper knowledge and learning skills desired for varying careers and for success in college. As these resources become available, California policymakers will have to decide whether EAP continues to be the best diagnostic tool to determine readiness for credit-bearing college-level work and, if not, how to modify or replace it with new assessments aligned to the CCSS.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

While EAP is a groundbreaking initiative that successfully engaged leaders of multiple educational sectors in discourse and led to agreement on mutual goals, its effectiveness in reducing remediation rates still remains to be seen. Currently, regional efforts and new research projects are underway that may demonstrate how EAP can be an effective tool to reduce remediation levels. Data from the community colleges that have implemented EAP will also inform evaluations of the program's effectiveness.

In the meantime, this report offers the following recommendations to make EAP more effective:

- Officially define the EAP standard as a common measure of readiness for non-remedial, credit-bearing baccalaureate-level work across all higher education institutions in California. By establishing a clear target, students will have an incentive to prepare themselves for college-level work and school districts will be encouraged to reorganize their curricula to ensure that students are doing the necessary coursework, particularly in math, required to participate in EAP and meet the readiness standard.

- Increase and improve messages about EAP to K-12 schools, students, and parents to inform them of the expectations of higher education. California's multiple education segments must improve their communication and outreach strategies to optimize the value of EAP. All systems in California need to send a stronger message to students about what the EAP results mean.

- Expand opportunities for students to take action in their senior year to correct deficiencies by making ERWC curriculum and teacher professional development more widely available.

- Improve the timeliness of EAP test results to improve students' ability to schedule their senior year. If EAP results were distributed in July rather than in August, high school administrators and counselors would have more time to accommodate student course needs.

- Increase student participation in EAP. When more students know about the EAP and understand what to do with the results, the program has greater potential to increase college-going and persistence rates in California. The emerging research around the EAP will be important to persuade CCC and UC faculty that it is an effective tool for measuring college-readiness by addressing remediation and improving college-readiness, even for elite students.

- Strengthen the role of the K-12 system by addressing academic deficiencies before students reach their senior year. The earlier students take action to improve areas of deficiency, the better prepared they are when they commence their postsecondary

education, increasing in turn their probability of success and degree completion. Because of the complexity and overlap of the remediation problem, CDE should become more involved in raising awareness about the remediation problem and lead the effort among the education segments to work collaboratively in this effort.

- Replace the CAHSEE with the EAP to establish a clear target of college-readiness for students and educators.

- Redesign and expand the EAP so that results provide more precise information for college placement and about the amount of remediation students require if they score "not ready for college." Include an EAP focus in any assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. PARCC has committed to placing college-readiness at the center of its strategy; as a governing state in SBAC, California should insist that college-readiness be central to the SBAC strategy as well.

- Broaden the test to include more comprehensive measures of proficiency and readiness to capture the full range of cognitive and other skills required for students who are entering college or the workforce.

Regardless of potential modifications to the EAP or whether California opts for a new assessment tool to measure college-readiness, all segments of California's education community should continue joint efforts to further align the standards and expectations of college-readiness so that California can be more successful in preparing students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers.

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Appendix A

Statement Signed By California Diploma Project Signatories
8 April 2010

We come together in a shared commitment to California's economic future. We believe that California's position as a global leader in innovation and creativity is inextricably tied to the success of our state's education system—preschool through college (P-16)—in preparing students for citizenship and careers in a complex, competitive global environment.

The technical and policy analyses conducted by Achieve for the California Diploma Project provide a foundation for development of policies and reforms in curricula, instruction, and educational practices that will bring about closer alignment between students' performance in secondary school and their readiness for college and careers. Specifically, and as a first step toward a more comprehensive approach to defining and assessing readiness, the CDP has determined that satisfactory performance in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics as measured by the augmented 11th Grade California Standards Tests (CST) used in the Early Assessment Program (EAP) is one initial indicator of the skills and knowledge needed to enter non-remedial, credit-bearing baccalaureate-level courses in California's two-year and four-year post-secondary education institutions. The EAP assessment measures many of the expectations articulated by the Inter-segmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS), as well as the knowledge and skills represented in California's K-12 academic standards, at a level that is consistent with national and international academic standards and assessment benchmarking.

We therefore commit ourselves to work together to establish satisfactory student performance on the EAP assessment as a common indicator of readiness for non-remedial, credit-bearing, baccalaureate-level coursework in all of California's colleges and universities. We recognize that the unique needs and circumstances of different segments and institutions will determine the specific ways in which this indicator is put to use. We further commit ourselves to work collaboratively to improve the EAP assessment and associated student outreach, intervention, and academic preparation programs to ensure alignment across all sectors.

We strongly support further work to establish a better aligned P-16 education system that will help all of California's students to graduate from high school ready for college and careers, by providing students and their parents and teachers with clear and consistent information about what it means and what it takes to be ready. Among the next steps we envision are:

- A collaborative and comprehensive effort by all postsecondary institutions to help students get ready for college, beginning with programs already in place to support students in high school through the EAP.

- Expanded use of the EAP assessment in all postsecondary institutions as one indicator of students' readiness for placement in non-remedial, credit-bearing baccalaureate-level coursework.

- Adoption of curricula and instructional strategies in P-12 schools to increase the number of students who meet standards and academic proficiency expectations for post-secondary success.

- Support for increasing the rigor of assessment and accountability systems to more fully assess the additional knowledge, skills and habits of mind that young people need to be ready for college and careers, and that give students meaningful early signals (e.g., success in English and math in grades eight and nine) about whether they are on track toward readiness.

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