

Date of Hearing: August 6, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Das Williams, Chair
SB 490 (Jackson) – As Amended: May 15, 2013

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Early Assessment Program: common core academic content standards.

SUMMARY: Permits the California Community College (CCC) and California State University (CSU) systems to use, in addition to the existing California Standards Tests (CSTs), future standards-aligned assessments for the purposes of the Early Assessment Program (EAP).

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Leroy Greene California Assessment of Academic Achievement Act (Greene Act), to provide a statewide pupil assessment program. The Greene Act will become inoperative on July 1, 2014, and as of January 1, 2015, will be repealed (Education Code § 60600, et seq.).
- 2) Recognizes the establishment of the EAP at the CSU to enable pupils to learn about their readiness for college-level English language arts and mathematics before their senior year of high school; establishes the CCC EAP and authorizes the CCCs to use the results of the CST for diagnostic or placement purpose of prospective students who participate; and, encourages school districts that choose to participate in the EAP to consult with the Academic Senate of the CCC to work toward sequencing their pre-collegiate level courses in English language arts and mathematics to the academic content standards (EC §99300, et seq.).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This measure is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: Early Assessment Program. Developed in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE), the State Board of Education (SBE), and the CSU, and accepted by participating CCC campuses, the EAP is a voluntary program designed to provide students, their families, and high schools with early signals about students' readiness for college-level English language arts and mathematics courses. Students in grade 11 who are eligible to take the English language arts, the Algebra II, or the Summative High School Mathematics CST may participate in the EAP.

The EAP identifies a student's need for additional preparation in these areas while still enrolled in high school. Students then have an opportunity to enroll in English language arts and/or mathematics classes that include additional instruction during their senior year to prepare for placement exams necessary at the CSU and the CCC systems. Students who demonstrate proficiency for college-level coursework, based on their EAP results, are exempt from taking CSU and participating CCC placement tests in English language arts and mathematics and are permitted to move directly into college-level classes upon enrollment. If a student is identified as deficient in mathematics and/or English language arts as indicated by their test score on the EAP, the student who has been accepted to a CSU will participate in a program designed to develop proficiency in their area of deficiency before they enroll as matriculated freshmen.

Students who participate in the EAP must complete the specified CSTs and an additional 15 questions on the English language arts and mathematics portions of the CSTs (“augmented CST”). Students are also required to complete an essay for the English language arts portion of the EAP. The EAP results are incorporated into the Standardized Testing and Reporting - Student Report. Students who seek or intend to enroll in a CSU or CCC have the opportunity to indicate that they want the scores released to the institution at the time they take the exams.

According to the CSU, in spring 2012, 87 percent of eligible grade 11 students participated in the EAP in English language arts and 83 percent of eligible grade 11 students participated in the EAP in mathematics. Of the 87 percent of grade 11 students participating in the EAP for English language arts, 23 percent scored college ready; of the 83 percent of grade 11 students participating in the EAP for mathematics, 15 percent scored college ready.

According to the CCC Chancellor's Office, based on the most recent data, 67 of the 112 CCC campuses accept EAP results and thus students scoring college ready are exempt from having to take the local CCC English language arts and/or mathematics placement exams.

Common core state standards (CCSS). The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the CCSS English language arts and mathematics on August 2, 2010. Current law requires the SBE to adopt revised frameworks that are aligned to the CCSS in Mathematics by November 30, 2013, and English language arts by May 30, 2014 (EC §60207).

California joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as a governing state in 2011, for the purpose of developing assessments that are aligned to the CCSS. A condition of becoming a governing member state, California committed to administering the SBAC assessments to pupils beginning in the 2014-15 school year (www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbac-faqs.asp).

The CCSS are designed to prepare students for college and career readiness and in turn, mastery of these standards may be evidence of such readiness. Therefore, SBAC has encouraged institutions of higher education to recognize its assessment as evidence that students are ready for entry-level, credit-bearing courses and should be exempted from remediation in English language arts and mathematics.

Need for the bill. According to the author, due to the approaching sunset of the Greene Act, this measure will allow for the Education Code to be updated to reflect the changes in assessments with the CCSS. Additionally, this measure is needed in order to encourage the CCC campuses to sequence their English language arts and mathematics courses to the CCSS.

Related Legislation. AB 484 (Bonilla), which is pending a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee, suspends the assessments required as part of the Standardized Testing and Accountability Reporting (STAR) Program, except for those assessments in the core subjects necessary to satisfy the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in grades 3 to 8, inclusive, and grade 10 and those assessments augmented for use as part of the EAP in grade 11, until new assessments addressing the CCSS are developed and implemented.

To note, this measure is amending the same code section as SB 490; the authors offices have indicated that they are working together to create double-jointing amendments should both measures reach the Floors of both Houses.

AB 959 (Bonilla), which was held in Assembly Appropriations, required the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a recommendation for the use of the SBAC assessments for use in the EAP as well as entry requirements and course placement decisions of colleges and universities no later than January 1, 2018, to allow for the use of the assessment data that will be available at that time.

SB 247 (Liu), which is pending a hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, excludes pupils in grade 2 from the STAR Program and extends the inoperative date of the STAR Program from July 1, 2014 until July 1, 2016.

Previous Legislation. AB 2001 (Bonilla, 2012), which was held in Senate Appropriations, stated the intent of the Legislature that the reauthorization of the statewide pupil assessment program include specified plans to reform that program as it relates to grades 7 to 12, inclusive and required the SPI, in consultation with various groups of individuals and entities, to develop recommendations to effectuate those reforms.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Association of California School Administrators
California Federation of Teachers
Community College League of California

Opposition

None on file.

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