



What is the Early Assessment Program?

Background

The California State University, in collaboration with the California Department of Education and California Board of Education, implemented the Early Assessment Program in 2004 to assist college-bound high school students in determining their readiness for college-level English and math courses. As a signal of college readiness, the EAP provides high school students with an opportunity to make the most effective use of their senior year to prepare for college if a student's EAP test result indicates that they are not ready for college-level courses. Beginning in 2nd grade through the 11th grade, California's public school students take the California Standards Test (CST). In the Spring of their 11th grade year, students are given an opportunity to take an augmented CST, called the EAP, to assess their level of readiness for college. The augmented CST consists of 15 additional questions in English and math and a writing essay. Scores are compiled from 45 selected test items from the CST in English and math, plus the additional questions and essay.

As an incentive to students to take the EAP test and to do their best, students who demonstrate college readiness on the EAP are exempt from taking CSU placement tests when they enroll at a CSU campus. These students will be able to enroll in college-level English and math courses at CSU. For math, a second category of readiness exists: conditional. If a student is determined as conditional, he or she will need to take the appropriate math or science course in their senior year, earning a C or better in the course, or successfully complete an online course, in order to enroll at a CSU campus without having to take the placement exam.

2009 Student EAP Test Results

In 2009, an estimated 82% of California's 11th grade public high school students (366,925 out of 447,742 students) who took the CST, opted to take the English portion of the EAP. Of the students who took the English EAP test, only 16% demonstrated readiness for college, while 83% did not. Because only those 11th grade students who have completed or are enrolled in Algebra II qualify to take the EAP math test, fewer students take this assessment. Of the 169,473 out of 220,305 eligible students who opted to take the EAP math test, 13% scored ready for college-level math, 44% scored conditional, and 43% did not demonstrate readiness for college-level math.

The Role of California Community Colleges in EAP

Senate Bill 946 provides the Chancellor's Office with the authority to access data on 11th grade students who take the EAP. Given State budget constraints and that no new funding was appropriated to implement a CCC EAP, participation by community colleges is voluntary. There are two levels of community college EAP participation. The first level is the local community college decision to use EAP test results. As of January 1, 2009, for students demonstrating readiness for college-level coursework on the EAP, SB 946 allows community colleges to use EAP results as a waiver to assessment and for placement into college-level English and math courses.

The second level of participation is programmatic. Community colleges identified for participation as EAP sites will be able to request high school student data from the Chancellor's Office (for their specific district boundary) to support outreach efforts. Using existing resources, participating community colleges must identify an EAP coordinator to work with CSU and local high school districts. The Chancellor's Office is applying for grant funds to support the program-level of implementation at local community colleges.