

**The Early Assessment Program:  
Helping High School Students Meet  
College Expectations in Mathematics and English**

**A Joint Program of California State University  
and California Public Schools**

The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a collaborative effort among three important state entities in California: California State University (CSU), California Department of Education (CDE), and California State Board of Education (SBE). The goal of this unprecedented partnership is to ensure that college-bound high-school graduates have the English and mathematics skills expected by the state university.

Like most public comprehensive universities, CSU admits students first—and only then tests them to see if they have the reading, writing, and mathematics skills needed for placement in college-level study. If they do not, the students are placed in remedial courses for one or two semesters—thus making the pursuit of a baccalaureate degree more expensive for both the student and the state.

The EAP will allow students, their teachers, their parents, and the CSU to know exactly how well prepared the 11<sup>th</sup>-graders are for university-level work. Furthermore, it will give high school students a chance to polish their skills before enrolling in college.

The EAP has three components: early testing, the opportunity for additional preparation in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and professional development activities for high school English and mathematics teachers.

The EAP tests are augmented California Standards Tests (CSTs) in 11<sup>th</sup>-grade English and mathematics; these tests are part of California's public school testing and accountability system and are required of all students. The augmented tests were developed by CSU and K-12 faculty, who made sure that both the California high school standards as well as the CSU placement standards were covered. The faculty added a writing sample to the English CST, as well as a few more test items, but they kept the time needed for testing to a minimum. Special scores are computed composed of a subset of relevant CST items plus the CSU augmented items. Specified levels of these scores indicate meeting CSU standards.

After 11<sup>th</sup>-graders take the test, they will be notified whether they have either met the CSU expectations (and are thus exempt from any additional CSU placement tests) or whether they need additional preparation in order to be successful in college-level work. Those who need extra work will have their entire senior year to prepare further. They can pinpoint individual strengths and weaknesses by using the CSU Diagnostic Writing Service on the web or the Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project.

Students who need better skills in expository reading and writing can take a specially designed 12<sup>th</sup>-grade course, developed jointly by teachers from high schools and the university. Modules from this course will be offered in fall 2004, and the release of the full course statewide to all high schools will occur by spring 2005.

Students who need to upgrade their mathematics skills will have access to courses and to other individualized online interactive programs during their senior year. A “[Math Success Website](#)” has been developed.

A final component of the EAP is teacher development. CSU teacher-education faculty are sponsoring reading institutes and are developing materials through which high school teachers can improve their skills in helping students to read and write effectively. Over 80 professional development and awareness sessions will be offered before December, 2004 involving over 1500 high school English teachers across California. Additional professional teacher development activities are being developed for mathematics teachers to be offered in Spring, 2005.

What are the benefits of EAP?

- Students get an early wake-up call about their preparedness for college. Those who find that they are not proficient in mathematics or English have their entire senior year to hone those skills.
- Citizens of California can be sure that required high school standards and tests are meaningful, have consequences, and connect to readiness for college.
- Citizens of California can be confident that high school standards and college-entrance standards are congruent.
- Students who do choose to improve their skills in the senior year can pass the CSU placement exams and thus bypass any remedial courses.
- Citizens of California can know that the state’s resources are being used wisely.