



Historic Shift Away from Flawed Standardized Placement Exams and Remedial Education Approved by Board of Governors

New regulations will help more students achieve their potential by reducing barriers to enrolling in transfer-level math and English coursework

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges Board of Governors on Monday unanimously [adopted regulatory changes](#) designed to keep students from inaccurately being placed into remedial courses that don't count toward certificates or degrees and create roadblocks to success.

“We are ending remedial education as it has existed for decades,” Board of Governors President Tom Epstein said. “Research shows that students are far more prepared than assessment tests have acknowledged. A student’s high school performance is a much stronger predictor of success in transfer-level courses than standardized placement tests.”

The Monday action establishes requirements for colleges to fully comply with a new state law, [Assembly Bill 705](#) by Assembly woman Jacqui Irwin, D-Thousand Oaks, that effectively eliminates unreliable placement tests to determine students’ math and English skills and whether they are ready for college-level work. Those placement tests result in more than two-thirds of new students being classified as unprepared for college-level work, with low-income students and students of color disproportionately placed in remedial classes and not completing remedial course sequences.

Assembly Bill 705, which took effect Jan. 1, 2018, mandates that colleges rely on high school coursework, high school grades and high school grade point average – metrics that research shows are far more accurate in assessing a student’s abilities. The bill requires the California Community Colleges system to be compliant by fall of 2019.

Students cannot be placed in remedial classes unless they are highly unlikely to succeed in a transfer-level course and enrolling in the remedial course would improve their likelihood of completing a college-level course within just one year. In addition, students must be informed of their rights to access transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics. Some colleges began moving toward reform before AB 705 was introduced in 2017.

“The research is overwhelmingly clear in showing how low-income and minority students are significantly more likely to be wrongly placed in remedial classes, creating a chain of events that contribute to stubborn equity gaps,” said Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley. “These changes constitute a major step toward in meeting the commitments and goals set forth in the California Community Colleges [Vision for Success](#).”

Oakley's comments came before delivering his annual the State of the System report, which details progress toward meeting the *Vision for Success* goals. The report shows the total number of credentials awarded last year increasing slightly, transfers to University of California and California State University continuing an upward trend, and gains in the number of students who report they became employed in their chosen field of study.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, composed of 73 districts and 115 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. California community colleges provide career education and workforce training; guaranteed transfer to four-year universities; degree and certificate pathways; and basic skills education in English and math. As the state's engine for social and economic mobility, the California Community Colleges supports the [Vision for Success](#), a strategic plan designed to improve student success outcomes, increase transfer rates and eliminate achievement gaps. For more information, please visit the [California Community Colleges website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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