



## **AB 1951 (O'Donnell) - PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE ACT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How does the Pathways to College Act make higher education more accessible?**

AB 1951 opens doors to higher education for parents and students by allowing school districts to offer college admissions tests like the SAT or ACT during the school day at no cost to students in lieu of the grade 11 state assessment.

By taking a college admissions tests like the SAT or ACT during a school day, more underrepresented students can be connected to scholarships, free, personalized test practice tools, and college application fee waivers.

### **How does the Pathways to College Act level the playing field for students?**

A growing body of evidence shows that offering a college entrance exam, like the SAT or ACT, at no cost to students during the school day propels more students into college.

The SAT and ACT offer free, personalized test practice and other resources to students of all means, no matter where they're from or how much their parents make.

### **Does the Pathways to College Act ensure accommodations for EL and students with disabilities?**

Yes. AB 1951 requires students with exceptional needs to be provided with appropriate accommodations or an alternate test.

AB 1951 also requires English Learners to be provided appropriate accommodations, including access to testing instructions in their primary language, bilingual glossaries and extended testing time.

### **Does the Pathways to College Act strengthen local control to school districts?**

Yes. AB 1951 gives local school districts more control over how students are tested in grade 11 by allowing districts to choose the test they provide to their students.

### **Will the Pathways to College Act ensure state and federal standards are met by school districts?**

Yes. The bill requires the alternative assessment to meet state standards and federal requirements. About a dozen other states have used or plan to use a college admissions exam like the SAT or ACT as an alternative assessment to meet state and federal accountability requirements.

Independent third-party alignment studies conducted by the University of Illinois and the Center for the Study of Curriculum from Michigan State University concluded that certain alternative assessments strongly align with the Common Core State Standards.

**How does the Pathways to College Act ensure school districts continue to receive federal funding?**

The federal government recognizes the value of local control. Federal law allows states to authorize an alternative assessment. This bill seizes the opportunity to level the playing field by giving all students easier access.

About a dozen states that have received approval to use an alternative assessment, such as the SAT or ACT, to meet federal accountability requirements.

**Does the Pathways to College Act require the alternative assessment be a valid and reliable measurement?**

Yes, AB 1951 requires the alternative assessment to be a statistically reliable and valid norm-referenced or criterion-referenced test.

**How does the Pathways to College Act make college admissions tests free for students in participating school districts?**

AB 1951 requires local educational agencies that choose to offer an alternative assessment to offer it for free to students during the school day. AB 1951 is written to be cost-neutral to the State.