



## FACT SHEET

### AB 1951 (O'Donnell) – Pathways to College Act As Introduced

## SUMMARY

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AB 1951 allows school districts to administer an approved alternative assessment (e.g., SAT or ACT) for students in grade 11, in place of the grade 11 Smarter Balanced Summative test in English language arts & math.

## BACKGROUND

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Under current law, students in grades 3-8 and 11 are assessed through the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system, which includes:

- Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (English language arts & math in grades 3-8, 11)
- California Alternate Assessments (grades 3-8 and 11 for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities)
- California Science Tests (grades 5, 8, and assigned grade in high school)
- California Alternate Assessment for Science (grades 5, 8 and assigned grade in high school for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities)

In an effort to increase college-attendance rates, over 30 school districts, including Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Fresno USD, Oakland USD, and San Jose USD administer college entrance exams to 11<sup>th</sup> grade pupils free of charge.

Administering the exam during the school day removes a barrier to college attendance for students who may not otherwise have access to the exam or take it on their own.

The LBUSD found that pupil performance on the SAT correlates almost identically with the performance on the CAASPP assessment. For example, 49% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders met or exceeded benchmarks on both the SAT and the CAASPP English language arts assessments, and 28% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders met or exceeded standards on the CAASPP math assessment, while 29% met or exceeded the benchmark on the SAT math.

Federal law allows states, beginning in the 2017-18 school year, to authorize local educational agencies (LEAs) to administer a nationally recognized high school assessment in place of the state's high school assessment. In fact, other states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, and Michigan, have received approval from the U.S. Department of Education to administer the SAT for federal accountability purposes, in place of a state adopted assessment program.

More school districts throughout the state are requesting local control and flexibility when it comes to assessing students in grade 11 so they can choose assessments that are meaningful to their high school students, provide actionable instructional data to teachers and reduce testing time.

## SOLUTION

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This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to approve one or more nationally recognized high school assessments that a LEA may administer in lieu of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment.



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The bill requires the following for LEAs that choose to administer an alternative assessment:

- The assessment is a statistically reliable and a valid norm-referenced or criterion-referenced test
- The assessment is aligned to the academic content standards
- The assessment is administered at no charge to students
- The assessment is administered to all students in grade 11, except to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and those students who opt out
- Students with exceptional needs must be provided with appropriate accommodations or with the California Alternate Assessments
- English learners must be provided appropriate accommodations, including access to testing instruction in their primary language, bilingual glossaries and extended testing time.

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**OPPOSITION**

None Received

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**STAFF CONTACT**

Sophia Kwong Kim  
(916) 319-2070  
sophia.kwong@asm.ca.gov

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**SUPPORT**

Association of California School Administrators  
Central Valley Education Coalition  
California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators  
California Suburban School Districts  
Long Beach Unified School District  
Oxnard Union High School District  
Paramount Unified School District  
Sacramento City Unified School District  
San Jose Unified School District  
Tustin Unified School District  
Val Verde Unified School District