March 8, 2006

Dear Eleventh Grade English and Mathematics Teachers:

THE EARLY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR 2006

Background

On behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE), State Board of Education (SBE), and California State University (CSU), we are asking for your continuing support of the Early Assessment Program (EAP) by encouraging your eleventh grade students to take the EAP in English-language arts and mathematics.

In collaboration with the CDE and SBE, the CSU developed the EAP to provide students, their families, and high schools the opportunity to assess eleventh grade student readiness for college-level English and mathematics, i.e., skills that students who choose either to enter college or the workforce directly out of high school will need to be successful. The EAP consists of questions from the eleventh grade California Standards Test (CSTs) in English-language arts, Algebra II, and Summative High School Mathematics plus 15 additional multiple-choice questions and a written essay. The spring 2006 administration is the third year that the EAP will be available to all students enrolled in eleventh grade who are eligible to take the eleventh grade CST in English-language arts and the CSTs in Algebra II and/or Summative High School Mathematics.

Benefits for Students: Why should eleventh grade students be encouraged to participate in the Early Assessment Program?

- The EAP provides valuable information to the high school about student readiness for college level English and mathematics.

- The EAP report enables the student, family, and high school to identify the student’s need for additional preparation in English and mathematics while still enrolled in high school.
As appropriate, working with high school counselors and teachers, students have the opportunity to enroll in mathematics classes in twelfth grade or to participate in web-based mathematics interactive tutorials. They may also enroll in English classes that include additional instruction in expository reading and writing. These are essential skills that high school teachers have identified as necessary for success not only in English but across the curriculum.

While the EAP questions are voluntary for eleventh grade students, the response to the EAP has been overwhelming. For spring 2005:

- Sixty-nine percent of all eleventh grade students eligible to take the CSTs in Algebra II/Summative High School Mathematics completed the state-mandated CSTs plus the optional EAP questions.

- Forty-six percent of all eleventh grade students eligible to take the CST in English-language arts completed the state-mandated CSTs plus the optional EAP questions and EAP written essay.

With your support, we hope to increase further the number of eleventh grade students who voluntarily choose to complete the EAP by answering the additional multiple-choice questions and completing a written essay.

The EAP not only provides an opportunity to high schools to identify students who need additional work in English and mathematics in twelfth grade, it also provides an additional benefit to students who attend any of the CSUs 23 campuses. Students who are determined to be college-ready on the basis of the EAP are exempt from taking the CSUs placement tests in English and mathematics and move directly into baccalaureate-level classes upon enrollment.

Students who are not college-ready at the end of eleventh grade have the opportunity to strengthen their skills in twelfth grade, which will help to increase their mastery of the subjects and their ability to demonstrate proficiency on the CSUs English and mathematics placement tests.

New Courses and Continuing Professional Development

Responding to requests from the CDE and high schools, the CSU, working with college and high school English faculty and reading experts, developed a curriculum for a twelfth grade Expository Reading and Writing Course that may be used by the high school as a full, one-year course or from which modules may be integrated into existing twelfth grade English classes. The Expository Reading and Writing Course is aligned
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with the English-language arts content standards and consists of lessons based on
non-fiction and fiction texts. It can fulfill the "B" requirement of the University of
California/CSU (A-G) college preparatory course pattern. The CSU, in collaboration with
the county offices of education, provides professional development programs for high
school English teachers for the twelfth grade Expository Reading and Writing Course as
well as for high school mathematics teachers.

Request for Cooperation

Along with this letter, the CSU Office of the Chancellor is providing each California
public high school packets of letters addressed to high school eleventh grade students.
We are asking you to distribute these letters for all eleventh grade students enrolled in
your mathematics and English classes and to encourage your students to participate in
the EAP during the spring 2006 administration of the CSTs by completing the voluntary
EAP questions and written essay. The letter addressed to students explains advantages
of participating in the EAP and what they need to do to ensure they receive an EAP
score report. These letters need to be distributed to students no less than two weeks
before the CSTs are administered on your high school campus. A copy of this letter is
enclosed.

If you have any questions regarding the EAP please visit the CSU Web site at
http://www.calstate.edu/eap, or contact Carolina Cardenas, Associate Director, Student
Academic Support, CSU Office of the Chancellor, at (562) 951-4724 or by e-mail at
ccardenas@calstate.edu. You may also contact the EAP coordinator at the CSU
campus nearest you. A listing of coordinators can be found on the CSU Web site at

Thank you for your continued support of these collaborative efforts to help prepare
California high school graduates for higher education and California's workforce.

Sincerely,

JACK O'CONNELL
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Enclosures