

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Patrick O'Donnell, Chair

AB 830 (Kalra) – As Amended March 23, 2017

**SUBJECT:** High school exit examination

**SUMMARY:** Repeals the requirement that the state develop and administer a California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and the requirement that pupils pass the CAHSEE as a condition of receiving a high school diploma, and repeals references to the CAHSEE in the Education Code. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Repeals the requirement that the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), with the approval of the State Board of Education (SBE) develop and administer the CAHSEE, as specified.
- 2) Repeals the requirement that pupils pass the CAHSEE as a condition of receiving a high school diploma.
- 3) Repeals references to the CAHSEE from Education Code provisions related to the following:
  - a) The 21<sup>st</sup> Century High School after School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program;
  - b) School Accountability Report Card;
  - c) Annual report on dropouts;
  - d) Establishment of charter schools;
  - e) Parent notices regarding the CAHSEE;
  - f) School counseling requirements;
  - g) Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children;
  - h) Regional Occupational Centers;
  - i) California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS);
  - j) High School Mathematics Professional Development Institutes;
  - k) Algebra Academics Professional Development Institutes;
  - l) Algebra Professional Development Institutes; and
  - m) Elementary Mathematics Professional Development Institutes.
- 4) Repeals a reference to CAHSEE from a Government Code provision related to exemptions to the open meetings requirements.

- 5) Repeals a reference to CAHSEE from an Unemployment Insurance Code provision related to the funding of programs to improve academic skills of low achieving youth and dropout prevention.
- 6) Makes permanent the ability of pupils to obtain a high school diploma if they have met all graduation requirements except passing the CAHSEE.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Suspends the administration of the CAHSEE for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 schools.
- 2) Requires local education agencies (LEAs) to grant a high school diploma to any student who completed grade 12 in the 2003-04 school year or a subsequent school year and has met all graduation requirements except passing the CAHSEE.
- 3) Requires the SPI to convene an advisory panel to provide recommendations on the continuation of the CAHSEE and on alternative pathways to satisfy the high school graduation requirements.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

**Background of the CAHSEE.** The CAHSEE assessed pupils in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. It was established by SB 2X (O'Connell, Chapter 1, Statutes of 1999). SB 2X was part of a package of school reform bills that established new curriculum content standards, a new statewide assessment program, and related professional development and instructional programs. The requirement to pass the exam as a condition of receiving a high school diploma was originally to take effect with the class of 2004. However, the State Board of Education (SBE) determined that a high failure rate in the pilot year was due to the fact that the new, standards-based instruction had not been in place long enough to give pupils an adequate amount of time to prepare for the exam. Accordingly the SBE voted to defer the requirement to the class of 2006.

The CAHSEE was evaluated annually by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO). The most recent annual report (November 24, 2014) covers the class of 2014. The report notes that the pass rate increased from year to year, and in 2014 it was 97.2% among all pupils (this includes pupils who had to take the test more than once before they passed it). By ethnicity, the pass rate ranged from 96.1% for Latino/Hispanic pupils to 99.3% for white pupils. The pass rate for students with disabilities was 67.0%. The highest subgroup pass rate was 99.7% for English learners who had been reclassified as fluent English.

**New standards.** The CAHSEE was aligned to the content standards for English language arts and mathematics that were adopted pursuant to the 1999 education reform package of bills. In 2010 the SBE voted to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The adoption of the CCSS led to the development of new statewide assessments that are aligned to the new standards. However, the CAHSEE is still aligned to the old standards. This misalignment is discussed in the 2014 HumRRO biennial report (January 31, 2014, pages 228-229):

Of the approximately 22,000 ELA and mathematics items in the entire CAHSEE item bank, only about 16,000 (73%) were initially considered to be associated with California content standards that could be cross-walked to CCSS, according to ETS. HumRRO observed review meetings ETS held to evaluate the 16,000 items for alignment at the item-to-CCSS level. Approximately half or more of the items were judged not aligned when evaluated directly to a CCSS standard, and an additional number of mathematics items were judged to align to a CCSS standard at an earlier grade than the California content standard did. These results indicate that the CAHSEE item bank would need to be substantially revised (e.g., replacing or modifying a significant number of items) to align the CAHSEE to the CCSS rather than to the previous California Content Standards.

Because the CAHSEE is not aligned to the CCSS, which have been adopted by California, the Legislature enacted SB 172 (Liu, Chapter 572, Statutes of 2015), which suspended CAHSEE for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 fiscal years and, until July 31, 2018, requires LEAs to grant a high school diploma to any pupil who has met all other requirements for high school graduation since 2003-04. However, SB 172 did not take effect until January 1, 2016. This meant that high school seniors in the class of 2015 who met all graduation requirements except passing CAHSEE would have to wait until 2016 to get their diplomas. Accordingly, the Legislature passed an urgency measure, SB 725 (Hancock, Chapter 225, Statutes of 2015) to allow for the immediate granting of high school diplomas to those pupils.

***Task force recommendations.*** SB 172 also required the SPI to convene a task force to make recommendations regarding the continuation of a high school exit exam or other means of meeting high school graduation requirements. The task force appointed by the SPI consisted of 29 members who represented teachers, school administrators, school board members, parents, students, the business community, testing experts, and the Legislature. The SPI's report and recommendations were released September 2016. The recommendation of the SPI is to remove the requirement to pass the CAHSEE as a condition of high school graduation. **This bill** implements that recommendation.

***Arguments in support.*** In his report, the SPI argues that the accountability context for K-12 schools has undergone a paradigm shift since the enactment of the CAHSEE. Major changes include adopting the Common Core State Standards, the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control and Accountability Plans, and the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. The SPI argues that these changes, among other things, promote the new goal of college and career readiness for all high school graduates and provide resources to allow the identification of pupils in academic need in lower grades. This paradigm shift moves us away from using a single test, like the CAHSEE, for making high stakes decisions.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Sponsor)

Association of California School Administrators

Los Angeles Unified School District

The School for Integrated Academics and Technologies (SIATech)

### **Opposition**

None received

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