California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 27, 2018

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TOM TORLAKSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Policy Analysis for California Education Report That Compares the Utility of the Smarter Balanced and SAT Assessments for Predicting Success in College.

## Summary of Key Issues

In 2004, the California State University (CSU) established the Early Assessment Program (EAP), a collaborative effort among the California State Board of Education (SBE), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the CSU, to enable students to learn about their readiness for college-level English and mathematics courses before their senior year of high school. Beginning with the 2014–15 school year, the EAP was replaced with the grade eleven Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) computer-adaptive assessments for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics to evaluate a student’s college and career readiness.

In 2015, the University of California (UC), Davis, in partnership with the CDE, was awarded a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences, United States Department of Education, under the Evaluation of State Education Programs and Policies program. This study — [*Predicting College Success: How Do Different High School Assessments Measure Up?*](https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/SBAC-SAT%20Paper.pdf) (March 2018) — was conducted by Dr. Michal Kurlaender, Katherine Kramer, and Erika Jackson of UC Davis under this grant. Support for the study was provided by the CDE, the CSU Chancellor’s Office, and the UC Davis Office for Institutional Research. As stated in the study:

Our results for the CSU analysis reveal the following: (1) high school grade point average is a stronger predictor than either standardized test score measure; (2) Smarter Balanced does as well as the SAT in predicting college outcomes of CSU students; (3) none of these assessments is a strong predictor of college persistence; and (4) the overall pattern of results holds for different subgroups (race/ethnicity subgroups, socioeconomic disadvantage, and by high school quality).

For our analysis of UC Davis students, we find: (1) both standardized test scores are stronger predictors of college performance than of persistence; (2) the SAT is a stronger predictor of first year performance than Smarter Balanced, but the difference is quite small in models that account for other individual and school characteristics; (3) none of these assessments is a strong predictor of college persistence (probably because 92 percent of all UC Davis students persist to year two); and (4) the overall pattern of results holds for different subgroups (race/ethnicity, socioeconomic disadvantage, and by high school quality).

The full study can be accessed on the Policy Analysis for California Education Web site at <https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/SBAC-SAT%20Paper.pdf>.

## Attachment(s)

None.