

# Independent Evaluation Study

of Certain Students Who Used  
Modifications and/or  
Accommodations on the  
California High School Exit  
Examination (CAHSEE)



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# Purpose

- **To study and report on a subgroup of high school students who have taken the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) with modifications and/or accommodations specified in their respective individualized education programs (IEP) or Section 504 plans.**
  - The subgroup is composed of those twelfth graders who have not passed the CAHSEE, but have satisfied, or will satisfy, all other requirements for graduating from high school.

## Purpose (cont.)

- **The study shall examine why such students have not passed the CAHSEE and whether these students have learned the material being tested, but are unable to demonstrate their mastery of that knowledge through the CAHSEE despite their use of permissible modifications and/or accommodations.**



# General Approach

- Identified all students with disabilities who took CAHSEE with modifications or accommodations as 11<sup>th</sup> graders in 2007-2008, and failed one or both parts
- Screened out those students who had subsequently passed CAHSEE or who were not on track for graduation
- Then selected a subsample of approximately 100 students to participate in cognitive interviews using released CAHSEE items in *either* mathematics or ELA



# Interviews

- **Each student was presented with 30 representative CAHSEE questions from either mathematics or ELA**
  - The protocol used a think-aloud format that provided insight into the student's cognitive processes
  - After the student answered each question, the examiner administered a set of standardized probes to further evaluate mastery of the construct being tested



# Scoring

- **Students were given credit for any items that they initially answered correctly (before probing)**
- **Responses to other items were evaluated by an expert panel to determine which responses should be given credit**
  - The expert panel consisted of two special education specialists and two content area specialists from local school districts

## Scoring (cont.)

- **On the mathematics test, each question was worth one raw score point**
- **On the ELA test, the formula was similar, but the essay was worth 20% of the total score**
- **Criterion for passing was that the student achieve the same percent of raw score points as was equivalent to a CAHSEE scale score of 350 (based on 2004 standard setting)**
  - 55% for mathematics
  - 60% for ELA

# Results for interview sample

- **After screening out students who passed the actual CAHSEE in May 2009, the percentages of students in our interview sample who were judged to have mastery were:**
  - Approximately 5% in mathematics
  - Approximately 32% in ELA

# Projecting to the population

- **All the students that we interviewed were reported by their schools to be on track to graduate**
- **We also knew that, among the students from the 2007-2008 CAHSEE file who we had screened by the districts as potential interview subjects**
  - Many had passed CAHSEE
  - Many had left the school
  - Among the rest, nearly 60% were reported to be on track to graduate

# Projecting to the Population

- **We returned to the 11,000 students identified in the 2007-2008 CAHSEE file**
- **We used 2008-2009 CAHSEE data to screen out:**
  - Students who had passed CAHSEE
  - Students who did not appear at all in the 2008-2009 CAHSEE file and had therefore probably left the system
- **Among the remainder, we used the information from our interview sample to estimate on track to graduate and mastery of essential CAHSEE content**



# Projecting to the population

- **We are continuing to refine our estimates using a regression based approach in which we consider the characteristics of students in our interview sample who were judged to have mastery**