

This document contains *Chapter 6: Options for Students Who Have Difficulty Passing the CAHSEE* from the Third Biennial Report, California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) published on February 1, 2006, by the California Department of Education. The entire report is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/thirdbiennial.asp>.

Chapter 6: Options for Students Who Have Difficulty Passing the CAHSEE

Introduction

Current state law requires all students, beginning with the Class of 2006, to pass the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) to receive a high school diploma. As noted in Chapter 1, prior evaluation reports have highlighted particular difficulties in meeting the CAHSEE requirement faced by students in special education programs. We have several times recommended consideration of alternatives for these students. In 2004, the California legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 964, calling for a panel to identify options or alternatives for students in special education programs and requiring a contractor to support the work of this panel and report on options that are identified.

Pursuant to requirements of SB 964, a report was submitted to the California legislature in spring 2005 recommending alternative graduation assessments and requirements for students receiving special education services (Rabinowitz, et al., 2005). The SB 964 report identifies three types of options for students receiving special education services. First, there are options for *alternate forms of testing* to be sure students receiving special education services have adequate opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do. Second, there are options for *modifying the CAHSEE requirement*. The main recommendation in this area, to defer the requirement for students receiving special education services, is based on the premise that instructional opportunities have not been adequate to provide sufficient opportunity for students receiving special education services to learn the required material. The deferral is also recommended to allow time to develop alternative requirements, such as coursework, that special education students might pass in order to receive a diploma. Finally, there are options concerning *alternative types of diplomas* for students who are not able to demonstrate full mastery of the CAHSEE standards.

Specific recommendations included in the SB 964 report (Rabinowitz, et al., 2005) are reproduced here. Recommendations for alternative assessment formats were:

1. While several alternative assessment formats (with and without accommodations) hold great promise as viable alternatives/supplements to CAHSEE, none has met sufficient technical or feasibility standards for full-scale implementation in California as an *equivalent alternative* to CAHSEE. Therefore, none should be implemented until evidence is available that its implementation will meet standards of equivalence and have incremental validity relative to CAHSEE for students with disabilities.
2. The CDE needs to determine criteria for determining when alternative assessment formats are ready for statewide high-stakes implementation.

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3. The CDE should develop and implement a focused research agenda on the technical adequacy (e.g., reliability, validity, equivalence) and feasibility of promising alternative assessment approaches for students with disabilities.

The specific recommendation regarding graduation requirements was:

Use successful student completion of coursework independently certified as equivalent to CAHSEE-level content as a substitute for passing all or part of the CAHSEE. This recommendation cannot take effect until the development and implementation of all necessary infrastructure to support this option is completed (e.g., professional development, monitoring, tracking/information systems).

Specific recommendations regarding diploma options were:

1. Continue school and system accountability by collecting and reporting CAHSEE data for all students and subgroups, while delaying the graduation requirement of passing CAHSEE for students with disabilities for a period of up to two years. Award students with disabilities a standard high school diploma upon completion of all other non-CAHSEE requirements during this period.
2. If the CAHSEE graduation requirement is not delayed beyond the graduation class of 2006, develop and implement a multiple-tier diploma for students with disabilities in time for that graduation class.
3. Continue to offer the waiver process and certificates of completion for students with disabilities under current statute and regulations.

HumRRO proposed an amendment to the current evaluation contract to conduct analyses and provide information relevant to the options identified in the SB 964 report. Before adopting specific recommendations, policy makers need answers to questions such as:

- How feasible is each recommendation?
- How long would it take to implement the recommendations and are there remaining unexamined issues that must be resolved?
- How effective will each recommendation be in achieving fairness in diploma decisions for students receiving special education services?

As part of our independent evaluation, HumRRO conducted additional analyses of information collected as part of our current work in the ongoing study of instruction and additional analyses of 2004–05 CAHSEE test results. In addition, we acquired supplemental data on special education services, linked this information to CAHSEE results, and analyzed relationships between types of services and CAHSEE passing rates. These analyses were designed to further assess the scope of the problem leading to the recommendations in the SB 964 report and to help assess the feasibility

and potential impact of these recommendations. Results of these analyses are presented in this chapter.

One Solution May Not Fit All

One of HumRRO's biggest concerns with the recommendations in the SB 964 report is that students receiving special education services are treated as a single group, with no recognition of vast differences in terms of needs and services within this group. It is implied that the various options identified from alternative diploma tiers through deferral of the CAHSEE requirement would apply equally to all students in this population.

Our strategy for identifying different groups within the population of students receiving special education services, here called students with disabilities (SD) following language from the SB 964 Report, was to examine information about the curriculum and services received by students within this population and see whether students in some service and curriculum categories are able to master the content and skills required to pass the CAHSEE.

We also sought to identify service categories where few students are able to pass the CAHSEE. It is possible that students in these categories will need alternative goals and recognition from those provided by the CAHSEE. It is also likely, of course, that many students in these categories simply need to be challenged and helped in different ways. Information provided from these analyses may also be helpful to educators recommending or deciding on appropriate services for students with disabilities.

Supplemental Data on Students Receiving Special Education Services

A first step in our analysis was to gather and analyze more information on differences in special education services and the degree to which students receiving these different services are having difficulty passing the CAHSEE. To this end, CDE provided data from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS). Two files were provided, one containing data from December 2004 and the other containing data from June 2004. The June 2004 data are being used to assess changes over time. The former was matched to the 2005 CAHSEE results, including 10th grade data from the February, March, and May 2005 administrations and 11th grade data from the September 2004 through May 2005 administrations.

Neither the CAHSEE nor the CASEMIS files contained a unique and reliable student identifier. Several passes were made to match the files using school code, name, birth date, sex, special education status, and English learner status. In the first pass, all of the CASEMIS data (including different grades) were matched to all of the CAHSEE results for a given grade (including students not flagged as special education). A relatively strict criterion was used in accepting matches to minimize the number of false matches. In subsequent passes, the criterion was relaxed in a controlled manner.

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For the CASEMIS, this meant only unmatched cases in the target grade. For the CAHSEE, only unmatched cases flagged as special education students were used. A less strict criterion was used for accepting matches to reduce the number of false non-matches. Additional detail on the matching process is provided in Wise, et al. (2005).

Table 6.1 shows the results of matching the December 2004 CASEMIS data to the 2005 CAHSEE 10th and 11th grade results. Overall, 74.3 percent of the 10th grade CASEMIS records and 62.0 percent of the 11th grade records were matched to CAHSEE records. The lower percentage for 11th graders reflects, in part, the fact that some students had already passed the CAHSEE and did not need to test as 11th graders and possibly also greater volatility in enrollment over time for 11th grade special education students. For both grades, CASEMIS information was found for over 80 percent of the CAHSEE students flagged as receiving special education services.

We looked at the match rate for different categories of students to identify types of students who were less likely to take the CAHSEE. Table 6.2 lists categories defined from the CASEMIS variables with significantly low match (CAHSEE participation) rates and shows the number of students in the category and percent of matches.

There are at least two possible reasons for lower-than-expected match rates. First, the students in the category may not be on a diploma track and thus not encouraged to take the CAHSEE. For example, students with a primary disability code indicating mental retardation may be in this category. One other possibility is that students in the category may be in transition. By the time of CAHSEE testing, they might be in a different school, making it much harder to find them, or not in school at all. Students in juvenile court schools or correctional facilities may be an example of this second possibility.

Table 6.1. Number of Students in the CASEMIS Files Matched to CAHSEE Results by Grade

Match Category	December 2004 CASEMIS Data By Grade According to CASEMIS						2005 CAHSEE Students Flagged as SD	
	9*	10	11	12	15 *	Total	10 th Grade	11 th Grade
Original Record Counts	57,654	50,992	44,762	40,382	1,556	195,346	42,677	34,489
CAHSEE 10 th Grade Records Matched	2,146	35,867	542	44	3	38,602	36,895	
CAHSEE 11 th Grade Records Matched	400	1,998	27,221	613	1	30,233		28,547
10 th and 11 th Grade Records Not Matched		13,127	16,999				5,782	5,942
Percent Matched		74.3%	62.0%				86.5%	82.8%

* Note. When matched, these were 9th grade students in the December 2004 CASEMIS data file who were 10th graders in the spring 2005 CAHSEE data files.

* Refers to students who stay in school beyond grade 12.

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Table 6.2. Types of 10th Grade Special Education Students with Low CAHSEE Participation

Student Category	Number of Students	Percent Match
All 10 th Grade CASEMIS Students	53,727	72%
Primary Disability Code		
10. Mental Retardation	3,158	25%
60. Emotional Disturbance	3,987	55%
70. Orthopedic Impairment	822	42%
120. Autism	959	44%
School Type		
19. Other Public School or Facility (such as a store-front transition program)	586	22%
20. Continuation School	966	46%
30-32. Juvenile Court School, Community Schools, or Correctional Institute or Facility	1,321	29%
40-45. Home Instruction Based on IEP Team Determination or Hospital Facility	307	37%
70-79. Nonpublic Day or Residential School or Other Nonpublic Agency	1,970	29%
Residential Status		
60. Incarcerated Institution	497	23%
Special Education Service(s) Received		
42. Special Day Class in Public Separate Facility	786	27%
90. Transportation Services	3,862	38%
Time Away from General Education Instruction During the Day		
90 – 99 Percent	1,081	29%
100 Percent	4,226	35%

Note. Based on matching 10th grade students in the December 2004 CASEMIS file with 10th grade students taking the CAHSEE in February through May of 2005.

Passing Rates for Students Receiving Different Special Education Services

We examined a number of variables describing the nature and extent of special education services provided and some characteristics of the students receiving these services. The first variable indicated the percentage of time the student was outside the general education class to receive special education instruction or services during the school day. Table 6.3 shows that students who were away from the general education class more than 50 percent of the time were much less likely to pass the CAHSEE as 10th graders than students who were not removed from regular instruction as much.

Table 6.3. Number of Students and Percent Passing by Time Away from Regular Instruction (Matched 2005 10th Grade Students)

Percent of Time Away from Regular Instruction	ELA		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent Pass	Number	Percent Pass
None	1,796	48.7%	1,806	46.6%
01 to 19 Percent	11,637	51.5%	11,630	49.1%
20 to 33 Percent	6,569	32.5%	6,570	29.0%
34 to 50 Percent	5,900	23.8%	5,889	20.0%
51 to 89 Percent	9,965	9.8%	9,919	8.7%
90 to 99 Percent	308	22.1%	307	20.5%
100 Percent	1,429	28.3%	1,388	22.6%
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	37,604	31.5%	37,509	29.0%

Note. Numbers differ for the ELA and mathematics tests because some students only took one of the tests.

As shown in Table 6.3, more than one-third of students receiving special education services are able to spend at least 80 percent of their day in regular instruction. Over half of these students passed the CAHSEE ELA requirement in the 10th grade and very nearly half passed the mathematics requirement. Except at the extreme, CAHSEE passing rates declined as students spent more time outside of regular instruction. Fewer than 10 percent of students who are in regular instruction at least 10 percent but less than 50 percent of the time were able to pass the ELA requirement and even fewer passed the mathematics requirement. Note: Further information is needed on students who were outside of regular instruction essentially all of the time to see why they had somewhat better success with the CAHSEE.

Table 6.4 shows the number of students taking each part of the CAHSEE who received different types of services and their rate of passing. The first three categories shown are relatively non-intensive and about 40 percent of the students receiving these services were able to pass the CAHSEE ELA or math tests. Well over half of the students with disabilities received one or more of these services. At the same time, over a quarter of the students with disabilities taking the CAHSEE were in special day programs in public integrated facilities. Only about 10 percent of these students were able to pass the CAHSEE tests.

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Table 6.4. Number of Students and Percent Passing by Type of Service Received (Matched 2005 10th Grade Students)

Type of Service	ELA		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent Pass	Number	Percent Pass
Regular Class with Accommodation	803	38.9%	799	39.1%
Non-intensive program (learning center)	1,766	45.0%	1,754	39.3%
Resource Specialist (Non-intensive)	21,339	39.9%	21,362	37.1%
Special Day Inclusion Services	181	20.4%	174	23.0%
Special Day in Public Integrated Facility	11,758	11.2%	11,674	9.5%
Special Day in Public Separate Facility	203	32.0%	196	20.4%
Language and Speech	4,262	26.5%	4,247	28.3%
Vocational Education Training	2,413	25.5%	2,447	23.7%
Individual and Small Group Instruction	826	34.3%	813	28.2%
Vision Services	156	55.1%	157	49.7%
Psychological Services	846	34.0%	852	28.5%
Transportation Services	1,428	27.5%	1,407	22.4%
Other Services	8,182	29.5%	8,146	25.6%
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	37,604	31.6%	37,509	29.0%

Note. Students may have received more than one type of service.

Table 6.5 shows the relationship between the type of service received and the percent of time away from regular general education instruction. The majority of students receiving the first three types of services were away from regular instruction less than half, and in most cases less than 20 percent of the time. This was also true of students receiving vision services. By contrast, most students in special day programs were receiving general education instruction less than half the time. Results in Table 6.3 above indicate that students away from instruction 51 to 89 percent of the time had the lowest passing rates. As shown in Table 6.5, these are predominantly students in special day programs in public integrated facilities. Students in day programs in separate facilities received separate instruction nearly all of the time. They were away from general education instruction over 90 percent of the time. These students passed the CAHSEE at somewhat higher rates than students in integrated facilities, although the passing rates were still quite low.

Table 6.5. Percent of Time Outside Regular Instruction by Type of Service Received (Matched 2005 10th Grade Students)

Type of Service	Percent of Time Away from Regular Instruction			
	< 20%	21%-50%	51%-89%	90%-100%
Regular Class with Accommodation	49.8%	28.9%	18.9%	2.4%
Non-intensive program (learning center)	61.1%	33.3%	5.1%	0.5%
Resource Specialist (Non-intensive)	48.5%	44.7%	6.1%	0.7%
Special Day Inclusion Services	24.6%	32.8%	36.1%	6.7%
Special Day in Public Integrated Facility	5.2%	17.3%	71.1%	6.4%
Special Day in Public Separate Facility	7.1%	5.7%	21.8%	65.4%
Language and Speech	32.9%	26.5	34.6%	6.0%
Vocational Education Training	34.0%	32.4%	31.1%	2.5%
Individual and Small Group Instruction	35.8%	38.9%	12.9%	12.4%
Vision Services	47.0%	27.4%	21.3%	4.3%
Psychological Services	33.0%	23.1%	30.6%	13.3%
Transportation Services	11.5%	13.1%	43.4%	32.0%
Other Services	30.4%	27.3%	30.7%	11.6%
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	35.5%	33.1%%	26.7%	4.7%%

Note. Row percents add to 100% except for rounding. Bolded numbers indicate percents well above column average.

Table 6.6 shows the number and percent of matched 10th grade students in each primary disability category and the ELA and math passing rates for students in each of these categories. The vast majority of students with disabilities in the matched sample had specific learning disability as their primary disability code. These students passed the CAHSEE at relatively low rates, slightly below the average for all students in the matched sample. Students with vision, hearing, speech, or other health impairments passed the CAHSEE at relatively higher rates. Almost none of the students coded as having mental retardation passed the CAHSEE. These students are underrepresented in this matched sample, because many students coded in this category on the CASEMIS file did not take the CAHSEE at all as indicated in Table 6.2 above.

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Table 6.6. Primary Disability Codes for 10th Grade Students Receiving Special Education Services with CAHSEE Success Information

Primary Disability Category	Matched 10 th Grade Students in the Category		Percent Passing CAHSEE in 10th Grade	
	Number	Percent	ELA	Math
010 = Mental Retardation	801	2.1%	2.7%	1.7%
020 = Hard of Hearing	399	1.0%	41.6%	43.3%
030 = Deaf	209	0.5%	19.8%	31.1%
040 = Speech/Lang. Impairment	1,840	4.8%	37.1%	38.7%
050 = Visual Impairment	176	0.5%	62.4%	53.2%
060 = Emotional Disturbance	2,173	5.6%	47.2%	37.3%
070 = Orthopedic Impairment	346	0.9%	45.0%	37.2%
080 = Other Health Impairment	2,222	5.8%	53.1%	45.8%
090 = Specific Learning Disability	29,826	77.3%	28.6%	26.5%
100 = Deaf-Blindness	1	0.0%		
110 = Multiple Disabilities	86	0.2%	22.9%	22.2%
120 = Autism	425	1.1%	50.6%	51.6%
130 = Traumatic Brain Injury	98	0.2%	23.2%	26.0%
All Matched Students	38,602	100%	31.6%	29.0%

Results for Students Receiving Special Education Services Who Retested in 11th Grade

We also matched 11th grade students in the December 2004 CASEMIS file with CAHSEE results from the 2004–2005 administrations. There were over 21,000 students with CASEMIS information on special education services and CAHSEE data from the student’s initial attempt in the 10th grade and retest(s) in the 11th grade.

Table 6.7 shows the initial 10th grade score and retest gain score for students by the percent of time students were away from regular instruction during the day. The results are similar to those shown for 2005 10th graders on their first attempt at the CAHSEE (Table 7.3 above). Students who were away from regular instruction over half of the time had average initial ELA scores of 310 (40 points below passing) and average initial math scores of about 320 (30 points below passing). By comparison, students away from regular instruction less than half time had initial ELA scores averaging 320–325 (10 to 15 points higher) and initial math scores averaging 326–330 (5 to 10 points higher). In addition, the improvement in scores from 10th to 11th grade was considerably less for students who were away from regular instruction more than half of the time. At these rates of gain, it would take about two years for the average score for students in the top two categories to exceed 350, while it would take four to six years for score averages for students in the bottom two categories to reach this level.

Table 6.7. Number of Students and Average Score Gain by Time Away from Regular Instruction (Matched 2005 11th Grade Students)

Percent of Time Away from Regular Instruction	ELA			Mathematics		
	Number	Average Grade 10 Score	Average 2005 Gain	Number	Average Grade 10 Score	Average 2005 Gain
Less than 20 Percent	6,022	325.6	14.3	5,937	330.4	9.7
20 to 50 Percent	7,720	320.3	12.4	7,853	326.5	8.1
51 to 89 Percent	7,216	309.7	7.3	7,208	319.3	4.4
90 to 100 Percent	977	310.4	9.7	1,033	320.6	6.1
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	21,935	317.9	11.2	22,031	324.9	7.2

Note. Numbers differ for the ELA and mathematics tests because some students only took one of the tests. For all matched students, the standard deviation of the 10th grade scores was 18.6 for ELA and 13.7 for mathematics. The standard deviation of the gain scores was 21.0 for ELA and 17.5 for mathematics.

Table 6.8 shows average initial scores and average gain scores for students receiving different types of special education services. These results are also similar to the initial passing rate results shown in Table 6.4 above. Results for the two most frequent types of service are quite different. Over 11,000 students in this matched sample were provided with a resource specialist. These students had relatively high initial score averages (323.5 for ELA and 328.8 for math) and relatively high score gains between 10th and 11th grade (13.5 and 9.0 respectively). There were also over 8,000 students in special day programs in public integrated facilities. Initial score averages for these students were quite low (309.3 and 319.1 respectively) and they had low average score gains (7.7 and 4.5).

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Table 6.8. Number of Students and Average Gain by Type of Service Received (Matched 2005 11th Grade Students)

Type of Service	ELA			Mathematics		
	Number	Average Grade 10 Score	Average 2005 Gain	Number	Average Grade 10 Score	Average 2005 Gain
Regular Class with Accommodation	485	320.4	11.0	446	325.9	7.1
Non-intensive program (learning center)	873	323.0	13.9	880	328.8	8.3
Resource Specialist (Non-intensive)	11,582	323.5	13.5	11,615	328.8	9.0
Special Day Inclusion Services	89	316.9	5.3	95	323.7	0.9
Special Day in Public Integrated Facility	8,381	309.3	7.7	8,386	319.1	4.5
Special Day in Public Separate Facility	81	312.0	17.9	102	323.0	7.2
Language and Speech	2,359	314.7	9.8	2,272	322.9	7.2
Vocational Education Training	2,636	316.2	10.5	2,674	323.7	6.1
Individual and Small Group Instruction	420	318.9	10.7	423	325.2	7.4
Vision Services	58	312.8	12.0	71	324.0	9.5
Psychological Services	410	314.6	11.0	429	322.1	7.2
Transportation Services	773	310.8	9.4	785	320.3	6.3
Other Services	4,608	315.5	10.8	4,771	323.6	6.5
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	21,935	317.9	11.2	22,031	324.9	7.2

Note. Students may have received more than one type of service.

Responses to Student Questions

Students responded to a brief questionnaire after completing each part of the CAHSEE exam. An analysis of responses for all students was described in Chapter 6 of our 2005 Evaluation Report (Wise, et al., 2005). Further analyses, based on 2005 responses of 10th grade students with CASEMIS data, are reported here. Table 6.9 shows how responses to key questions varied for students receiving differing proportions of the regular curriculum.

Table 6.9. Responses to CAHSEE Student Questionnaire Items by Percent of Time Away from Regular Instruction (Matched 2005 10th Grade Students)

Questionnaire Responses	Percent of Time Away from Regular Instruction			
	< 20%	21%-50%	51%-89%	90%-100%
Question 3. Do you think you will graduate from high school?				
A. Yes	81.6%	74.0%	66.9%	67.2%
B. No	3.1%	4.4%	6.2%	5.7%
C. Not Sure	15.2%	21.5%	26.8%	27.0%
Question 5. What do you think you will do after high school?				
A. Join the military.	8.0%	9.6%	9.5%	9.8%
B. Go to community college.	24.9%	25.4%	22.8%	21.1%
C. Go to a 4-year college.	37.1%	30.3%	28.3%	30.7%
D. Voc., tech. or trade School	5.4%	5.8%	5.4%	5.2%
E. Work full-time.	5.9%	8.1%	12.7%	9.4%
F. I don't really know.	15.9%	18.2%	19.7%	21.5%
Missing or invalid response				
Question 9. Were the topics on the test covered in courses you have taken?				
A. Yes, all of them.	25.5%	20.0%	23.7%	21.9%
B. Most (two-thirds or more)	57.7%	58.2%	51.7%	49.6%
C. Many were not covered.	16.6%	21.6%	24.5%	28.3%
Question 11. Were the questions on this test more difficult than questions you were given in classroom tests or homework assignments?				
A. Generally more difficult.	35.8%	44.9%	50.0%	49.2%
B/C. About the same or less.	64.2%	55.1%	50.0%	50.8%
Question 12. If some topics on the test were difficult for you, was it because:				
A. I did not take courses that covered these topics.	21.8%	27.2%	28.2%	31.0%
B. I had trouble with these topics in courses I took.	29.0%	31.1%	28.5%	24.8%
C. I have forgotten things I was taught.	36.7%	31.7%	30.2%	29.7%
D. None of the topics were difficult for me.	10.8%	8.5%	12.3%	13.1%
Missing or invalid response	1.7%	1.4%	0.8%	1.5%

Note. Based on responses following the mathematics test on the most recent administration for each matched 10th grade student. Column percents add to 100% except for rounding.

In general, the responses of students who spent less time in regular instruction differed in a predictable direction. Students who spent less than half of their time in regular instruction were less sure that they would graduate from high school, more uncertain about post-high school plans, more likely to report that many of the topics on the test were not covered in their courses and that the questions were more difficult than questions encountered in their courses, and more likely to report not having taken courses that covered topics on the test. What is surprising is how small the difference in response rates is given the very significant differences in CAHSEE passing rates (see Table 6.3). Two-thirds expect to graduate, more than half expect to go on to a community or 4-year college, and more than 70% said that most or all of the topics on the test were covered in their courses. On the one hand, it is admirable that these

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students continue to have high expectations. On the other, given that these students are not receiving much of the regular curriculum and have not yet been able to pass the CAHSEE, many of these students may be set up for disappointment.

Accommodations and Modifications

The SB 964 report discusses the use of alternative forms of testing to allow students in special education programs different ways to demonstrate mastery of the required skills. Based on the findings reported in the preceding section, it would appear that students who are not able to participate in the regular curriculum could not master the required skills. Alternative forms of assessment will be unlikely to help these students if they are expected to master the same standards as all other students.

The CAHSEE does allow a number of accommodations for students who need them. In addition, some students take the CAHSEE with modifications specified in their IEPs, even though these modifications invalidate their scores. Students who test with modifications and score above the passing level are allowed to petition for a waiver from the CAHSEE requirement. Table 6.10 shows the number of times 10th grade students receiving special education services tested with an accommodation or modification in 2005 and the percent of time a passing score was obtained⁹.

Table 6.10. Number of 10th Grade Students Receiving Testing Accommodations or Modifications and Percent Passing

Accommodation or Modification	ELA		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent Passing	Number	Percent Passing
Accommodation or Modification per IEP	7,350	28.4%	5,822	24.5%
Audio Cassette Presentation	605	18.7%	583	12.0%
Large Print	111	57.7%	121	43.0%
Braille	31	64.5%	28	35.7%
One or More Modifications	1,857	23.6%	4,895	22.9%
Oral Presentation	1,493	21.0%		
English or Math Dictionary	167	17.4%	34	26.5%
Scribe	93	32.3%		
Spell/grammar checker	238	40.8%		
Arithmetic table or manipulatives			192	15.1%
Calculator (programs disabled)			4,814	22.9%
Unlisted Modification	71	23.9%		
No accommodation or modification	32,443	33.7%	30,841	31.4%
All SD Students	41,650	32.3%	41,558	29.4%

Note. Results are based on all 10th grade SD students taking the CAHSEE in 2005. SD students testing in more than one administration are counted multiple times. Students may also have received more than one accommodation and/or modification and, if so, are included in more than one category. Students testing with modifications who score 350 or more are not considered to have passed the test, but may apply for a waiver of the CAHSEE requirement.

⁹ The table shows the percent of time students received a score of 350 or more. Students taking the test with modifications were not considered to have passed, even with a passing score. They could, however, apply for a waiver of the CAHSEE requirement based on their passing score.

Table 6.11 shows the number of students testing with accommodations or modifications by type of special education service received and also shows passing rates for each testing condition. One point of note is that a significant number of students (about 4,483) took the mathematics exam with modifications, in nearly all cases using a calculator. It did not appear to help them much, which is not surprising, as the CAHSEE does not test computational skills to any great extent.

A significant number of students with disabilities did receive testing accommodations and many took the test with modifications. Students testing with accommodations or modifications may be different from students who did not receive accommodations in many significant ways. It is thus not possible to draw any firm conclusions from differences in passing rates for these groups. In addition, available data from either CASEMIS or CAHSEE do not provide information on other accommodations and/or modifications that students might be receiving in instruction but were not able to use on the CAHSEE. Additional information is needed to determine whether more students could demonstrate mastery of the CAHSEE standards with additional accommodations or with a different type of assessment altogether.

Note: Many states are working to develop alternate assessments linked to the same performance standards as the operational accountability assessment (Webb, et al., 2005). Most of these efforts are still under review. To date, no state has demonstrated significant increases in passing rates through an alternate form of assessment.

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Table 6.11. Number of Matched 10th Grade Special Education Students and Percent Passing by Type of Service and Testing Condition

Type of Service	Statistic	ELA			Mathematics		
		No Accom.	Accom.	Modif.	No Accom.	Accom.	Modif.
Regular Class with Accommodation	Number	638	151	14	626	122	51
	% Pass	39.7%	33.1%	--	40.9%	23.8%	52.9%
Non-intensive program (learning center)	Number	1405	353	8	1,301	248	205
	% Pass	45.5%	42.8%	--	39.8%	37.9%	37.6%
Resource Specialist (Non-intensive)	Number	17,292	3786	261	16,608	2,744	2,010
	% Pass	40.2%	38.6%	38.7%	37.8%	34.7%	35.4%
Special Day Inclusion Services	Number	123	52	6	110	14	50
	% Pass	16.3%	28.9%	--	21.8%	21.4%	26.0%
Special Day in Public Integrated Facility	Number	8,307	3,119	332	7,597	2,088	1,989
	% Pass	10.9%	11.9%	12.7%	9.4%	10.4%	8.7%
Special Day in Public Separate Facility	Number	165	33	5	144	28	24
	% Pass	33.3%	27.3%	--	23.6%	14.3%	8.3%
Language and Speech	Number	3,218	950	94	3,008	659	580
	% Pass	29.1%	19.1%	14.9%	32.4%	22.3%	13.8%
Vocational Education Training	Number	1,802	571	58	1,699	455	293
	% Pass	28.5%	17.5%	12.1%	27.1%	15.8%	16.7%
Individual and Small Group Instruction	Number	653	143	30	615	90	108
	% Pass	35.1%	30.1%	36.7%	30.1%	23.3%	21.3%
Vision Services	Number	71	70	15	78	63	16
	% Pass	62.0%	51.4%	40.0%	52.6%	52.4%	25.0%
Psychological Services	Number	680	150	16	688	106	76
	% Pass	34.4%	34.0%	18.8%	29.3%	25.5%	25.6%
Transportation Services	Number	1,003	371	54	951	242	214
	% Pass	28.5%	24.8%	29.6%	22.9%	24.4%	17.8%
Other Services	Number	6,427	1,575	180	6,194	1,156	796
	% Pass	30.1%	27.0%	29.4%	26.9%	22.4%	20.1%
All Students Receiving Special Education Services	Number	29,205	7,706	693	27,642	5,384	4,483
	% Pass	32.7%	28.0%	24.7%	30.7%	25.3%	22.7%

Note. Students may have received more than one type of service. Passing rates were not computed for cells with fewer than 15 students.

Summary of Findings

The study revealed a strong relationship between the types of special education services a student receives and success on the CAHSEE. More than a third of the students analyzed received non-intensive services such as in-class accommodations or a resource specialist and were able to spend more than 80 percent of their time in regular instruction. About half of these students passed the CAHSEE while still in 10th grade. Students receiving these services, who had not passed in the 10th grade, showed significant gains when they retested in the 11th grade. It seems likely that, with continued assistance these students will have a good chance of meeting the CAHSEE requirement. It is thus reasonable to ask that both the schools and these students themselves continue to work to meet the required standards.

About one-quarter of the students receiving special education services require more intensive assistance. These students participate in regular instruction less than 20 percent of the time and only about 10 percent of them pass the CAHSEE during the 10th grade. Those who retest in the 11th grade show only small gains in CAHSEE scores compared to other students. The services received by these students are specified by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, who have statutory authority for making such judgments. There is no basis for second-guessing the services being provided to these students, although it is important to ask IEP teams to be sure student classifications are appropriate. It is less reasonable to hold these students responsible for mastering the skills assessed by the CAHSEE when they are not receiving instruction related to the skills tested by the CAHSEE. Alternate goals and some way of recognizing achievement of these alternate goals are needed for students in this second group.

The remaining students we analyzed receive other combinations of services and show mixed results on the CAHSEE. More detailed information on the needs of these services and the specific services provided is needed to determine which ones have a reasonable chance of meeting the CAHSEE requirement.

Our general conclusion from these results is that it would be a mistake for legislators to impose a single set of alternatives on all students who receive special education services. Students who may be able to master the CAHSEE standards should not be lightly excused from doing so. Other students have little likelihood of mastering the CAHSEE standards and require other options to achieve graduation.

The number of students testing with accommodations or modifications did vary somewhat as a function of the type of service the student was receiving. Overall, however, passing rates for accommodated students were slightly lower compared to those who took the CAHSEE without accommodations. Students who received modifications would have passed at slightly lower rates still, had their scores counted. As noted above, however, additional information is needed to determine whether many students might benefit from some additional forms of accommodation or from a different form of assessment altogether. Under NCLB accountability requirements, states are

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allowed to use an alternate form of assessment that, except for a small number of students with severe mental retardation, must allow students to demonstrate mastery of the same standards used with the regular assessment. So far, no states have shown significant number of students demonstrating mastery through such alternate assessments.

Options for All Students

The focus of this chapter has been on options for students with disabilities. While no one can say for certain how well seniors will do on the CAHSEE this year, there are likely to be many seniors who will not have passed both parts by June 2006. Table 6.12 provides an estimate of the numbers of seniors in the Class of 2006 who may fail to meet the CAHSEE requirement. During the 11th grade, roughly 40 percent of the students in each demographic category who had not yet passed the CAHSEE were able to do so. Our estimates are based on the assumption that 40 percent of the seniors who still need to pass the CAHSEE will be able to do so. Many of the students who do not meet the CAHSEE requirement on time, may fail to meet other graduation requirements as well. We do not have student data on other graduation requirements, which vary by district.

Table 6.12. Average Estimated Numbers of Seniors Who Might Not Pass the CAHSEE by June 2006

Group	Estimated Number of Students Still Needing to Pass in June 2005	Estimated Number Who Might Not Pass by June 2006
All Students	99,937	59,962
Females	44,350	26,610
Males	55,555	33,333
2. Asian	4,717	2,830
5. Hispanic	60,361	36,217
6. African American	13,860	8,316
7. White (not Hispanic)	16,295	9,777
Economically Disadvantaged	61,635	36,981
English Learners	40,002	24,001
Special Education Students	26,667	16,000

Note. June 2005 estimates are based on counts of students still trying to pass the CAHSEE during the 2004–05 school year. June 2006 estimates assume that 40% of the students in each category will be able to pass during their senior year. Many of the students who have not passed the CAHSEE at that time may have also failed to meet other requirements for graduation.

In our 2005 Evaluation Report, we recommended that options for students who do not pass the CAHSEE by the end of their senior year be identified and implemented by June 2006. We continue to make this recommendation in Chapter 7 of this report. We provide a brief discussion here of the nature of options that might be considered and issues that would have to be addressed.

Having largely dismissed alternate forms of testing as a viable solution for students who do not pass, we are left with the other types of options considered in the SB 964 Report: alternative graduation requirements and alternative types of diplomas (more precisely, alternatives to regular diplomas). There is one additional type of option that we believe merits serious consideration—allowing students ways of continuing to work to master the CAHSEE requirement. These ways might include an additional summer program, a fifth year of high school, or a program in a community college setting to help students master the required skills.

A major theme of our analyses of information on SD students is that there need to be different options for different students. This applies to all students struggling to meet the CAHSEE requirement, not just those currently in special education programs. The options divide largely on whether the student considers himself or herself—and is considered by others—to be on a diploma track. A student should never be discouraged from aspirations and expectations for mastering the skills required for graduation, but, realistically, for some students alternatives to a diploma may have to be considered. For these students, alternatives to a regular diploma should be considered as ways of recognizing the goals that these students are able to achieve. Alternative measures, such as portfolios, might be used to demonstrate achievement of the student's goals and justify recognition of their accomplishments.

For the majority of students struggling with the CAHSEE requirement, appropriate options include additional time and help to master the essential skills. Many community colleges already have programs to help students complete their high school diploma. For many students, the new learning environment afforded by community colleges may be helpful in their efforts to refocus on mastery of the essential ELA and mathematics skills. For other students, a fifth year of high school may be sufficient. It would be ideal, of course, if the possible need for a fifth year could be identified early and the student's program of instruction spread out more evenly across all five years.

California should continue to explore alternate requirements that might substitute for passing the CAHSEE. It is unlikely that statewide alternative classes or other measures could be developed and adopted in time to help students in the Class of 2006 or even the Class of 2007. The Board and legislature might consider waiver options to allow districts to try out specific options and provide data for consideration in deciding whether to move forward toward statewide adoption.