

Information Memorandum

Date: December 10, 2003

To: MEMBERS, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

From: Geno Flores, Deputy Superintendent
Assessment and Accountability Branch

Subject: California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Study Regarding Alternatives to the CAHSEE

Senate Bill (SB) 964, chaptered in October 2003, requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to approve a request for a proposal (RFP) for an independent consultant to assess options for alternatives to the CAHSEE for pupils with exceptional needs to be eligible for a high school diploma, and make recommendations about graduation requirements and assessments. The RFP must be developed and approved by January 31, 2004. Once the SBE approves the RFP, CDE staff will work with SBE staff to finalize any changes to the RFP, and send it out to potential bidders by end of January.

SB 964 also requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to appoint a 15-member High School Exit Examination for Pupils with Disabilities Advisory Panel to advise the independent consultant. A report from the independent consultant is due no later than May 1, 2005. The report must recommend options for graduation requirements and assessments, if any, for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan; identify provisions of state and federal law and regulation that are relevant to graduation requirements and assessments for students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan; and recommend steps, to the extent necessary, to bring California into compliance with state and federal law and regulations.

Issue: Currently, California law requires all students to pass the CAHSEE as a condition of graduation. There are not alternative assessments to the CAHSEE and there is no provision to opt out of the CAHSEE and still graduate from high school. Students with disabilities may take the CAHSEE with any accommodations or modifications identified in their IEP or Section 504 Plan for use on the CAHSEE, standardized testing, or for use during classroom instruction and assessments. On behalf of students using modifications who receive the equivalent of a passing score on one or both subject matter parts of the CAHSEE, a school principal shall submit a request for a waiver of the requirement to successfully pass the CAHSEE to the governing board of the school district.

As soon as the draft of the RFP is completed a copy will be sent to the SBE for review.