Senate Resolution **No. 60**

Introduced by Senators Mitchell, Beall, Hancock, Hill, and Jackson

August 19, 2014

Senate Resolution No. 60—Relative to mathematics misplacement.

WHEREAS, Pupil achievement in mathematics is important to prepare pupils for college and their future careers, especially those careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and

WHEREAS, A pupil's 9th grade math course placement is a crucial crossroad for future educational success. Misplacement in the sequence of mathematics courses creates a number of barriers and results in pupils being less competitive for college admission; and

WHEREAS, The most egregious examples of mathematics misplacement often occur with successful pupils and, disproportionately, with successful pupils of color. These successful pupils of underrepresented populations are achieving a "B" grade or better, or are testing at proficient or even advanced proficiency on state assessments, but are, nevertheless, held back to repeat 8th grade mathematics coursework rather than advancing to the next course in the recommended mathematics course sequence; and

WHEREAS, Mathematics misplacement can not only have far-reaching impacts on a pupil's confidence, general knowledge of mathematical concepts, and high school experience, but it can also impact the college and career opportunities available to that pupil; and

WHEREAS, Many incoming freshman high school pupils, particularly pupils of color, are affected by mathematics misplacement; and

WHEREAS, New research shows that it is less common for pupils of color, even high-achieving pupils of color, to enroll in 12th-grade calculus compared to their peers; and

WHEREAS, All pupils, regardless of race or ethnic background, deserve an equal chance to advance in mathematics; and

WHEREAS, With the shift towards implementation of increasingly complex mathematics standards, it is particularly important that all pupils have a high-quality mathematics program that meets the goals and expectations of these standards; and

WHEREAS, With these increasingly complex mathematics standards, it is crucial for teachers and guidance personnel to advise pupils and parents about the importance of accurate course placement and its impact on future college eligibility so that a pupil can take each of the courses in the mathematics sequence; and

WHEREAS, California faces a looming shortage of college-educated workers in an increasingly competitive global economy; and

WHEREAS, Mathematics misplacement must be addressed to ensure the success of all students; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That local school boards are asked to develop, adopt, and monitor a fair, objective, and transparent mathematics placement policy; and be it further

Resolved, That such a policy should do at least all of the following:

(a) Systematically take multiple objective measures into consideration, such as diagnostic placement tests, statewide assessments, pupil grades, and pupil work.

(b) Include multiple progress check points throughout the academic year to permit reevaluation of progress.

(c) Require periodic examination of pupil placement data to ensure that there is no disproportionate impact in the course placement of pupils by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background.

(d) Be readily available to pupils and parents, and offer clear recourse for pupils and parents who question placement decisions.

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