An act to add Section 51224.7 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST


(1) Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary education in this state, and authorizes local educational agencies throughout the state to provide instruction to pupils.

This bill would enact the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015. The bill would require each governing board of a governing boards of local educational agency, agencies, as defined, serving pupils in grade 8 or 9, or both, that do not have a mathematics placement policy as of January 1, 2016, to develop, adopt in a regularly scheduled public meeting, and implement a fair, objective, and transparent mathematics placement policy with specified elements. The bill would further require each governing board of a local educational agency to ensure that its mathematics placement policy is available to each pupil and his or her parent or legal guardian and is posted prominently on its Internet Web site. By imposing additional requirements on local
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educational agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:
2 (a) 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).
3 (b) A pupil’s 9th grade math course placement is a crucial crossroads for his or her future educational success. Misplacement in the sequence of mathematics courses creates a number of barriers and results in pupils being less competitive for college admissions, including admissions at the California State University and University of California.
4 (c) The most egregious examples of mathematics misplacement occur with successful pupils and, disproportionately, with successful pupils of color. These successful pupils are achieving a grade of “B” or better, or are testing at proficient or even advanced proficiency on state assessments. Nevertheless, they are held back to repeat 8th grade mathematics coursework rather than advancing to the next course in the recommended mathematics course sequence.
5 (d) Mathematics misplacement has far-reaching impacts on a pupil’s confidence, general knowledge of mathematical concepts, and high school experience, and may also impact the college career opportunities available to the pupil.
(e) New research shows that it is less common for pupils of color, even high-achieving pupils of color, to reach calculus by grade 12 compared to their white and Asian peers.

(f) All pupils, regardless of race or ethnic background, deserve an equal chance to advance in mathematics.

(g) With the shift towards implementation of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, it is particularly important for all pupils to have access to high-quality mathematics programs that meet the goals and expectations of these standards.

(h) It is crucial for teachers and guidance personnel to advise pupils and parents on the importance of accurate mathematics course placement and its impact on future college eligibility so pupils may take each course in the mathematics course sequence.

(i) California faces a looming shortage of college-educated workers in an increasingly competitive global economy.

(j) A policy for correct mathematics placement must be addressed in order to ensure a fair process and chance of success for all pupils.

SEC. 2. Section 51224.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

51224.7. (a) This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015.

(b) Each governing board of a local educational agency serving pupils in grade 8 or 9, or both, that do not have a mathematics placement policy as of January 1, 2016, shall develop, adopt in a regularly scheduled public meeting, and implement a fair, objective, and transparent mathematics placement policy that does all of the following:

1. Systematically takes current academic objective measures into consideration, such as statewide assessments, pupil grades, and diagnostic placement tests.

2. Includes multiple progress checkpoints throughout at least one progress checkpoint during the academic year to permit reevaluation of individual pupil progress, including at least one checkpoint within the first three months of the academic year.

3. Requires examination of pupil placement data, at least annually, to ensure that there is no disproportionate impact in the course placement of pupils by race, gender, ethnicity,
or socioeconomic background. The local educational agency shall report the aggregate results of this examination to the governing board of the local educational agency and prominently post the examination results on its Internet Web site. This report may be included as part of the local educational agency’s accountability report of its local control and accountability plan.

(4) Offers clear and immediate timely recourse for each pupil and his or her parent or legal guardian who questions the pupil’s placement.

(c) Each governing board of a local educational agency shall ensure that its mathematics placement policy is available to each pupil and his or her parent or legal guardian and is posted prominently on its Internet Web site.

(d) For purposes of this section, “local educational agency” means county office of education, school district, state special school, or direct-funded charter school as described in Section 47651.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.