



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**TOM TORLAKSON**  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 13, 2016

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

### **IMPLEMENTING THE CALIFORNIA MATHEMATICS PLACEMENT ACT OF 2015**

Access to mathematics courses that prepare students for college and career is essential for student success after high school. All students should have the opportunity to excel in mathematics, not just students who plan to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). With fair, objective, and transparent placement policies in place, California's high school students will benefit from challenging mathematics courses that support their college and career goals.

Senate Bill 359 (Chapter 508, Statutes of 2015), known as the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015, was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on October 5, 2015, and took effect on January 1, 2016.

The California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015 requires the governing boards or bodies of local educational agencies (LEAs) that serve pupils entering grade nine and that have not already done so to adopt "a fair, objective, and transparent mathematics placement policy" before the beginning of the 2016–17 school year. (LEAs are defined as county offices of education, school districts, state special schools, and charter schools.) The mathematics placement policy must be adopted in a regularly scheduled public meeting.

The mathematics placement policy for pupils entering grade nine must meet the following requirements:

- Systematically takes multiple objective academic measures of pupil performance into consideration;
- Includes at least one placement checkpoint within the first month of the school year to ensure accurate placement and to permit reevaluation of individual student progress;
- Requires an annual examination of pupil placement data to ensure that students are not held back in a disproportionate manner on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background;

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- Requires a report on the results of the annual examination by the local educational agency to its governing board or body;
- Offers clear and timely recourse for each pupil and his or her parent or legal guardian who questions the student's placement; and
- For non-unified school districts, addresses the consistency of placement policies between elementary and high school districts.

The California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015 authorizes the governing boards or bodies of LEAs serving pupils who are transitioning between elementary school and middle or junior high school to develop and implement a mathematics placement policy that satisfies the requirements listed above. The governing board or body of an LEA shall ensure that its mathematics placement policy is posted on its Web site.

To view SB 359, visit the California Legislation Information Web site at [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160SB359](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB359).

If you have questions regarding the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015, please contact Emily Oliva, Education Programs Consultant, in the STEM Office by phone at 916-319-0198 or by e-mail at [EOliva@cde.ca.gov](mailto:EOliva@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

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2016-00022