



Research Brief

Title: Remediation programs for students who do not pass exit exams

Question: What are some remediation programs for students who do not pass high stakes exit exams?

Summary of Findings:

Regardless of one's personal beliefs about high stakes exit exams, 52% of all high school students in the United States who are in public schools will be required to take and pass an exit exam. Nationally, these tests are gaining momentum. In most cases, students who do not pass the exit exam, will be denied a high school diploma. In order to help those students, some states, districts, and schools have implemented remediation and support programs, so that students can gain and practice the requisite skills to successfully pass the exit exam.

Program Suggestions:

- Consider alternative assessments such as portfolios, essays, research, performances, and senior projects. (OR, WA, PA, CT, ME, RI, PA, VE)
- Consider the students' grades as well as alternative assessments such as those listed above. (OR, WA, PA, CT, ME, RI, PA)
- Permit students who are new to the United States to take the test in their primary language. (NY)
- Allow students who need modifications to take the test in small chunks. (NJ)
- Offer a summer session after the senior year and upon successful completion, the students receive a diploma.
- Offer a summer session or its equivalent for those in year round schools, to help students prepare for the exam.
- Allow students to take a course at the community college level to help them boost their skills.
- Provide an after-school program, breakfast club, or Saturday classes.
- Supply adult tutors for small group and/or one-on-one tutoring.
- Reduce class size so that the students can get more personalized assistance and support.
- Restructure some of the courses. In Boston, at Putnam Vocational Technical High School, students take three periods daily of reading, writing and math. The maximum class size is 20 students. The courses are co-taught by a teacher from the academic program and one from the vocational program. Once the student reaches the 7th grade level academically, they are immediately moved into English 9 and Algebra I, with monitoring from the original teachers.



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- Examine the Boys Town Reading curriculum model, where over 4 semesters students who are not reading at grade level take formal reading classes. Semester 1: Those who are reading at or below the 4th grade level-study common letter combinations and sounds; Semester 2: Those who are reading from the 4th-6th grade level, learn fluency and word recognition and their meanings; Semester 3: Those who are reading at 7th grade level, are trained in vocabulary development; Semester 4: Those who are reading at the 8th grade level and above, use reading and writing to gain academic literacy.
- Design a transition program where students take double periods of math and English courses. These courses should use more hands-on and real-life applications as well as more comprehension and problem solving skills.
- Encourage and support more literacy rich classrooms, where reading activities are an integral part of the instructional program.
- Establish a tutoring program, where these students are working with elementary school students. This will help reinforce the necessary skills for all involved.
- Reduce electives for students who still need to pass, so they can take additional courses in math and/or English.
- Devise and implement a formative benchmark assessment program that is aligned with the appropriate standards in math and English and use the results to inform the instructional program. These can be used throughout the students' entire academic career to allow them to have a foundation on which they know what skills and knowledge they need to build.



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Online Resources:

- **A quiet crisis: Unprepared for high stakes**
A lengthy article that describes several types of programs that schools are doing to help remediate their “at risk” students make academic gains.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2001/04/18/31catchup.h20.html?print=1>
- **Assessment**
An overview of what different states are doing regarding assessment.
<http://www.edweek.org/rc/issues/assessment/?print=1>
- **Benchmark assessments offer regular checkups on student achievement**
This article describes different types of benchmark assessments along with several perspectives on this type of assessment.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/11/30/13benchmark.h25.html?print=1>
- **Beyond the bell extended learning academies**
A description of a program offered in the Los Angeles Unified School District to support students in their quest to pass CAHSEE.
<http://btb.lausd.net/ela.html>
- **California’s High School Exit Exam Woes**
This article describes three problems with the expectations of the CAHSEE test.
<http://educationwonk.blogspot.com/2005/06/californias-high-school-exit-exam-woes.html>
- **Exit-exam trend prompts scrutiny of consequences**
Several different reasons for dropping out of high school, including high stakes testing, are mentioned in this article.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/09/04/01high.h22.html?print=1>
- **Experts to suggest exam options**
Several perspectives on the pluses and minuses of options besides CAHSEE for California’s students are briefly described.
<http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/13981633p-14815354c.html>



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- **Meaningless diplomas hurt Hispanic students**
A brief article on why Hispanic students who do not have a diploma or have one from certain schools run the risk of getting lower paying jobs than their counterparts.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/01/21/19winters.h23.html?print=1>
- **Parent guide to the California High School Exit Exam**
This is an information guide for parents briefly describing the CAHSEE.
http://www.edsource.org/pdf/archive/guide_exit_01.pdf
- **Polytechnic High School**
A description of the “Beyond the Bell” programs this school offers, including math and language arts classes for students needing to pass CAHSEE is provided.
http://www.polyhigh.org/beyond_the_bell.jsp
- **Program overview**
This piece is a brief synopsis of the purpose, background and expectations of the CAHSEE.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/overview.asp>
- **Program resources**
This site provides active links to study guides in math and language arts.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/resources.asp>
- **Pushed out or pulled up? Exit exams and dropout rates in public high schools**
“This study uses two highly respected graduation rate calculations to evaluate what effect high school exit exams have on graduation rates. The results for both graduation rate calculations show that adopting a high school exit exam has no effect on a state’s graduation rate. The analyses also show that neither reducing class sizes nor increasing education spending leads to higher graduation rates.”
http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_05.htm
- **Put to the test: The diploma divide**
This article presents several points of view about CAHSEE.
<http://www.sacbee.com/content/news/story/13967207p-14801310c.html>
- **Questions and answers about the California High School Exit Exam**
Brief definitions of variations and modifications for the CAHSEE are provided.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/qandatestvar.pdf>



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- Report calls for alternatives to exit exam
This article gives a list of some proposed alternatives to the CAHSEE.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_20051001/ai_n15806046
- Report: High schools must demand more
This article strongly recommends that high schools should have more rigorous requirements of 4 years of math and English in order to help the students get ready for a competitive and global market.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/01/05/16achieve.h24.html?print=1>
- Seniors who fail tests will get diploma
In Utah, students who fail the state test will receive a diploma with the areas that were not passed will be stated on it.
http://www.sltrib.com/ci_3398332
- Special report: The perils of high school exit exams
A brief review on some of the effects of high stakes testing at the high school level is given.
http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.459dee008f99653fb85516f762108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_ws_MX&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journaltypeheaderimage=%2FASCD%2Fimages%2Fmultifiles%2Fpublications%2Felmast.gif&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_viewID=article_view&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journalmoid=e9e66a50a9337010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_articlemoid=451890f28a337010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journalTypePersonalization=ASCD_EL&javax.portlet.begCacheTok=token&javax.portlet.endCacheTok=token
- State goofed on pass rate for high school exit exam
This article presents two differences of opinion about the pass rates of the class of 2006 on the CAHSEE.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_20050824/ai_n15813015
- Students need alternative to high school exit exam
This article includes a list of potential alternatives in lieu of passing the CAHSEE.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_20051001/ai_n15806104



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- **Study: Exit exams have minimal effect on drop out rate**
This is a brief synopsis of a study from the Manhattan Institute, finding that exit exams have little effect on dropout rates. A list of states with the requirement is provided.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/05/05/34exit.h23.html?querystring=exit%20exams&print=1>
- **Study says to state: Don't rush; Provide support on exit exams**
Two differing views on timelines to implement exit exams are stated in this piece.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/09/04/01high.h22.html?print=1>
- **The California High School Exit Exam-Questions and answers**
This provides an overview of the CAHSEE, a brief description of what can be done to support those who do not pass and a list of pros and cons about high stakes testing.
http://www.edsource.org/pdf/QA_hseefinal.pdf
- **The expectations gap**
This is an extensive report on numerous aspects of all of the states' high school exams.
[http://www.achieve.org/dstore.nsf/Lookup/coursetaking/\\$file/coursetaking.pdf](http://www.achieve.org/dstore.nsf/Lookup/coursetaking/$file/coursetaking.pdf)
- **The reality of increased graduation requirements: A nationwide view of options**
This article provides a synopsis of a study done that examined alternative diploma options, graduation requirements, and the possible impact on students, especially those who are on an I.E.P.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_200306/ai_n9287462
- **What's next?**
This is a synopsis of the Quality Counts at 10 and what still needs to be done in the area of standards-based education.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/01/05/17smith.h25.html?print=1>
- **What to do with WASL will be test for lawmakers**
A review of some alternatives to provide assistance to help students in Washington graduate is provided.
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/education/2002721290_was105m.html



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Submitted Date: 1/16/06

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