



NEWS RELEASE

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SCCOE ready to serve students impacted by new CAHSEE law

SAN JOSE, CA – Santa Clara County Office of Education staff are preparing to assist students who may be impacted by the passage of SB 172, a new law which will allow qualifying students to retroactively receive diplomas even after failing the final California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) administration.

“This is an important step away from outdated testing practices and toward an assessment model that authentically measures student achievement and preparation for future success,” said Gundry. “Moving forward, our priority is to ensure students are connected with the resources they require to formally complete their education and pursue their academic and career goals.”

The new law will require school districts to award diplomas to students who met all graduation targets but failed the exit exam, which became a requirement starting with the class of 2006. Statewide, about six percent of students who took the CAHSEE did not graduate based solely on their exam results. SCCOE staff are currently reviewing student records from the first test administration in 2004 to 2015 to see how many students served directly by the SCCOE – primarily alternative education students – could benefit from the new law. Staff currently estimates the new changes will impact fewer than 200 students.

Obtaining a high school diploma is crucial for economic success and stability: The U.S. Census Bureau estimates a person with a high school diploma will earn \$9,634 more per year than a high school drop-out, and more than 60 percent of all jobs in the U.S. require a diploma. As such, the SCCOE offers a number of services to help students finish their secondary education: an array of alternative schools; HiSET (GED) testing; and Odysseyware, an online learning system that helps students recover course credits while staying enrolled in their regular classes. Most recently, the SCCOE has begun operating Opportunity Youth Academy, a new specialized program for young adults between the ages of 16-24 who don't have a diploma or GED. More than just a credit recovery program, OYA pairs students with staff who build positive, one-on-one relationships with them and work to map out a path for each student's individual academic and career goals. A ribbon-cutting will be held at OYA's flagship site in Gilroy on Nov. 5.

The last CAHSEE was administered in May 2015. Former SCCOE students can contact [Norma Bayless](#) in the Transition Center at (408) 573-3214 for more information. When the law goes into effect on January 1, 2016, all other students can contact their former school district to see if they qualify for a retroactive diploma.

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