

**2015 Educational Options Study – History and Status  
Forestville USD, Guerneville SD and West Sonoma County UHSD  
May 12, 2015**

In January 2012, Forestville USD, Guerneville SD and West Sonoma County UHSD completed the *Grade 7-8 Educational Options Study*. This study addressed the options, feasibility and impacts of creating a grade 7-8 school for students in Guerneville and Forestville Union School Districts as a means of continuing strong academic programs while increasing more of the opportunities recommended for middle grade students. The study considered whether a combined grade 7-8 educational program for students served in Forestville USD and Guerneville SD could generate additional funding to enhance the educational program for grade 7-8 students. Both elementary school districts have had declining enrollment in grades 7/8 and are seeking options to expand rather than contract the educational, enrichment and extracurricular opportunities for grade 7-8 students.

The 2012 study found that there could be increased educational opportunities from providing a grade 7-8 program for Guerneville and Forestville USD students through West Sonoma County UHSD if funding for grade 7-8 students was the same as funding for grade 9-12 students. No action was taken to implement the grade 7-8 Educational Options program because the California Department of Education would not confirm that grade 7-8 students would be funded at the grade 9-12 level, despite providing this higher funding level to other California school districts. The 2012 study addressed options with the highest level of revenue, the educational program model, school location (including transportation), preliminary school schedule, staffing and findings specific to each school district.

In 2014, the revenue formula for school funding changed significantly with the introduction of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Given that the decision to suspend further consideration of the prior Grade 7-8 Educational Options Study was due to funding uncertainty with the prior school revenue formula, the three District superintendents chose to begin meeting in September 2014 and have met periodically during the year. There is agreement to update the findings from the 2012 study to create a 2015 study. The question to be addressed in the updated study is as follows:

*“Through working together, can Forestville USD, Guerneville USD and WSCUHSD fund and offer a more robust and LCAP aligned grade 7-8 educational program that provides the state and nationally recommended social, extra curricular and high school readiness opportunities, with instruction provided by appropriately credentialed teachers?”*

During the 2014/15 school year, Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) fiscal staff and School Services of California have completed an analysis of the revenue that could be generated across the three districts under six scenarios. These scenarios include having each school district provide the 7-8 program and each school district providing the 7/8 program as a charter school. The analysis shows that there are options which generate higher revenue for a combined grade 7/8 education program. The districts are currently in the process of identifying the cost to operate a more robust grade 7-8 program. The 2015 study will also address issues such as employee contracts.

The 2015 Educational Options Study will be presented to each school Board in August 2015. The study will include a recommended action plan that includes community and staff input and engagement.



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**TOM TORLAKSON**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June 1, 2015

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

**INFORMATION ON THE  
2015–16 CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAMINATION**

The purpose of this letter is to provide information on pending legislation that will impact upcoming California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) administrations. Pending legislation and budget authority, the CAHSEE may be suspended in 2015–16 school year. In accordance with *California Education Code* Section 60851(d), there will be no July 2015 CAHSEE administration.

Senate Bill (SB) 172 (Liu), sponsored by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) Tom Torlakson, proposes to suspend the administration of the high school exit examination for three years, and the requirement that students pass this examination as a condition of graduation from high school. Under the proposed bill, the administration of the examination would be suspended during the 2016–17, 2017–18, and 2018–19 school years, or when the approved high school exit examination is no longer available.

The bill also requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to convene an advisory panel to provide recommendations to the SSPI on the continuation of the high school exit examination and on alternative pathways to satisfy specified high school graduation requirements. On May 28, 2015, SB 172 passed the Senate Appropriations Committee and will now move to the full Senate for consideration.

In the event that SB 172 does not become law, the 2015–16 May Revision, Omnibus Education Trailer Bill, requests that language be adopted to continue the administration of the CAHSEE. The CDE is working with the Legislature and the Department of Finance to ensure that the CDE can continue the current contract and the CDE is working closely with the CAHSEE contractor to be responsive should this occur.

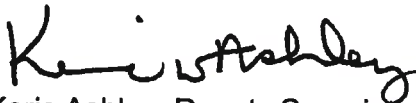
The CDE is also working closely with the Legislature to determine what the state will do during the suspension period and any impact this may have on students in the Class of 2016 and others who have yet to meet the exit examination graduation requirement. The CDE will provide follow up to this communication as SB 172 progresses through the legislative process. Although we have little information to provide at this time, we will be

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diligent in our communications with you in regards to this bill and the 2015–16 Budget Bill.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact John Boivin, Administrator, High School and Physical Fitness Assessments Office, by phone at 916-319-0575 or by e-mail at [jboivin@cde.ca.gov](mailto:jboivin@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keric Ashley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Keric Ashley, Deputy Superintendent  
District, School, and Innovation Branch

KA:jb

cc: CAHSEE District Coordinators