

Last Minute Memorandum

To: STATE BOARD MEMBERS **Date:** July 7, 2003

From: Geno Flores, Deputy Superintendent, Assessment and Accountability Branch

Re: ITEM #6

Subject: California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): Discussion of Potential Changes to CAHSEE.

Please insert the following additional attachments:

[Attachment 5:](#) CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint* Revised December 2000 (2nd Proposed Revision) (Pages 1-17)

Note: This attachment replaces Attachment 3 pages 1-9 only

[Attachment 6:](#) Projected Reliability of a Reduced CAHSEE Test (Pages 1-2)

Recommended English-language Arts Blueprint Revisions

After further discussion about scoring the English-language arts (ELA) exam with one less essay, additional changes to the test blueprint have been proposed to keep the relative weights of reading and writing in the ELA test at about 50 percent each, as was originally proposed by the High School Exit Examination Standards Panel. In the original blueprint, the two essays counted 30 percent of the total score; writing was weighted 50 percent including the essays; and reading was weighted 50 percent. With the additional changes to the revised blueprint, there will be 45 points for reading multiple-choice questions and 27 points for writing multiple-choice questions plus 18 points for an essay for a total of 45 points for writing. The changes are listed in the third column of the attached blueprint. The standards identified for elimination in the 2nd Proposed Revision were selected because they are difficult to test with multiple-choice questions. They are:

Reading Comprehension

- 2.2 Prepare a bibliography of reference materials for a report using a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents; and
- 2.3 Generate relevant questions about readings on issues that can be researched.

Writing Strategies

- 1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources; and
- 1.6 Integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.

Writing Conventions

- 1.5 Reflect appropriate manuscript requirements, including title page presentation, pagination, spacing and margins, and integration of source and support material (e.g., in-text citation, use of direct quotations, paraphrasing) with appropriate citations.

Other standards have had the number of questions adjusted as shown on the attached blueprint.

Recommended State Board of Education Actions

If the State Board of Education (SBE) approves the proposed changes both to the CAHSEE Language Arts and Math Blueprint, it will be important for the SBE to take action on the other issues proposed in the original item #6, Attachment 3, in order for the test contractor to be able to develop a new form of the test for the spring 2004 census administration. Actions for this item include the following:

1. Approval of proposed revisions to the blueprints;
2. Approval of reducing the test from three days to two days; and
3. Approval of whether or not to use compensatory scoring.

If SBE approves the proposed revisions to the blueprint, the California Department of Education (CDE) will hold a meeting with the content review panels for the CAHSEE to validate that with the changes, the test is still aligned to the standards. This panel will also look at the statistical difficulty of the items, including the language level particularly for the mathematics items. Information will be brought back to SBE in September of the results of this meeting. The readability paper is for discussion only. The conclusion is that the readability is set at the correct level for both ELA and mathematics.

Reducing The Test to Two Days

If SBE chooses to reduce the test from three days to two days, the testing contractor will need to initiate a number of programming and printing changes immediately in order to have a test ready for the spring census administration. ELA would be tested on one day, and mathematics on the second day. With the revised blueprint, the test contractor estimates that the testing schedule for ELA will require 3 hours and 40 minutes for working time (when students are actually taking the test). In addition, administration time is needed, so conservatively (assuming no pre-ID service used) 30 minutes per session would need to be added for the administrative details. Districts can either test all morning (8am-12noon), or split the testing into morning and afternoon sessions. Scheduling and facilities will continue to be an issue whether or not the CAHSEE is given on two or three days. One day for testing ELA will require less overall disruption to the school schedule and will ensure that more students complete both sessions of the ELA test. There is a caution that this is a high-stakes test and students who may need extra time for the English-language arts (ELA) test may not have enough time left in the day.

Input From School Districts

CDE announced at our two large meetings of state testing directors that SBE would be considering this reduction in July and did not receive any negative responses. Apparently, the

trade-off in reducing the testing days more than makes up for having one very long day of testing.

In discussions with several school district testing directors (Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Kern, Sacramento, and more at the north/south meetings), it is clear that reducing testing time will be helpful. It is less unanimous that one versus two days is better given that the ELA testing time will not be significantly reduced in order to maintain adequate (0.9) reliability on the ELA test. However, all indications are that most schools will prefer one day for ELA. Also, a one-day ELA test will eliminate the absence issue—students not showing up on Day One or missing Day Two would not be able to achieve a passing score even if they got all the items correct and achieved a perfect score on the writing task. The testing directors said that most students finished the test within the time allotted and one director said the times in the manuals were “excessive” for the majority of students.

Compensatory Scoring

The decision on compensatory scoring raises administrative issues. The model is based on an assumption that the student would continue taking the test each time it is offered until he or she passes. Without an individual student identifier, the testing contractor will not be able to match student reports with 100 percent accuracy if a student takes the test more than once. The options are to either amend the current contract to have the testing contractor build in a system for individual student identifiers or to report only the numerical scores on the student reports and give the district the rules on the compensatory scoring so they will know when the student has successfully passed both sections of the exam. CDE talked to several states having high-stakes examinations.

Florida does not use a compensatory model. Students must achieve a scale score of 300 on both the grade 10 mathematics and reading tests (FCAT) as one of the requirements to receive a high school diploma. Please refer to Web site <<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fcat/fcatpass.htm>>. In talking to testing directors in several other states with high school exit examinations (Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Texas), the compensatory model has been considered, but met with varying responses.

In Texas, a compensatory model was not used with the TASS over the past 10 years. The new exit examination includes tests in four content areas (math, ELA, science, and social studies) and the mathematics test now includes high school geometry (over time the math content assessed has increased in rigor). The revised exit exam has met with less than stellar student passing rates this year, generating concerns in the business and policy world. Therefore, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is presenting two compensatory model options to its SBE this month. The first option is to accept a score of up to one standard error below the passing score on one of the four content tests as long as the other three tests receive a passing score. The second option is to accept a score of up to one standard error below the passing score on one of the four content tests as long as the other three tests receive a passing score AND the average score of all 4 content tests is at or above the passing score, then the student passes the testing graduation requirement. In analyses conducted by TEA, it was found that only one (1) student out of about 180,000 tested would fail under the second option while passing under the first option. TEA prefers the first option because it will be easier to implement at the local level.

In Louisiana, there has been a graduation exit examination since the 1980's and the state has never applied a compensatory model. Only recently did the state add promotion/retention tests at

grades 4 and 8. For these latter tests, the state briefly considered a compensatory approach, but did not pursue it because they felt it would be too confusing to explain to parents and that the data checking related to combining scores would be too labor intensive for the state department staff.

In Massachusetts, the compensatory model was rejected because of the manner in which the passing score was set on the graduation test. The test is used for both accountability (first-time test takers only) and student graduation requirements. It was implemented in 1998, but did not count for graduation until 2001. Initially, four performance levels were set, and then the passing scores on the math and English-language arts tests were set between level 1 (failing) and level 2 (needs improvement). The State did not feel that work below “needs improvement” was acceptable for a high school graduation requirement, so the compensatory model was not used. Massachusetts felt the compensatory model was inappropriate given the already low cut score on the exit exam. However, the State may reconsider a compensatory model when it adds two more content areas to the graduation requirement in the future.

California Department of Education (CDE) Recommendation

If the State Board of Education decides to approve a compensatory model, CDE recommends that the “partially compensatory” model be used and that the minimum threshold be set at no lower than 2 standard errors below the current passing score. The two standard error rule translates into a scaled score of roughly 330 on the mathematics and ELA portions of the exam. This would be roughly 44 percent correct for the mathematics and ELA portions of the CAHSEE.

In the June Board item, Table A.1 was presented. If the minimum threshold for both mathematics and ELA were set at 330, then 70% of these first-time test takers would pass with a total score of 700 and a minimum on either portion of 330. This is 11% higher than the 59% of first-time test takers achieving at least 350 on each test independently. If ELA were left at 350 and math were lowered to 330, then the overall pass rate would be 69%.

Table A.1
CAHSEE March 2003 Passing Rates - Partially Compensatory Approach (Total \geq 700) with Different Minimum Thresholds for ELA and Math*

		English Language Arts Minimum Threshold							
		350	345	340	335	330	325	320	250
Math Minimum Threshold	350	59%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
	345	62%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%
	340	66%	66%	66%	67%	67%	67%	67%	67%
	335	67%	68%	68%	68%	68%	68%	69%	69%
	330	69%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	71%	71%
	325	70%	71%	71%	71%	71%	71%	71%	71%
	320	71%	71%	71%	72%	72%	72%	72%	72%
	250	71%	72%	72%	72%	72%	72%	72%	72%

* Based on 10th Grade students who completed both ELA and Math

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
Reading (Grades Nine and Ten with two standards from Grade Eight as noted*)	58 Multiple-choice Items Total	51 Multiple-choice Items Total	45 Multiple-choice Items Total
1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.	10 Multiple-choice Items	No Change	7 Multiple-choice Items
1.1 Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and understand word derivations.	6	6	5
1.2 Distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words and interpret the connotative power of words.	4	4	2
1.3 Identify Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology and use the knowledge to understand the origin and meaning of new words (e.g., the word narcissistic drawn from the myth of Narcissus and Echo).	0	0	0

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
<p>2.0 Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced. The selections in <i>Recommended Literature, Grades Nine Through Twelve</i> (1990) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, by grade twelve, students read two million words annually on their own, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information. In grades nine and ten, students make substantial progress toward this goal.</p>	<p>24 Multiple-choice Items</p>	<p>19 Multiple-choice Items</p>	<p>18 Multiple-choice Items</p>
<p>Structural Features of Informational Materials</p> <p>†8.2.1 Compare and contrast the features and elements of consumer materials to gain meaning from documents (e.g., warranties, contracts, product information, instruction manuals).</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>2.1 Analyze the structure and format of functional workplace documents, including the graphics and headers, and explain how authors use the features to achieve their purposes.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>

† *Eighth-grade content standard.*

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
2.2 Prepare a bibliography of reference materials for a report using a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents.	2	0	0
Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appreciated Text 2.3 Generate relevant questions about readings on issues that can be researched.	2	1	0
2.4 Synthesize the content from several sources or works by a single author dealing with a single issue; paraphrase the ideas and connect them to other sources and related topics to demonstrate comprehension.	3	3	3
2.5 Extend ideas presented in primary or secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation, and elaboration.	3	3	3
2.6 Demonstrate the use of sophisticated learning tools by following technical directions (e.g., those found with graphic calculators and specialized software programs and in access guides to World Wide Web sites on the Internet).	0	0	0

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
<p>Expository Critique</p> <p>2.7 Critique the logic of functional documents by examining the sequence of information and procedures in anticipation of possible reader misunderstandings.</p>	3	3	3
<p>2.8 Evaluate the credibility of an author's argument or defense of a claim by critiquing the relationship between generalizations and evidence, the comprehensiveness of evidence, and the way in which the author's intent affects the structure and tone of the text (e.g., in professional journals, editorials, political speeches, primary source material).</p>	7	5	5

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
<p>3.0 Literary Response and Analysis Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analysis of recurrent patterns and themes. The selections in <i>Recommended Literature, Grades Nine Through Twelve</i> illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.</p>	<p>24 Multiple-choice Items</p>	<p>22 Multiple-choice Items</p>	<p>20 Multiple-choice Items</p>
<p>Structural Features of Literature</p> <p>3.1 Articulate the relationship between the expressed purposes and the characteristics of different forms of dramatic literature (e.g., comedy, tragedy, drama, dramatic monologue).</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>3.2 Compare and contrast the presentation of a similar theme or topic across genres to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text</p> <p>3.3 Analyze interactions between main and subordinate characters in a literary text (e.g., internal and external conflicts, motivations, relationships, influences) and explain the way those interactions affect the plot.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>2</p>

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
3.4 Determine characters' traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, and soliloquy.	2	2	2
3.5 Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the ideas expressed in each work.	4	3	2
3.6 Analyze and trace an author's development of time and sequence, including the use of complex literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashbacks).	2	2	2
3.7 Recognize and understand the significance of various literary devices, including figurative language, imagery, allegory, and symbolism, and explain their appeal.	2	2	2
3.8 Interpret and evaluate the impact of ambiguities, subtleties, contradictions, ironies, and incongruities in a text.	2	2	2

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
3.9 Explain how voice, persona, and the choice of a narrator affect characterization and the tone, plot, and credibility of a text.	2	2	2
3.10 Identify and describe the function of dialogue, scene designs, soliloquies, asides, and character foils in dramatic literature:	2	1	1
Literary Criticism †8.3.7 Analyze a work of literature, showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of its author. (Biographical approach)	4 (Tasks that assess the three different approaches will be rotated across test forms.)	4 (Tasks that assess the three different approaches will be rotated across test forms.)	3 (Tasks that assess the three different approaches will be rotated across test forms.)
3.11 Evaluate the aesthetic qualities of style, including the impact of diction and figurative language on tone, mood, and theme, using the terminology of literary criticism. (Aesthetic approach)			
3.12 Analyze the way in which a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period. (Historical approach)			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
Writing (Grades Nine and Ten)	24 Multiple-choice Items	21 Multiple-choice Items	27 Multiple-choice Items
1.0 Writing Strategies Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.	11 Multiple-choice Items	9 Multiple-choice Items	12 Multiple-choice Items
Organization and Focus	2	2	3
1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.			
1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.	3	3	3

† *Eighth-grade content standard.*

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2 nd Proposed Revision
Research and Technology			
1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.	1	0	0
1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).	1	1	2
1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).	1	1	1
1.6 Integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.	1	0	0

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
1.7 Use appropriate conventions for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to those in style manuals (e.g., Modern Language Association Handbook, The Chicago Manual of Style).	0	0	0
1.8 Design and publish documents by using advanced publishing software and graphic programs.	0	0	0
Evaluation and Revision 1.9 Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.	2	2	3
2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce texts of at least 1,500 words each. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.	Essay Items	Essay Items No Change	Essay Items No Change

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
Using the writing strategies of grades nine and ten outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students: 2.1 Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories :	√	√	√
a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience.			
b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.			
c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.			
d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood.			
e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
2.2 Write responses to literature:	√	√	√
a. Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works.			
b. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.			
c. Demonstrate awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.			
d. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.			
2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports:	√	√	√
a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives.			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2 nd Proposed Revision
b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.			
c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts, and ideas.			
d. Include visual aids by employing appropriate technology to organize and record information on charts, maps, and graphs.			
e. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.			
f. Use technical terms and notations accurately.			
2.4 Write persuasive compositions:	√	√	√
a. Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
b. Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study, or analogy).			
c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning.			
d. Address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and expectations.			
2.5 Write business letters:	√	√	√
a. Provide clear and purposeful information and address the intended audience appropriately.			
b. Use appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style to take into account the nature of the relationship with, and the knowledge and interests of, the recipients.			
c. Highlight central ideas or images.			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	2 nd Proposed Revision
d. Follow a conventional style with page formats, fonts, and spacing that contribute to the documents' readability and impact.			
2.6 Write technical documents (e.g., a manual on rules of behavior for conflict resolution, procedures for conducting a meeting, minutes of a meeting):			
a. Report information and convey ideas logically and correctly.			
b. Offer detailed and accurate specifications.			
c. Include scenarios, definitions, and examples to aid comprehension (e.g., troubleshooting guide).			
d. Anticipate readers' problems, mistakes, and misunderstandings.			

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.	13 Multiple-choice Items	12 Multiple-choice Items	15 Multiple-choice Items
Grammar and Mechanics of Writing			
1.1 Identify and correctly use clauses (e.g., main and subordinate), phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, and participial), and mechanics of punctuation (e.g., semicolons, colons, ellipses, hyphens).	4	4	5
1.2 Understand sentence construction (e.g., parallel structure, subordination, proper placement of modifiers) and proper English usage (e.g., consistency of verb tenses).	4	4	5
1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, paragraph and sentence structure, diction, and syntax.	4	4	5
Manuscript Form			
1.4 Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct use of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.	0	0	0

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

CAHSEE Language Arts Blueprint*
Revised December 2000

<i>California Content Standard</i>	Number and Type of Items	July 2003 Proposed Revision	July 2003 2nd Proposed Revision
1.5 Reflect appropriate manuscript requirements, including title page presentation, pagination, spacing and margins, and integration of source and support material (e.g., in-text citation, use of direct quotations, paraphrasing) with appropriate citations.	1	0	0

2 Essays

1 from standards 2.2 or 2.3

Response to Literature or Analytic Essay (Expository Writing)

1 from standards 2.1, 2.4 or 2.5

Biography, persuasion, business letter

July 2003 Proposed Revision

1 Essay-Randomly rotate all categories of writing for each test administration

1 from standards 2.2 or 2.3

Response to Literature or Analytic Essay (Expository Writing)

Or from 2.1, 2.4, or 2.5

* Blueprint approved by the State Board of Education on December 7, 2000.

Projected Reliability of a Reduced CAHSEE Test
Educational Testing Service (ETS)
July 2, 2003

The California Department of Education (CDE) and ETS have recommended a revised English-Language Arts test consisting of 72 operational questions and one writing prompt. The suggestion has been that California students and school districts could benefit from a reduction in the testing time for the English-Language Arts part of the CAHSEE. The current recommendation will shorten the test sufficiently so that it could be given on one day rather than two, as is done currently. This analysis uses data from the March 2003 CAHSEE administration to project the impact of this change on test reliability.

Based on a random sample of student data from the March 2003 administration, we calculated reliabilities for the full English-Language Arts test (82 multiple-choice items and 2 constructed response items) and for a test consisting of 72 multiple-choice items and one constructed response item. For the full test reliability, we applied the weights that are currently used in CAHSEE ELA scoring, where multiple-choice items have a weight of 0.7683 and each constructed response item is weighted 3.375. This weighting results in 90 points, with the essays counting 27 points (30 percent) and the multiple-choice items counting 63 points (70 percent). For the reduced test, we propose that the multiple-choice items have a weight of 1.0 and that the essays have a weight of 4.5. This weighting results in 90 points, with the essay counting 18 points (20 percent) and the multiple-choice items counting 72 points (80 percent). We calculated reliabilities based on a random sample of all 10th grade students from the March 2003 administration as well as a random sample of 10th grade English Learners. These latter data were used to check the reliability of the reduced test in a special sample that is lower in ability compared with the total group. Table 1 presents the results of this analysis and indicates that the CAHSEE ELA test reliability is only slightly affected by the reduction in test length. The composite reliability of the reduced test, with the multiple-choice and constructed response components weighted as described above, remains above the targeted value of 0.90.

Table 1

March 03 Test	MC Items	2 CR Items	Composite
All 10 th Grade Students	0.95	0.81	0.95
10 th Grade English Learners	0.91	0.74	0.92
Reduced ELA Test	MC Items	1 CR Item	Composite
All 10 th Grade Students	0.94	0.69	0.94
10 th Grade English Learners	0.90	0.65	0.91

Additional information related to the reduced test length is summarized in Table 2, which provides intercorrelations of various components of the current CAHSEE English-Language Arts test based on a random sample of 10th grade students from the March 2003 administration. These components include scores based on all multiple-choice items measuring Reading standards (58 questions in the current test), multiple-choice items measuring Writing standards (24 questions in the current test), the two constructed-response items (CR1 is passage-based and CR2 is stand alone), and the total CR score (CR Tot). Note that several correlations in this table are inflated because one score is part of the score with which it is correlated (these are indicated with asterisks).

Table 2

	MC	Reading	Writing	CR1	CR2
MC	1.00				
Reading	0.99*	1.00			
Writing	0.92*	0.84	1.00		
CR1	0.73	0.72	0.67	1.00	
CR2	0.69	0.67	0.67	0.68	1.00
CR Tot	0.78	0.76	0.73	0.93*	0.91*

It can be seen from Table 2 that the two constructed response items correlate relatively highly with each other ($r = 0.68$) as well as with the total multiple-choice component ($r = 0.73$ and 0.69 , respectively). The correlation between CR Tot (based on both constructed response items) and the multiple-choice component is only slightly higher (0.78). These data provide corroborating evidence that removing one of the constructed-response items from the CAHSEE English-Language Arts test will not have much effect on test reliability. In addition, the proposed rotation across administrations between a passage-based literary response essay and a standalone essay is supported by the correlation between these two essay types.

In shortening the test, changes to the test blueprint have been proposed to keep the relative weights of Reading and Writing in the CAHSEE ELA test at about 50 percent each, as in the current ELA test. To accomplish this goal, additional multiple-choice items measuring writing strands will be added to the test to replace the constructed response item that has been eliminated. The net result of this change will be that the number of Reading multiple-choice items will be reduced from 58 to 45 and the number of Writing multiple-choice items will be increased from 24 to 27. The high correlation of 0.84 between the reading and writing components in the current ELA test suggest that the proposed reconfiguring of the reading and writing components will have little effect on the psychometric properties of the test. The benefit of revising the ELA test in this manner is that the current emphasis on measuring reading and writing equally will be maintained, thus encouraging equal emphasis on both reading and writing instruction.