

# Mathematics Placement Protocol

Escondido Union High School District

The Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD) is committed to providing access to high quality mathematics education, including advanced mathematics courses, to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic background. The EUHSD Governing Board recognizes that student achievement in mathematics is critical for preparing students for college and career, especially in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) fields. In particular, we realize that a student's 9<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics placement is crucial to ensuring future educational success.

In the EUHSD, students and parents participate in a course selection process each school year to insure appropriate placement, and to which students and parents are able to provide additional information to assist with placement decisions. In addition, academic guidance services are made available to help students select courses relevant to their academic needs.

SB359 requires school districts with 8<sup>th</sup> grades and/or 9<sup>th</sup> grades to (1) develop, establish, and implement fair, objective and transparent mathematics placement policies that consider multiple objective measures (i.e. CA statewide assessments, and pupil course grades) as the basis for placement and, (2) permit multiple checkpoints to assess placement accuracy and pupil progress, especially at the start of the academic year.

The following five (5) placement practices outline how EUHSD meets the requirements of the Math Placement Act of 2015:

- 1) Systematically take multiple objective academic measures of student performance into consideration for placement.
  - **Academic measures used for placement into Math 1:**
    - In the EUHSD, all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are placed in the same core content course, Math 1.
  - **Academic measures used for concurrent placement into Math 1 and a Math Support Class:**
    - Evaluate 8<sup>th</sup> grade course and grade.
    - Evaluate State assessment (CAASPP) data provided by feeder school districts.
    - Evaluate the local assessment data – NWEA-MAP scores provided by feeder districts.
- 2) Include at least one placement checkpoint within the first month of the school year to ensure accurate placement and permit reevaluation of individual pupil progress.
  - **Placement Checkpoint:**
    - Students enrolled in Math 1 without an additional support class, who are not progressing appropriately, will *not* be moved to a lower class. These students will be offered an opportunity to take a Math Inventory assessment to determine if placement in a concurrent Math Support course is indicated.

- 3) Examine aggregate student placement data annually to ensure students who are qualified to progress in math based on performance are not held back on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background.
  - **Examination of student placement data:**
    - Evaluate number of students by course with grade distribution.
    - Evaluate math course completion by subgroup.
    - Evaluate a-g completion rate by subgroup.
- 4) Offer clear and timely recourse for each student and his or her parent or legal guardian who questions the student's placement.
  - **Recourse for students and parents:**
    - Students and parents who question a student's math placement are provided the opportunity to meet with the student's guidance counselor to discuss placement criteria.
- 5) For non-unified school districts, addresses the consistency of math placement policies between elementary and HS districts.
  - **Consistency of math placement policies:**
    - EUHSD district representatives meet with our main feeder districts annually to discuss placement criteria and course offerings.

**Additional background information:**

If students are placed below their level of proficiency in 9<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics courses, their ability to complete the recommended sequence of mathematics courses required for admission to the University of California and California State University systems and other higher education institutions will be compromised. If admitted to college, students who were forced to repeat lower level mathematics courses in high school will be behind other students, and less likely to be competitive for careers in the STEM fields upon graduation. Mathematics misplacement has also been shown to affect students' confidence and their overall educational experience. Mathematics misplacement can occur with successful students, and disproportionately affects successful students of color. Studies have shown that successful students, particularly from minority populations, may receive passing grades in mathematics coursework and/or demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests in 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics course work, and yet nonetheless be held back and forced to repeat the same course in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade rather than advancing.

Finkelstein, N., et al. (WestEd 2012) *College Bound in Middle School & High School? How Math Course Sequences Matter*

Waterman, S. (2010) *Pathways Report: Dead Ends and Wrong Turns on the Path Through Algebra*, [http://www.noycefdn.org/documents/Pathways\\_Report.pdf](http://www.noycefdn.org/documents/Pathways_Report.pdf)