

Calif. may ax high school exit exam

By Diana Lambert and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

California students are getting better at passing the high school graduation exam, but the test may be on its way out.

The state is in the midst of an education overhaul as schools begin adopting Common Core State Standards, national guidelines that proponents say focus more on critical thinking and problem-solving. California education leaders say an expected shift in classroom instruction and test methods will render the current exit exam obsolete.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson has proposed alternatives to the California High School Exit Exam that include scrapping it altogether, using parts of the Common Core test instead or relying on college entrance exam performance to determine eligibility for graduation. Lawmakers are expected to take up the issue next year, though state education officials say a new test is unlikely until July 2017.

The exit exam includes math problems at the sixth- through eighth-grade level, as well as an English portion that tests at the 10th-grade level. All high school students in California, with the exception of some disabled students, must pass it to graduate.

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