

Measuring Up to the CAHSEE

A Best Practices document on how the Measuring Up program helped to improve Academic Performance in the area of Mathematics for high school seniors enrolled in an alternative school setting.



About Coast High School

Coast High School, which is an alternative high school in the Huntington Beach Union High School District, is one of eight schools in the district that offer courses leading to a HBUHSD diploma. Coast High is unique in the sense that it is the only school in the district to use an Independent Study curricular delivery system.

Summary

The purpose of Coast High School's CAHSEE Math Prep program is to prepare at-risk students for their first exposure to the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). Placement in the class is based on a student's CST results, targeting primarily those who scored "Below Basic" or "Far Below Basic" on their Algebra 1 CST. What's different about this program is that seniors who have already tried to pass the CAHSEE but were not successful, as well as students from out-of-state who entered the school during their senior year, are given Independent Study appointments with a math instructor.

Once a week, the senior meets with their teacher and is given an assignment (of approximately 20 hours in length) based on the results of their previous CAHSEE experiences, as well as various diagnostics that were given during the prior year. In addition, released questions from previous CAHSEE exams are assigned to students and test-taking tips are also emphasized in both the teacher-directed class and with the Independent Study appointments.

Carole Maken, Coast High School's Math Coordinator, said that she purchased Measuring Up to the California Content Standards and the online component Measuring Up e-Path, because she needed to be able to accurately assess the prior knowledge of each of her students in order to make coursework accessible to everyone. Maken says "by using the results of Measuring Up e-Path's CAHSEE diagnostic test I can assign lessons in the Measuring Up book that pinpoint the concepts and skills that a student needs in order to successfully complete the course in which they are enrolled. In addition, the assignments are spelled out for me and for the student, saving me the trouble of searching for materials to remediate missed concepts."

Students can complete the diagnostic at home, along with their other Independent Study assignments, and they can bring the printout of their results to their appointment, saving the teacher the time it would take to administer, grade, and interpret a pencil and paper diagnostic.

The Results

Students at Coast High School who were previously unable to achieve a passing score on the CAHSEE in the area of mathematics are using the print and online components as a scaffold for what Maken calls "a very successful intensive remediation program." Maken says that by using Measuring Up ePath, students are able to "take a risk" and answer questions without the fear of embarrassing themselves in front of their

peers. She says “this active form of learning engages several senses and helps keep students on task longer than if they just work from a textbook. I have found that my students will willingly complete one-hundred exercises on the computer without complaining.”

Maken, who has been teaching for a number of years, said that she is often reluctant to adopt new programs like Measuring Up, and only agreed to try it because of its acceptance by the State of California as a supplement to the adopted textbooks for Mathematics. Maken said that she was pleasantly surprised by the program’s capabilities. “The success on the CAHSEE in math that my students have experienced convinced me that this time-saving, student-engaging program was beneficial not only for my Independent Study students, but also for the students enrolled in other HBUHSD teacher directed CAHSEE remediation classes.”