What is the Early Assessment Program?

Background
The California State University, in collaboration with the California Department of Education and California Board of Education, implemented the Early Assessment Program in 2004 to assist college-bound high school students in determining their readiness for college-level English and math courses. The California Community Colleges joined the program in 2009. As a signal of college readiness, the EAP provides high school students with an opportunity to make the most effective use of their senior year to prepare for college if a student’s EAP test result indicates that they are not ready for college-level courses. Beginning in 2nd grade through the 11th grade, California’s public school students take the California Standards Test (CST). In the spring of their 11th grade year, students are given an opportunity to take an augmented CST, called the EAP, to assess their level of readiness for college. The augmented CST consists of 15 additional questions in English and math and a writing essay. Scores are compiled from 45 selected test items from the CST in English and math, plus the additional questions and essay.

As an incentive to students to take the EAP test and to do their best, students who demonstrate college readiness on the EAP are exempt from taking CSU placement tests when they enroll at a CSU campus. These students are able to enroll in college-level English and math courses. For math, a second category of readiness exists: conditional. Students who are determined to be conditionally ready are required to take the appropriate math or science course in their senior year, earning a C or better in the course, or successfully complete an online course, in order to enroll at a CSU campus without having to take the placement exam. A “conditional” status on the English test has been added.

2012 Student EAP Test Results
In 2012, an estimated 87% of California’s 11th grade public high school students (383,565 out of 440,115 students) who took the CST, opted to take the English portion of the EAP. Of the students who took the English EAP test, only 23% demonstrated readiness for college, while 62% did not. In 2012, CSU added a new “conditionally ready” category for the English EAP—15% of students who took the EAP last year scored conditionally ready on the English EAP test. Because only those 11th grade students who have completed or are enrolled in Algebra II qualify to take the EAP math test, fewer students take this assessment. Of the 203,972 out of 246,387 eligible students who opted to take the EAP math test, 15% scored ready for college-level math, 46% scored conditional, and 40% did not demonstrate readiness for college-level math.

The Role of EAP in the California Community Colleges
Senate Bill 946 provided the Chancellor’s Office with the authority to access data on 11th grade students who take the EAP. Given State budget constraints and that no new funding was appropriated to implement a CCC EAP, participation by community colleges is voluntary. As of February 2013, 73 community colleges accept EAP test results for students demonstrating readiness for college-level coursework as a waiver to the college’s assessment and for placement into college-level English and math courses.