



# Santa Ana Unified School District

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Stefanie P. Phillips, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

July 18, 2019

Adam Day, Chair  
California State University Board of Trustees  
c/o Trustee Secretariat  
401 Golden Shore, Suite 136  
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear CSU Chair Day,

As one of the top ten largest urban school districts in California, we write to express Santa Ana Unified School District's strong opposition to the proposal of adding a fourth year of mathematics/quantitative reasoning to the admission requirements for first year incoming students to the California State University (CSU) system.

Adding a fourth year of mathematics/quantitative reasoning to the requirements creates unintended consequences for our District. By establishing math as a 4-year math requirement, students would have no room in their schedule for an extra course in math, should they need it. In SAUSD, 52.1% of our students at our comprehensive schools complete a rigorous college preparatory curriculum which means that students still rely on credit recovery options given our A-G curriculum for diploma track students.

In essence, what this requirement would do is create a two-tier system of higher education that would provide an advantage for students who have interests or strengths in math, science, or engineering-based majors. What message would this convey to students whose interest are based in the liberal and performing arts? Further, if this requirement passes, the CSU's would decrease access to higher education by rerouting more students to community colleges. While our *Santa Ana College Promise* partnership with Santa Ana College, CSU Fullerton, and UC Irvine has exhibited amazing results in increasing the number of students attending college, we wouldn't want to force requirements on a system that would reroute students automatically just simply by not meeting a math requirement. Our students need to have options and not have the system do it for them.

This requirement would also require districts to hire additional teachers to accommodate all of the students that would need an extra year of math support. Where would this funding come from? Students would also have diminished access to other electives that they would normally pursue. It also would impact the master schedule as more math teachers would be needed versus other content areas and therefore impacting a principal's ability to offer courses based upon student interest.

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For many high school students in SAUSD, which has an 88% free and reduced lunch count, most high school students' work in order to help their families. Therefore, recovering courses in the summer and/or throughout the year becomes a challenge for our students that work. We would be creating an extra strain on their schedules to double-up on two math classes in a year should they not pass a math course. As school districts and universities charged with preparing California's next leaders, we need to remove barriers so that students have access to higher education, not add more. We are thankful for the CSU system for removing remedial courses from their course offerings, as this has created barriers for students that would get trapped in remedial courses and drop out. We need to do the same here, remove barriers that impede students from obtaining access.

SAUSD has proven that a large urban district can succeed. Based upon 2017-2018 data reported on *DataQuest*, SAUSD has a College Going Rate of 76.5% while the state exhibits a 65.8% rate. SAUSD also has an 92.1% graduation rate (comprehensive schools) and will continue to advocate for all of our students in their attainment of a university degree through equity and access opportunities.

We look forward to working together with our university partners to ensure that our students are successful. Please let us know how we could be of assistance for further information should you have questions on the impact that this requirement would have on our District. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alfonso Jimenez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Alfonso Jimenez, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent  
Educational Services