



CSTA Policy Statement on “200” Score Linked to Science CSTs

ISSUE: In 2003, the California State Board of Education approved a policy requiring that students in Grades 9, 10 and 11 not enrolled in a standards-based science course (i.e., a course not aligned with a particular test blueprint and not satisfying the UC-CSU “a-g” entrance requirements) not be administered a California standards-based test but would automatically receive a score of 200, the lowest score possible. The assignment of a score of 200 effectively penalizes a district, as the district must include the score in its API, even though students receiving the score are not enrolled in a standards-based course and, therefore, by the state board’s own policy, not required to take the CST.

The California Science Teachers’ Association opposes this policy for the following reasons:

1. Students are currently required to take only two years of science in order to graduate, yet they are required to take, or at least have reported, three years of science tests. This inconsistent policy unfairly penalizes students not taking science for three consecutive years.
2. Some high school science courses align with specific test blueprints but may not satisfy UC-CSU “a-g” entrance requirements.
3. The assignment of scores of 200 has a powerful negative consequence in the state assessment and accountability systems in that it imposes an unwarranted lower API score than a district should have to report.

CSTA affirms its belief that all students who are enrolled in a science course should take a standards-based test; however, we support a three-year high school science graduation requirement which, if implemented, would alleviate the unfair assignment of a score of 200. Barring institution of such a requirement, CSTA urges the State Board of Education to immediately reverse the decision to impose an automatic score of 200 for any student not taking a standards-aligned CST.

Approved March 12, 2005, CSTA Board of Directors