

March 19, 2008

The Honorable Fabian Nunez
Assembly Speaker
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

AB 2040: SUPPORT

Dear Speaker Nunez:

The California Association of School Psychologists (CASP) has reviewed your AB 2040 and has taken a support position on the bill. CASP is a statewide association that represents over 3,000 school psychologists working in California public, private, and charter schools. School psychologists are mental health professionals who have specialized training in both psychology and education. They use their training and skills to team with educators, parents, and other mental health professionals to ensure that every child overcomes barriers and learns in a safe, healthy and supportive environment.

AB 2040 would provide special education students who have not passed one or more portions of the CASHEE with an alternative path to a high school diploma. Specifically, the bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene an advisory committee to develop a standardized evidence-based alternative assessment. Additionally, the bill grants one additional year for special education students to graduate as the new evidence-based system is put in place. Giving the Superintendent the opportunity to develop a specific assessment alternative with the help of a wide ranging advisory committee is the best means of gaining a consensus on this issue and ensuring that local assessments can then be handled in a responsible and cost effective manner.

CASP believes that this is a reasonable and well-balanced approach to a very difficult problem. We strongly support finding viable alternatives to the California High School Exit Exam for students with disabilities and commend you for taking a proactive role in ensuring that no child is left behind.

We look forward to working with you and your staff in the coming year on this critical issue. If we can be of further assistance please contact our legislative advocate, Jeff Frost, at 447-8420.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Fisher
CASP Executive Director

cc: Assembly Education Committee