A Delphi Study of an Effective State Assessment Method for Continuation High Schools

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A Delphi Study of an Effective State Assessment Method for Continuation High School

A dissertation by

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“I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13 New Revised Standard Version)

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ABSTRACT

Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there has been an urgency in the overall academic accountability for all students nationwide. Since then the state leadership and experts in the state of California have made it a priority to educate and hold schools and students accountable through standards based instruction and assessments. To date this has not been the case for continuation high schools in the state of California.

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for California continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method.

This study was centered on the research question “What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success according to experts in California continuation education?” This question was answered using a policy Delphi research method employing three rounds of questions with experts in continuation education.

In the first round experts identified best state assessment methods which were rated using a Likert scale in the second round. In the third and last round the same experts took the top six methods rated and answered open ended questions related to (facilitators, barriers, and implementation strategies).

Based on the findings of this study, the experts found consensus in that it would take a team of experts from the classrooms, school sites, and state leadership to
effectively develop an appropriate assessment method. There was however a strong lack of confidence in state leadership (legislators, California Department of Education, and CBE), however among the experts there is a wide range of ideas related to indicators, or what the assessments should look like.

Recommendations made from this study were centered on gathering a team of experts from the Education Options Council and the California Continuation Education Association to design the assessment process. This team should have representation from teachers, and administrators, and the process should include the input of state leadership.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Education is the responsibility of the educator, and the person being educated, with the goal of graduation as the end result (Pickett, 2007). All involved are expected to provide curriculum and instruction with equity, fidelity, presented in a practical method understanding the student’s academic need (Pickett, 2007). Educators in the state of California (CA) are held accountable to this charge, with the objective to improve the student achievement for all students as measured through individual assessments and reported through accountability reports (Andreyko, 2010; California Department of Education [CDE], 2015b, 2015m). Unfortunately, the lack of flexibility in these accountability programs do not allow for multiple measures to be counted as educators respond to the unique needs for all students, particularly the most vulnerable (Loomis, 2011).

To earn a diploma in the state of CA a student must pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and complete specified state and local graduation requirements (CDE, 2015i, 2015j). The student must also complete a minimum set of required courses specified by CA Education Codes (EC) (CDE, 2015i, 2015j; Course of Study, Grades 7-12, 1983).

In order to pass these courses, it is expected that a student demonstrate a certain degree of mastery of specified standards (Andreyko, 2010; CDE, 2015c, 2015g, 2015m). Credits or units are rewarded to students who pass the courses, which are added to the number required for graduation (CDE, 2015i, 2015j).

In the end this same student is expected to compete globally for jobs upon graduation from high school and possibly complete course work which would qualify
them to enter a four year college in accordance with CA’s A-G requirements, if the
district has adopted A-G as their graduation requirements (Bush & Stanford University,
2012; Pickett, 2007).

Today, continuation high schools are constantly re-shaping within their own
communities to meet the employment demands of this current global economy (Farris,
2014; Pickett, 2007). In 2013 legislation passed the California Careers Pathways Trust
EC which created funding for career pathways to support education. This would require
the State of California to examine the role of the continuation high school and methods to
monitor and measure student performance to meet this role.

CA continuation high schools have been a provision to students who struggle in
their pursuit of a high school diploma in comprehensive high schools (J. R. de Velasco,
McLaughlin, 2012). The smaller setting is designed to provide support to students who
are academically disadvantaged as evidence by credit deficiencies (J. R. de Velasco,
Austin, et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Ramstetter, 2013). This small
setting provides small group adult support which has proven successful particularly when

A student attending continuation high schools will earn accelerated credits with
less required time (CDE, 2015i; Schiber, 2006). Most students transfer to continuation
high schools to address credit deficiencies, due to labeled “at-risk” behaviors
(suspensions, truancies, low skills), and are usually too far deficient in credits to even
graduate from the school (Denham, 1996; Ramstetter, 2013). This would bring questions
such as: How can a student who is unsuccessful in a comprehensive high school go to
another school and earn more credits than a student at the comprehensive high school,
and at a faster pace? What accountability measures are in place to assure that the student is mastering the expected standards in the school?

To date there is a paucity in the research to address instruction, accountability, and assessments with continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). There are some exceptional alternative education schools (California High School Exit Exam, 1990); however their methods are mostly conducted in silos (Pickett, 2007). Legislation has not addressed this issue and current state assessment structures are ineffective in the reporting of proper measurement of student outcomes in these schools (CDE, 2015a, 2015e; Denham, 1996).

With less required instructional minutes and accelerated credit recovery structures in place in the continuation high schools, true mastery of standards expected to earn the credits in courses, are in question (CDE, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j). The question, are students and families being deceived to believe that they are attaining the necessary knowledge and skills for success in post-secondary education, or specific training for a vocation, in preparation for a successful independent lifestyle? This would indicate the strong need for an effective state assessment method to properly measure student outcomes in continuation high schools.

**Background**

**History**

CA continuation high schools started in the year 1919 as a result of legislation, as an alternative for students who needed a more flexible day, or week, and a program different from a comprehensive school setting to accommodate employment or special circumstances (Denham, 1996; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Prior to the
turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century schools revolved around support of the family farm, with only certain aspects of formal education (Burger, 2006; Loomis, 2011). Students were needed to either support the family by working the farm or gaining employment (Burger, 2006; Loomis, 2011).

During the industrial era a factory model approach to education was developed with the focus of providing the skills necessary for industrial jobs (Burger, 2006; Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012). This was in response to the “one-size-fits-all” approach during the Consolidation Movement in the early to mid-1900’s (Bard, Gardener, & Wieland, 2006; Center for Educator Recruitment and Advancement, 2015). This movement, the Centralized Educational Approach, was born out of a philosophy that all schools should look alike to meet the demands of the rise in industry (Bard et al., 2006; Center for Educator Recruitment and Advancement, 2015).

In 1919 the Part Time Educational Law was passed allowing students to work part-time to maintain full time jobs (James & Federal Board for Vocational, 1919; Luttrell, 2012). Students were allowed to attend school part-time to support their families economically (James & Federal Board for Vocational, 1919; Luttrell, 2012). Legislators decided to develop continuation high schools to provide support and the needed flexibility for this student population (Denham, 1996; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

These eras bred many different reforms in education during the mid to late 1900s causing conflict to a certain student population reshaping the focus of continuation high schools (Farris, 2014; Loomis, 2011). This resulted in controversy due to a lack of personalization between educators and students, and certain student populations who
could not fit into the established educational mode of this movement (Bard et al., 2006; Center for Educator Recruitment and Advancement, 2015; Loomis, 2011). Legislators decided to re-develop continuation high schools to provide support and the needed flexibility for this student population (Denham, 1996; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

This needed flexibility in the continuation high schools were designed to address students between the ages 16 to 18 providing them flexibility and academic support in a smaller setting (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Since 1965 CA state laws have mandated that school districts enroll 100 or more seniors for continuation high schools or programs to provide an alternative to a high school diploma (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

Continuation high schools are one of the most extensive student dropout programs in the state of CA (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). There are approximately 500 continuation high schools in the state of CA, with around 116,000 students annually attending (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013).

This has been the highest of alternative programs answering the one of the most successful efforts as it relates to reducing the dropout rates in the state of CA (Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013). Students who attend are 16 to 18 years of age, and usually identified as “at-risk” and credit deficient (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Pickett,
2007). They are also placed into these programs due to issues such as; poor grades, family dysfunction, drug abuse, mental disorders, or teenage pregnancy (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Pickett, 2007). These high schools have served students by providing a more flexible curriculum and time period to address the individual need of an at-risk student population (J. R. de Velasco et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2012; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Students have to spend a minimum of 180 instructional minutes a day for apportionment purposes, and usually 15 hours a week of instruction (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Credits offered by the continuation high schools are accelerated which allows for them to be earned faster than their comprehensive counterparts for lesser time. One would argue that the academic focus of continuation high schools is usually “transitional” meaning preparing students for occupations or post-secondary lifestyles. However programs vary due to lack of support. Additionally, most students attending are juniors or seniors making their time to adequately prepare for post-graduation opportunities limited (McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). The question is, “Does this flexibility compromise the integrity of instruction?” If so, what measure of assessment and accountability has been employed to answer this question?

Throughout the history of continuation education, there has been no study to effectively answer this question (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). The academic structure of CA continuation high schools question adequate measure of mastery of standards for academic success (CDE, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j). This strengthens the need
for an effective assessment method to determine CA continuation high school’s ability to prepare students for a productive future.

**California State Summative Assessments and Accountability**

Standardized testing has been in existence since 1967 in the state of CA, assessing students to establish standards and reporting through an established accountability structure (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; CDE, 2015d; California Legislative Information, 2015a). There is very little evidence of effective evaluation and accountability in CA continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). This makes it difficult to determine how successful continuation high schools are in supporting students longitudinally (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Most research on continuation high schools has been on the students and programs, but there is very little on evaluation and academic accountability (CDE, 2015h; Denham, 1996; Pickett, 2007).

However, students are still held to the same state assessment structures as the neighboring comprehensive high schools (CDE, 2015m). Currently the accountability structure is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), however previously CA state testing was based on standards established by the CDE and California legislation (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; CDE, 2015d, 2015e; California Legislative Information, 2015a).

**California State Achievement Test and Accountability**

As a result of the California of 1999 (PSAA), legislation was passed authorizing the Standardized Test and Reporting (STAR) program (Andreyko, 2010; CDE, 2015m;
California Legislative Information, 2015a; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). The objective was to improve the student achievement for all students through assessments and accountability reporting (Andreyko, 2010; CDE, 2015c, 2015m). All students were assessed by California Standard Test (CST), which assessed student academic performance in certain content standards in all core subject areas (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015). Each spring, CA public school students in grades two through eleven took a STAR test developed by grade and subject, unless a parent or guardian submits a written request exempting them (Star Sample Questions, 2015). Student scores were released in mid-August and reported by the school to parents and all involved (CDE, 2015a). This accountability was measured annually through the Academic Performance Index (API) report (CDE, 2015a).

The STAR program was suspended in 2013 by Assembly Bill 484 and a new program called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP) was established (CDE, 2015d; California Legislative Information, 2015a). This program addresses the CCSS through an assessment structure replacing the CST called Smarter Balanced Testing. This assessment structure is mostly computer based requiring students to take the test online (CDE, 2015e). It is also self-paced and individualized to the student taking the test (CDE, 2015l; Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium [SBAC], 2015). CA students third through eighth and 11th grade are expected to participate in the test in 2015 (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; CDE, 2015e, 2015l). Other assessments were designed based on students with cognitive disabilities, and certain language barriers (CDE, 2015f, 2015m).
The CAHSEE is a competency exam that must be taken and passed by CA high school students in order to receive a high school diploma (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012). Students must either pass the examination, or meet exemption requirements for eligible students with disabilities under the California High School Exit Exam (1990) EC, or obtain a local waiver (California High School Exit Exam, 1990).

The purpose of the CAHSEE is to improve student achievement in public high schools and ensure that high school students demonstrate grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012). This test was developed in 1999 by the California Department of Education (CDE) with the objective to enhance performance of students in the state of CA (CDE, 2015g). It was administered effectively in 2006 to the first student group in CA (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012).

With the introduction of Common Core, and Assembly Bill 484, the future of the CAHSEE is uncertain (Baron, 2013; Nichols, 2010).

In July 2015 Senator Carol Liu authored a Senate Bill 172 which would suspend the CAHSEE for three years beginning with the year 2016 (California Legislative Information, 2015b; CDE, 2015a). In August 2015 the California Senate authored another bill (Senate Bill 725) discontinuing the CAHSEE providing that the test not be required for a high school diploma (California Legislative Information, 2015c; CDE, 2015a).

**Alternative Schools Accountability Model**

The Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) was established from the PSAA of 1999, which required the state to develop an alternative accountability system
for schools under the jurisdiction of the county or schools serving at-risk populations (CDE, 2015c). It was developed by the CDE, in conjunction with the PSAA on alternative accountability, in response to criticism that that alternative schools were becoming dumping grounds and not effectively serving student academic needs (CDE, 2015c; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

School districts or county offices of education had to select three performance indicators from a list of 15 indicators to be approved and sent to the CDE for evaluation and reporting (CDE, 2015c; California State Department of Education [CSDE], 2001). The CDE would then collect and post the reported data supporting these indicators for the school year. Participation in this system was voluntary with approximately 1,000 schools participating (CDE, 2015c). Annual reports were recorded on the CDE website outlining a detailed summary based on the indicators reported by the district (CDE, 2015c).

The ASAM assessed the schools with fewer than 100 students, working with schools under the jurisdiction of the county, community day schools, and continuation schools (Alameda County of Education, 2015; Education Seattle PI, 2015). This addressed the gap in standardized tests, which could not measure small populations (CDE, 2015a; CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015). The ASAM requires schools to show improvement in three of the 15 indicators (CDE, 2008; CSDE, 2001). It particularly provided assessment data in indicators such as: (a) reading, (b) writing, (c) math readiness, and (d) credit completion (CDE, 2008; CSDE, 2001).

Inconsistent school reporting made it very difficult for appropriate posting by the state (CDE, 2015c). With the STAR Assessments, all public and charter schools were
required to assess and report, whereas the ASAM requirements were not mandatory (CDE, 2015m). Because this system was voluntary, not every school participated and therefore, the state reports were considered invalid (CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

The ASAM was discontinued in the 2009-2010 school year due to budget constraints, which required continuation high schools to report under the API accountability model (CDE, 2015c; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

Transiency. Most students attending continuation high schools are transitory and usually in attendance no more than a year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Transiency refers to the adjusted number of students entering and leaving school during the school year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Probst & Los Angeles Unified School District, 1998). This makes it difficult to effectively evaluate the student, or produce proper measurement of student performance (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Some students are transferring back to comprehensive schools, while new students transfer in throughout the year, which leads to enhance instability in the student population (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Probst, 1998). Most students are juniors and or seniors who only have a year at the most before graduating, matriculating to adult school programs, or dropping out altogether. Due to this transiency, the outcome of test results will not show a true reflection of student academic performance (Denham, 1996; Sanderson, 2004).

Discrepancies in Assessments

Currently, there are no state assessments or accountability systems that effectively measure student achievement for students who attend continuation high schools (J. R. de
Velasco, McLaughlin, & University of California, 2012). Most students who attend these schools are transient making it difficult to effectively evaluate, with so few students tested on continuation high school campuses that the API and other state reports give invalid reports (CDE, 2015a, 2015m; Denham, 1996).

Students who attend these schools are usually juniors or seniors between the ages of 16 to 18 years who do not attend longer than a year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Putney, 2010). This makes it difficult to effectively assess the student population, particularly the seniors, who usually make up a major part of the school population (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). In addition, class changes are more frequent than comprehensive high schools not allowing time for appropriate formative assessments that are usually aligned to the key standards tested in state standardized assessments (Coffey, 2015). These formative assessments and reporting structures were designed to address a student’s abilities to master certain key standards established by the state, however this may not be an appropriate mode of measurement for students attending continuation high schools (CDE, 2015a; CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

**Statement of the Research Problem**

The objective of the CA PSAA of 1999, was to improve the student achievement for all students through assessments and accountability reporting (California Public Schools Accountability Act, 1999; CDE, 2015a, 2015k; California Education Code [CA EC], 2015a, 2015b). The same year the CDE developed the CAHSEE with the objective of enhancing performance of students in the state of CA (CDE, 2015g).
Legislators attempted to establish an expected efficacy in the academic abilities of all students, which would be reflected in their performance in instructional rigor and mastery of state established standards (CDE, 2013, 2015k). Since then, the state has instituted different assessments for school and student accountability (CDE, 2015a, 2015b, 2015e, 2015m).

The states adoption of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is currently in place to measure student’s mastery of CCSS (CDE, 2015e, 2015l). This would not include the mostly senior populations who attend continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). However, all high school students are to master these standards to pass courses needed to earn credits towards a diploma (CDE, 2015d, 2015e, 2015l, 2015m).

Continuation high schools are considered a better option for serving the needs of at-risk students who are unable to be successful in traditional high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Farris, 2014; Vargas, 2013). Students who attend continuation high schools are 16 to 18 years of age and usually “at-risk” and underperforming (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). These schools offer attributes of: (a) flexible schedule, (b) self-paced accelerated-credit programs, and (c) remediation opportunities that are not offered in traditional high schools (Loomis, 2011; McCaffrey, 2011). For apportionment purposes, continuation high schools are to maintain a minimum of 180 minutes of daily attendance, with certain flexibility in instruction to meet the needs of the student (Bush, 2012; CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012).
Current state assessments have proven unsuccessful in determining appropriate measurement of student achievement in continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). Students are usually transient making it difficult to establish accurate trend data that could give appropriate measurement (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996), and due to the at-risk nature of the student population, testing is usually difficult to manage (Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011). The ASAM was the only measurement reporting system specifically for continuation high schools, which was voluntary and eventually discontinued (CDE, 2015c).

The question still remains: How could a student who is unsuccessful in a comprehensive high school, go to another school and earn more credits, and at a faster pace, as a student attending a comprehensive high school? What state accountability measures are in place to ensure that these same students are mastering the expected state standards worthy of a high school diploma?

To date there is very little research on effective assessments in continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Oesterreich, 2003; Vargas, 2013). Throughout the history of continuation schools, state assessments have never been formalized to effectively address accurate measurement of student achievement in these settings (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Most students are not enrolled long enough to even test, and due to the low numbers, the reporting is usually invalid (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). The implementation of existing assessment methods for continuation education is not mandatory so continuation students are often not accurately assessed (CDE, 2015c).
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for CA continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method.

Research Questions

Round 1

1. What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in CA continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success according to experts in CA continuation education?

Round 2

2. How do experts in CA continuation education rate the assessment methods identified in Research Question 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success?

Round 3

3. What assessment tools do experts in CA continuation education identify as most effective for each of the five most effective methods identified in Research Question 2 to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it identifies accurate methods and tools for assessment and accountability to accurately monitor student achievement in CA.
continuation high schools. At present there is no research based, mandated assessment methods to measure academic achievement in CA continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Oesterreich, 2003; Vargas, 2013). Methods presently include voluntary assessment methods that are selected from a menu of assessment options in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model. However, continuation and alternative schools can opt not to use academic achievement as a measure of success (CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

The result is that there is inconsistent and inaccurate data available regarding the academic achievement of CA continuation high school students (CDE, 2015a; CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

To date there has been limited research on the issue of assessing academic achievement in continuation schools (Denham, 1996). The results of this study will fill a gap in the existing body of knowledge of CA accountability structures and measurements for the academic achievement of students attending continuation high schools. Continuation students are not consistently assessed with respect to their academic progress. These students deserve to be accurately assessed so that they have the opportunity to be more appropriately placed and scheduled in their academic career. Continuation schools need to have methods of assessment and tools to implement the assessment methods identified so that an accurate measurement of each student’s progress can be maintained. This study is significant in that it clearly identifies both the assessment methods and the tools for assessment that will allow appropriate academic assessment of CA continuation students to be implemented.
Definitions

*Academic Performance Index (API).* The API is a measurement of academic performance and progress of individual schools and districts in the State of CA (CDE, 2015a; Ed-Data, 2015).

*Alternative Education.* Alternative Education includes different methods to instruction and learning distinct from comprehensive schools, with alternatives embedded in a number of philosophies differing from those of traditional education (Butts, 2003; Donlon, 2008). These schools are alternatives to comprehensive schools, dealing primarily with students who are considered at-risk of graduating from school (Loomis, 2011). They include: (a) school with-in schools, (b) independent studies programs, (c) county and community day programs, and (d) continuation schools (McCaffrey, 2011). Most students who attend are credit deficient and unsuccessful in comprehensive education (Loomis, 2011; McCaffrey, 2011).

*Alternative Schools and Accountability Model (ASAM).* The ASAM was established in 1999 by the PSAA of 1999 to provide accountability for alternative schools supporting at-risk student populations (Alameda County of Education, 2015; CDE, 2015; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

*Assembly Bill 484.* A Bill approved and filed on October 2, 2013 suspending most Standardized Testing and Reporting (CDE, 2013, 2015c; California Legislative Information, 2015a). This Bill was authored by Assembly Member Susan Bonilla and Senate President pro Tem.
Assessment Method. For the purposes of this study, an assessment method is defined as a general method of reviewing or analyzing the academic work of students. For example, written work, standardized tests, verbal presentations, etc. are examples of assessment methods.

Assessment Tool. For the purposes of this study, assessment tools are defined as specific tools used to implement an assessment method. For example, as assessment tool for writing might be Turnitin, an assessment tool for standardized tests might be a specific commercial test, and an assessment tool for presentations might be a teacher developed rubric.

California Department of Education. The CDE is an agency that oversees public education in the state of CA (CDE, 2015f). Its headquarters are located in Sacramento and operates within the government of CA (CDE, 2015f). It oversees funding, testing, and student achievement (CDE, 2015f).

California High School Exit Exam. The CAHSEE is a required assessment to be taken for a high school diploma in CA and measures academic performance in the areas of reading writing, and mathematics (Baron, 2013; CDE, 2015g; Nichols, 2010).

California Public Schools Act (PSSA). The Public Schools Accountability Act was passed in 1999 with the purpose of developing a system of accountability in student performance of schools and districts in CA (CDE, 2015k; Ishimaru, 2013). Its goal is for schools and districts to improve and measure student performance in academic achievement (CDE, 2015k).
California State Testing. The California Standardized Test was developed to assess student’s ability to demonstrate mastery of state content standards (Star Sample Questions, 2015).

Common Core State Standards. CCSS are instructional standards in English and math adopted by a number of states across this nation. It is an educational initiative in the United States that specifies learning expectations for K-12 students (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2012; CDE, 2015n). These standards were adopted by teachers, parents, and education experts with the goal of a national quality education aiding students who move to different states (CDE, 2015n).

Continuation High Schools. A program, or school, that is an alternative to a comprehensive high school for students who are at-risk of graduating or deficient in credits (Loomis, 2011). These schools serve students usually junior or senior, from ages 16 to 18 (Loomis, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress (MAPP). The Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress (MAPP) test are test aligned to the National Governors Association and College Board’s Common Core Initiative (California Legislative Information, 2015a).

Smarter Balance Assessments (SBAC). Smarter Balance Assessments are adaptive online exams aligned to the CCSS in English language arts and literacy, and mathematics (CDE, 2015l). These exams are taken by students in grades three, eight, and eleven, including summative and interim assessments for accountability and instructional purposes (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015).
Standardized Test and Reporting (STAR). The Standardized Testing and Reporting program measures performance of students in grades two through eleven in California. Students take a test in math, reading, writing, science, and history with an accountability reporting system providing results of measurement and improvement trends (CDE, 2015m; Ed-Data, 2015).

Student Transiency. Transiency refers to the adjusted number of students entering and leaving school during the school year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Probst, 1998).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to experts in CA continuation school student assessment in the State of CA.

Organization of the Study

The study will encompass five chapters which will be: Chapter I, the Introduction; Chapter II, the Literature Review; Chapter III a Methodology; Chapter IV, Report of the Findings; and Chapter V, Recommendations and Findings.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature related to effective state assessment methods for continuation high schools began with an historical overview of education in the United States of America. Following the broad overview, is an exploration of CA continuation high schools dating back to the early 1900s during the post consolidation movement, followed by a review of research on the development of state assessments in CA. A thorough search was conducted to identify current studies that would add to the understanding of this topic and can be viewed in Appendix A. The literature reveals the role of continuation high schools in the state’s efforts toward improved graduation rates as well as their work to educate students labeled at-risk (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Vargas, 2013). Continuation high schools hold a unique position in public secondary education, serving as either the last chance for successful dropout prevention, or as an opportunity to recover credit (Vargas, 2013).

The Delphi research describes different types of federal and state standardized assessments, and questions their effectiveness in the true measure of academic performance of students who attend continuation high schools. Clearly, to date, there is a lack of an effective state assessment method in CA as well as the paucity in research in this area (J. R. de Velasco et al., 2008). It also became apparent that there are discrepancies in the mentioned assessments and that they are, therefore ineffective in measuring a student’s mastery of state standards.

This Delphi quality research also challenged the reader, and future researchers, to question how a student who is unsuccessful in a comprehensive high school can go to another school and earn more credits than a student at the comprehensive high school,
and at a faster pace? The question remains, what accountability measures are in place to ensure that the continuation high school student is mastering the expected standards, which justifies the granting of credits and eventual graduation?

Legislation has not addressed accountability measures for continuation high schools, and current CA assessment structures are ineffective to report proper measurement of student achievement in these schools (CDE, 2015a, 2015e; Denham, 1996). This study will discuss the history of legislation and how it relates to continuation high schools, and the accountability and assessments structures.

This Policy Delphi research will also describe the impact transiency plays on the assessment of continuation high school student progress. The last theme in the research is around the need for an effective state assessment method for continuation high schools in CA.

**Historical Perspective of Continuation Schools and Education**

The first known continuation high school, Racine Continuation High School, was established November 3, 1911 in Racine, Wisconsin (Luttrell, 2012; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1919). Prior to the development of this school, there were no other provisions for the 300,000 students between the ages of 14 to 20 at that time (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1919). During this time period, a variety of groups and unions began to advocate for the creation of vocational educational programs in schools to support the labor shortages and unemployment from the rapid growth in industry (Luttrell, 2012; Steffes, 2015). Previous to this philosophy was that education supported the notion of morality, duty to country, and responsible leadership (Loomis, 2011). This school provided a day long instruction, with compulsory
attendance related to vocational training with four hours on the employer’s time (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1919). This was the catalyst that started the establishment of continuation high schools in the United States (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1919).

The Beginning of California Continuation High Schools

In 1917 the first continuation schools were developed in the state of CA as part time school for young workers (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011). By 1921 there were 33 schools with approximately 6,965 students, which continued to rise until the 1930s (Denham, 1996; Farris, 2014). With the social, political, and economic developments during the Great Depression, the overall purpose of continuation high schools shifted mainly due to the lack of availability for work. (Farris, 2014; Schiber, 2006). The focus of continuation schools moved from vocational education to vocational guidance (Kelly, 1993; McCaffrey, 2011). However, the number of schools dropped in CA significantly to almost nonexistent (Denham, 1996; Farris, 2014).

The direction changed in continuation high schools in the 1940s from vocational support to educational adjustment supporting the core academic subjects (Farris, 2014; McCaffrey, 2011). In addition to the academic changes, the 1960s role of continuation schools changed to support students with behavioral problems (Farris, 2014). The term was maladjusted youth which eventually changed in the 1980s to at-risk youth (Farris, 2014; Pickett, 2007; Rumberger, 2011).
Laws and Legislation

In the 1960s CA legislation mandated that school districts must have continuation schools to address the growing number of suspensions, expulsions and student dropout (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). This mandate stated that school districts enroll 100 seniors for continuation high schools or programs to provide an alternative to a high school diploma (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin et al., 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). With the enactment of the 1976 Compulsory Continuation Education, Continuation Classes CA EC, legislation declared its intent that continuation education schools and classes should be established and maintained to meet the special needs of students and to provide:

1. An opportunity for pupils to complete the required academic courses of instruction to graduate from high school.
2. A program of instruction which emphasizes occupational orientation or a work-study schedule and offers intensive guidance services to meet the special needs of pupils.
3. A program designed to meet the educational needs of each pupil, including, but not limited to, independent study, regional occupation programs, work study, career counseling, and job placement services, as a supplement to classroom instruction.

The CA Compulsory Continuation Education, Continuation Classes (1976) EC structured the current continuation high schools that are in existence today (CDE, 2015h).
These laws set in place the structure, policies, operations, and procedures that are currently in practice (CDE, 2015h)

In 1987, the CDE revised goals for continuation school education. According to these goals, students should:

- Acquire a high school diploma or California High School Proficiency Certificate;
- Become productive persons as they learn the importance of vocational preparation and get assistance in acquiring entry-level job skills;
- Develop a feeling of self-worth, self-confidence, and personal satisfaction
- Develop a sense of responsibility;
- Develop a tolerance and understanding of a variety of viewpoints;
- Engage in meaningful recreational and leisure-time activities;
- Understand and obey laws and participate in constructive civic activities; and
- Understand and practice sound money management and become intelligent consumers. (CDE, 2015h)

The numbers of Continuation High Schools in CA have risen to this day to approximately 500 schools and 116,000 students (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013).

**Current Continuation High Schools**

Continuation education over the past century has evolved considerably since its conception (Burger, 2006; Luttrell, 2012). Continuation high schools began as a way for students needing to work to have time to earn a high school diploma (Burger, 2006; Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011). It was not until 1965, that these schools
started to become a major part of the educational system in CA (The Public School Accountability Program, 2009; Luttrell, 2012).

**Provisions**

Continuation high schools offer flexibility designed to address students between the ages 16 to 18 providing academic support in a smaller setting (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). These high schools have served students by providing a supplemental curriculum and time period to address the individual need of the student (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

Students are required to spend a minimum of 180 minutes a day for apportionment purposes, and usually 15 hours a week (CDE, 2015h; Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). The ability the attend school for a minimum of 15 hours a week gives assured advantages such as: opportunities to pursue work experience, or deal with some of the at-risk causing issues at home (Loomis, 2011).

Credits offered by the continuation high schools are accelerated, earning students credits faster than their comprehensive counterparts for lesser time (Loomis, 2011). Many continuation schools have an enrollment of 200 students with an average class size of 20 (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Loomis, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). This smaller size allows staff to work closely with the student population establishing productive relationships (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008).
Unlike comprehensive schools, continuation schools have more flexibility to modify instructional practices and programs within the school (Loomis, 2011; Vargas, 2013). Continuation high schools in general are characterized as having small enrollment allowing that one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, providing a supportive environment (Schiber, 2006). Teachers usually have the autonomy to develop and structure curriculum relevant to the student’s interest or need (Loomis, 2011; Schiber, 2006).

Having a smaller student-to-teacher relationship ratio allows teachers to know their students better and students to know their teachers better (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Hill, 2007). In a smaller setting, students may feel more comfortable asking questions and requesting help from their teachers (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011). Through this system, students may become more interested in school, realizing they can be successful in the school setting, and begin working towards a high school diploma (Atkins, 2003; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Powell & Marshall, 2011).

**Academic Quality**

Students who attend continuation high schools are usually juniors or seniors between the ages of 16 to 18 years not attending longer than a year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Putney, 2010). A student attending continuation high school will earn accelerated credits with less required time (CDE, 2015i; Schiber, 2006). Most students transfer to continuation high schools to address credit deficiencies, due to labeled “at-risk” behaviors (suspensions, truancies, low skills),
and usually transfer too far deficient in credits to even graduate from the school (Denham, 1996; Ramstetter, 2013).

Students enrolled in continuation education programs often are behind in high school credits CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). These schools offer a flexible credit accrual program allowing the student to earn the credits with minimum hours of instruction (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2012). This flexibility is autonomous from school to school allowing each district to design its own policies related to credit accrual per student (CDEh, 2015; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2012). This ambiguous process is not closely monitored by the state potentially questioning the credibility of high school completion statewide of students attending (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco et al., 2012)

This would bring questions such as: How can a student who is unsuccessful in a comprehensive high school go to another school and earn more credits than a student at the comprehensive high school, and at a faster pace? What accountability measures are in place to assure that the student is mastering the expected standards in the school?

Recently, there have been reports funded through the California Alternative Education Research Project and conducted jointly by the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University, the National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University, and WestEd. A summary of these reports was published by WestEd, entitled, Alternative Education Options: A Descriptive Study of California Continuation High Schools, authored by J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008).

The California Alternative Education Research Project conducted jointly by the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University, the National Center for Urban School
Transformation at San Diego State University, and WestEd was a yearlong descriptive study of continuation high schools in CA (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Perez & Johnson, 2008). This study drew on technical reports from field research in nine southern, central, and northern CA counties, 26 school districts and 37 continuation schools (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

In a summary brief regarding effective academic regulation, J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) state the following:

In California – as in other states – there is no single point of authority for articulating state policy on youth education and development. Consequently, alternative education programs operate at the intersection of multiple professional and regulatory frameworks. Students typically are involved in other state systems of regulation and oversight - probation, child protective services, and homeless services, to name a few. Successful student experiences in alternative education programs depend not only on effective opportunities for academic engagement but also on critical support services often accessible only from out-of-school agencies. Yet, at both county and district levels, we found that the various youth-serving institutions which touch alternative education students generally operate in isolation from one another, or worse, at cross purposes. (p. 8)

The current statewide approach which mandates all students to the same standards, assumes that continuation programs accomplish the same state-mandated benchmarks as comprehensive schools with less time (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Curriculum usually, in most cases, are left to the teacher’s own autonomy to figure out how to align
the state standards with the support needed to educate an at-risk student population (Bush 2012; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008).

In most cases curriculum delivered is state standard core content (English, math, science, and social science), specifically for high school graduation (Bush, 2012; J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Perez & Johnson, 2008). In addition, other courses were tailored for the specific needs of the student such as CAHSEE preparation, online learning, or life skill courses (Bush, 2012; Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). These courses are usually offered as electives, but are limited in most schools based on limited faculty and resources, or make up courses needed for credit recovery (Bush, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

According to the research from The California Alternative Education Research Project, a variation of instructional practices from the schools were some form of an independent studies program, small group, project based, or whole group (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). These practices are usually unique to the particular needs of the students of the school or district (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

The types of programs offered in continuation schools are; academic remediation, social guidance, life skills, and career preparation (Burger, 2006; Bush, 2012; Vargas, 2013). They are mostly considered the last chance school for students to earn a high school diploma or attend some type of higher education (Burger, 2006; Bush, 2012; Vargas, 2013).

All schools had some form of independent studies with students moving through curriculum by following specific task such as; contracts, packets, or bookwork, with one-
on-one support from a classroom teacher (Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). This method of study allows the student to work and learn at a comfortable pace while building relationships with the teacher (Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). However this approach is sometimes criticized as a lack in rigor or appropriate content for proper standard mastery (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

**Challenges for Continuation Education**

In this same study principals and teachers reported that they are expected to do more with less time leaving the students academically ill-equipped (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008). Teachers are charged with building the lack of academic skills, while maintaining the rigor necessary for the student mastery of state standards (Burger, 2006; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013).

Credit recovery practices are inconsistent across schools and within districts with very creative and lenient ways of earning them (Perez & Johnson, 2008). Some strategies would include acquiring few credits for graduation to volunteering after school (Perez & Johnson, 2008). This is usually done in a more flexible and creative style of pedagogy with very little professional training (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; Perez & Johnson, 2008). The question is, “Does this flexibility compromise the integrity of instruction?” If so, what measure of assessment and accountability has been employed to answer this question?

J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) report that students lose the most when continuation schools do not function as they were envisioned and do not offer a true alternative education (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). Many elements go into
developing and sustaining any successful high school program, and this is just as true for continuation schools (Burger, 2006; McCaffrey, 2011).

Continuation schools face a unique set of challenges in their districts to provide alternative education for their at-risk students (Bush, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011). Primary among these challenges is making sure the programs across the state are consistent with one another (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011).

All students in CA are required to demonstrate subject mastery as measured by CA standards tests in order to earn a diploma and each school district is responsible for determining their own local standards in qualifying for a diploma and in some instances students attending comprehensive high schools may have higher standards (i.e. more units to graduate, four years of English), while maintaining lower credit requirements for students in continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012).

Another issue is the student “push out” problem which is defined as using transfers to alternative schools to avoid responsibility for low-performing and behaviorally challenging students (McCaffrey, 2011; Hill, 2007).

**Continuation High School Student Population**

Every year a significant numbers of CAs public school students, disproportionately low-income and minority students, leave the comprehensive high schools to CA continuation high schools (Burger, 2006; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Rumberger, 2011). It is estimated that 10% of the state’s student population attend alternative educational schools in the state of CA with approximately 50% graduating (Denham, 1996; Loomis, 2011). Today there are approximately 500 continuation high schools in the state of CA, with around 116, 000 students annually.

The term at-risk had not been used to describe students who struggled with the established educational structure; however legislators were concerned with the numbers of these students and their influence to the economy and culture of the country (Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012). Continuation high schools became an educational environment for at-risk students, 16 to 18 years of age, who are unsuccessful in a traditional education structure (Burger, 2006; Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Many students who were behind in credits, had issues with attendance, or had behavioral challenges, have found a sanctuary in a CA continuation high school setting (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Luttrell, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

Many students who transfer from continuation high schools are usually credit deficient, socially failing due to behavioral issues, or endanger of dropping out of school all together (Loomis, 2011). Continuation high schools provide a second chance opportunity for students who are otherwise, on a path toward dropping out. Most reasons for continuation high school referrals vary; need to work, teen motherhood, truancy, credit deficiency, and behavior issues (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Farris, 2014; Luttrell, 2012).

Students transition to continuation high schools through school referral, self-referral and involuntary transfer, usually through a counselor or school administrator (Luttrell, 2012). Most students have discipline or attendance issues at their comprehensive schools, which usually affects their academic performance (Luttrell, 2012). Sometimes students or parents refer themselves perceiving an environment that
has less pressure and the ability to recover credits (Luttrell, 2012). Along with the referral process students can be involuntarily transferred (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2008; Luttrell, 2012).

Continuation high schools focus on school-to-career education, individualized strategies, intensive guidance and counseling, and flexible school schedules to meet student needs (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2008; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). These schools are a major safeguard in warranting a diploma and opportunity of postsecondary transition to at-risk students (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013).

**At-Risk Youth**

Students who are identified as at risk are often those who do not fit the mainstream mold; their cultural and life experiences, learning styles, learning disabilities, or behavior are considered unacceptable in traditional comprehensive high schools (Kerka, 2003; Loomis, 2011). This term has also been used in education to describe students who are in jeopardy of dropping out of school due to certain disengagement with the learning process (Pickett, 2007; Rumberger, 2011). Additionally, these students were unable to fit into the established white middle class educational systems, and were dropping out of school (Oesterreich, 2003; Rumberger, 2011).

The term at-risk came from the 1983 article “A Nation at Risk”, which was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Harris, Guthrie, & Wong, 2014; National Commission on Exellence in Education, 1983). Implications of this report indicated that the U.S. educational system failed to produce a competitive
workforce to that of other countries (Harris et al., 2014; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Even though the terminology at-risk started in 1983, this student population had been around for years prior, particularly students from families who did not fit into the white middle or upper classes (Burger, 2006; Cornbleth, 2000; Loomis, 2011; Encyclopedia.com, 2015). This population failed to respond to the Euro-centric educational systems and was dealing with issues associated to certain living conditions unrelated to education (Burger, 2006; Cornbleth, 2000; Loomis, 2011; Encyclopedia.com, 2015).

Students who are labeled at-risk usually are affected by the following factors: (a) poverty, (b) students of color, (c) academic challenges, (d) family structure, (e) substance addictions, (f) mental or physical abuse, (g) mental health issues, (h) gang activity, or (i) incarceration (Loomis, 2011; McCaffrey, 2011; Rumberger, 2011).

**Low-Income and Poverty**

Thomas (2012) discusses in his book *Ignoring Poverty in the U.S.* about the politically convenient ignorance in poverty by the elites to secure capitalism enforcing the labor and leisure classes. Thomas writes about a system that perpetuates a lack of educational access, through living conditions and gaps in privileges, for students in poverty or low-income, while the elite continues to grow academically (Thomas, 2012).

Certain at-risk behaviors can be contributed to this lack of access particularly in inner city schools (Arvin, 2009; Thomas, 2012). There are assured educational benefits that are given to those who are privileged like: (a) teaching efficacy in instruction and
expectations, (b) resources in and outside of the school, and (c) reinforcements from the home (Arvin, 2009).

There are expectations of academic success and college for students who come from an elite privileged household (Arvin, 2009; Thomas, 2012). Students who are in poverty or low-economic status are socially disengaged by the lack of efficacy from the school and in the home (Arvin, 2009; Thomas, 2012). Education is not enforced or supported from the home with a sometimes unconscious low self-esteem which promotes unsuccessful educational results (Arvin, 2009; Thomas, 2012).

Poverty and low-economic status is usually the catalyst to some of the other student at-risk factors (substance abuse, family dysfunction, mental health issues, abuse, etc.) (Carswell, Hanlon, O'Grady, Watts, & Pothong, 2009; Loomis, 2011). Students who are in poverty and low-income usually start school with a deficit in literacy and academic skills (McCaffrey, 2011).

**Ethnicity**

Many would argue that the achievement gap in education is due to the cultural distance between Caucasian, African-American and Latino students (Burger, 2006; Carswell et al., 2009; Loomis, 2011; Oesterreich, 2003). Risk factors for dropping out of school are heightened for racial and ethnic minority groups, including Latinos and African Americans, which encompass a significant socioeconomic underclass and, in CA, represent the majority of students in continuation schools (Loomis, 2011; Vargas, 2013). Traditionally, African-American and Latino students have steadily underperformed their Caucasian counterparts in the state of CA (CDE, 2015g; Loomis, 2011). Culturally, and
historically, education systems in general, have been developed to support the Caucasian middle and upper-middle classes. (Loomis, 2011; Oesterreich, 2003).

Most teachers are predominately Caucasian mostly female, making it systematically difficult for students of color to build relationships (Deruy, 2013; Rich, 2013). More than 80% of the bachelor’s degrees in education awarded during the 2009-10 and 2010-2011 school years were awarded to non-Latino Caucasian students (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2015; Deruy, 2013; Rich, 2013). Students of color struggle with adjusting their cultural norms and values with that of the developers of the educational systems and the teachers who facilitate it (Deruy, 2013; Loomis, 2011; Oesterreich, 2003). This leads to at-risk behavior which results in failing grades, discipline, and dropping out of school (McCaffrey, 2011; Oesterreich, 2003).

**Family Structure**

Family background can have a major, aggregate influence on school and the performance of the student (Pollak, 2003; Rumberger, 2011). All other major factors listed can be contributed to an unhealthy family structure, particularly families of low socioeconomic status (Rumberger, 2011). There are many factors of structure in the family that can influence student academic success results such as: (a) non-traditional structure, (b) divorce, (c) dysfunction, (d) family educational attainment, and (f) educational expectation (Pollak, 2003; The Heritage Foundation, 2015). Nontraditional family structures are family structures such as: (a) blended, (b) single parent, (c) foster care, or (d) grandparent (The Heritage Foundation, 2015).
There is a crucial distinction between children reared in traditional nuclear families and children reared in other family structures (Pollak, 2003; The Heritage Foundation, 2015). Families that are non-traditional are more than likely to be engaged in some of the other factors listed causing at-risk student behavior.

**Substance Addiction**

Some studies provide evidence that substance use precedes academic failure (CASA, 2015; DuPont, Cladeira, DuPont, Vincent, Shea, & Arria, 2013). Many studies have shown that students who engage in drug abuse have poorer educational outcomes than their non-engaging peers (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2015; DuPont et al., 2013). Academic performance is severely impaired, along with levels of responsibility such as: (a) skipping class, (b) misbehavior, or (c) failing to complete assignments (NIDA, 2015; DuPont et al., 2013).

Substance abuse is also related to high school dropout rates in the United States. A study was done by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) (2015) which found that illicit drug use among dropouts was higher than for those in school (31.4% vs. 18.2%) (CASA, 2015). The same study conducted by CASA found that dropouts were more likely to be current marijuana users than those in school (27.3% vs. 15.3%) and non-medical users of prescription drugs (9.5% vs. 5.1%). The more severe the substance use, the more likely the impact on academic performance and risk for dropout (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse [CASA], 2015; DuPont et al., 2013).
Societal Influences of At-Risk Youth

The result was, and is, a growing number of students failing to respond to the established educational systems (Pickett, 2007; Rumberger, 2011). This issue has contributed to the cycle of economic and social problems within the country such as: (a) unemployment, (b) crime, and (c) development of a globally competitive workforce (Harris et al., 2014; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

It has become a cycle of the societal issues affecting at-risk student epidemics, and the at-risk students affecting the societal issues (Arvin, 2009; Oesterreich, 2003; Thomas, 2012). This growing student population eventually is unable to function in society influencing the countries welfare, creating a need for a different educational system (Harris et al., 2014; Luttrell, 2012; Mather & Jarosz, 2014).

Assessment Methods and Accountability

The heart of effective assessment methods is the basic question “To whom and for what are students and schools to be held accountable?” (Brand, 2011, p. 22; Wiliam, 2010, p. 108). An increase public demand for accountability has become a major factor which is observed in the press, in public, and political discussions (Brand, 2011; Ydesen, 2013).

Assessments are key in education and the best way to find out whether instruction has had its intended effect (Wiliam, 2010). The quality of instruction and learning will have an influence on the value of life in society, therefore the measurement and monitoring of education is vital (Wiliam, 2010). The instruction itself does not guarantee effectiveness, so it is imperative that there are some forms of measurement and accountability in place (Brand, 2011; Wiliam, 2010).
Historical Models of Accountability

The idea of testing procedures being used to hold students and teachers accountable is not a new concept (Wiliam, 2010). Even in the early days of organized education, the accountability was of overriding significance (Brand, 2011; Maguire, 2015). The school accountability movement in the United States originated with taxpayer supported public education in the early 1800s (Brand, 2011). During this time period, there were other movements taking place overseas in other parts of the world (Maguire, 2015; Wiliam, 2010).

European Nineteenth Century

Ireland. In 1806 a commission was appointed their government to investigate the state of education in Ireland (Maguire, 2015). Between 1806 and 1812 this commission issued a body of reports which exposed a lack of effective leadership and lack of accountability within the schools (Maguire, 2015; Wiliam, 2010). In 1824 the Royal Commission on Irish education was instigated to investigate how the societies schools were administered (Maguire, 2015; Wiliam, 2010). This commission was criticized for not being forth-right with their information, and not totally affiliated with the government (Maguire, 2015).

During this time period another organization Kildare Place Society which was otherwise known as the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland, (Collins Barracks, 2012). The National School System was established in 1831 with the purpose to unite all creeds in the school system (Donnelly, 2011). Educational support and accountability was given under this organization for all students with in this society (Donnelly, 2011; Maguire, 2015). This program was responsible for supports such as: (a)
teacher training, (b) monitoring instruction and assessments, (c) text book publication, and (d) the establishments of schools well above the ordinary standards (Donnelly, 2011; Maguire, 2015).

**England.** Near the end of the 19th century public schools in England were supported by mostly religious organizations with very little accountability related to student performance (Wiliam, 2010). In 1858, a Royal Commission was set up, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, “to inquire into the state of education in England and to consider what measures were required for the allowance of adequate instruction to all classes” (Ford, 2015; Gillard, 2015; Wiliam, 2010). The inspectors supporting this commission were the ones who gave an oral examination to the student to determine if the teaching and learning was adequate for the grant funding (Wiliam, 2010). These examinations were not given for the betterment of the student, it was basically for the grant (Brand, 2011; Wiliam, 2010).

**The United States**

The notion of testing and accountability in education was not always the practice during the time before the nineteenth century (Ford, 2015; Ravitch, 2002). Since the nineteenth century holding students, teachers, schools, and all involved, accountable for instruction and learning was more of a contemporary concept (Ford, 2015; Ravitch, 2002). This has been a conflict between education and laypeople for over a century, and would explain the controversy around testing and accountability today (Ravitch, 2002).

Ravitch (2002) states:

Nineteenth-century schools tested their students to see if they had mastered what they were taught, and students who didn’t pass the tests were “left back.”
Schoolteachers in the nineteenth century were often required to pass a test of their knowledge and could be interviewed by members of the local school board (which usually included a member of the clergy) to make sure they harbored no unconventional views or unusual religious beliefs. But once they were accepted for service, teachers faced no more tests of their suitability or capacity. If students failed to learn, it was the students’ fault. (as cited in Ford, 2015, p. 12)

The school accountability movement in the United States began with taxpayer supported public education in the early 1800s, however the accountability was to the taxpayers (Brand, 2011; Cuban, 2004). America during 1900 to 1918, made a rapid shift from an agrarian to an urban society (American Experience, 2015; Loomis, 2011). Testing was primarily for tracking purposes to prepare students for the workforce (Loomis, 2011).

During the industrialization in the United States in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century test was used to measure the performance of students in an effort to sort students by abilities and intelligence at the expense of educational equity (Brand, 2011; Herman & Haertel, 2005). During this time, student achievement was not addressed, particularly not beyond secondary school years as youth who were not academically inclined would leave school to pursue work, military, or other ventures (Ford, 2015; Ravitch, 2002).

The Progressive movement, in the 1930s and 1940s, inspired the concept of standardized testing, however there was no belief within the profession that tests should be used to hold anyone accountable (Ravitch, 2002). Progressive educators embraced
efforts to make schools less academic and more responsive to children who were not interested in traditional learning (Loomis, 2011; Ravitch, 2002).

**Accountability Era**

There were many examples of the public’s dissatisfaction with the status on public schools or who is believed to control them (Brand, 2011; Smith & Fey, 2000). In an effort to compete globally in student achievement, federal legislation in the 1950s began to establish some accountability measures in student achievement (Brand, 2011). The successful launch of the Soviet satellite, Sputnik, and the threat of nuclear attack across the world, influenced the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (Brand, 2011; Peterson, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015c). The NDEA was signed into law on September 2, 1958, with the intent to increase the technological sophistication and power of the United States (Brand, 2011; Peterson, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015c).

**Civil rights movement.** Opposition to desegregation and federal control in the 1960s began an internal strife between school boards and federal government (Cuban, 2004; Brand, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Ravitch (2002) argues that accountability could be traced back to the Equality of Educational Opportunity, known as the Coleman report written in 1966 (Coleman 1966; Ravitch, 2002). Coleman (1966) exposed the disparities of educational resources and opportunities, as well as, examines the differences in achievement scores of children of different races (Coleman, 1966; Guthrie & Morrelli, 1971; Ravitch, 2002). This report was the first to question how school resources influenced achievement (Guthrie & Morrelli, 1971; Ravitch, 2002).
National assessment of educational progress (NAEP). The Coleman report, along with other movements during the late 1960s, motivated assessments to produce results verses entry exams for job positions (Ravitch, 2002). NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas (NCEC, 2015; Stancavage & Bohrnstedt, 2013).

In 1970 the establishment of the NAEP provided cumulative new data and trend lines to document the educational achievement of American students (Ravitch, 2002). Due to much examination in the early 1960s, the indication of a national assessment gained motivation in 1963 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015; Stancavage & Bohrnstedt, 2013).

NAEP planning began in 1964, with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to set up the Exploratory Committee for the Assessment of Progress in Education (ECAPE) in June (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). NAEP held their first assessments in 1969, and voluntary trial assessments for the states began in 1990 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015; Stancavage & Bohrnstedt, 2013). In 2002, selected urban districts participated in the state-level assessments on a trial basis, and continue as the Trial Urban District Assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). This act offered specific grant funding to local districts serving students from low-income families (Herman & Haertel, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b).

A nation at risk. The publication of “A Nation at Risk” shifted the modification of governance from the local boards of education to the state and federal governments (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Smith & Fey, 2000). This was also a major swing in education reform and another motivator for federal monetary
support to the local systems (Smith & Fey, 2000; United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The report itself exposed, nationally and internationally, a lack of academic achievement in areas such as:

- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
- About 13% of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40%.
- Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.
- Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school.

**Elementary and secondary education act (ESEA).** The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law in 1965 by households (Herman & Haertel, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). The ESEA grant funding covered text and library books, the creation of education centers, and scholarships for low income college bound students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). This initiative was a challenge to educators and districts on increasing the accountability of achievement (Brand, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b).

**Improving America’s schools act (IASA).** The Improving America’s Schools Act, reauthorized by the ESEA, and was the first federal mandate to all the states to implement a set of learning standards and assessments aligned to the standards (Brand, 2011; U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994). This act was signed by President Clinton
in 1994 with intentions to provide additional support and rebuild additional pathways to enable all children to meet challenging state standards (Brand, 2011; U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

**No child left behind.** The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 2001 as a reauthorization of the ESEA signed in 1965 (Ford, 2015; Hamilton, 2007). Hamilton (2007) in her book, *Reauthorizing No Child Left Behind: Facts and Recommendations*, wrote; “When Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), it established an ambitious goal for the nation’s states, districts, and schools: All children will be proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013–2014 school year” (p. 1).

Stecher, Vernez, and Steinberg (2010), argued that “The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is arguably the primary policy initiative affecting schools and districts in the United States today, and its standards-based accountability (SBA) provisions are perhaps its most potent component” (p. 1). The mandates of this initiative has required the states in this country to adopt content and achievement standards, develop a measurement system of student progress towards those standards, and implement strategies and interventions in schools and districts to support students who fail to meet the targets (Brand, 2011; Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010).

The NCLB builds on the heritage of the accountability of student performance under the 1994 to 1998 reauthorization of the ESEA by increasing its parameters in different ways (Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010). Hamilton (2007) writes that the states are mandated to complete the following requirements:

- Set academic standards for reading, mathematics, and science;
- Develop and implement an elaborate accountability system to measure performance against these standards;
- Test all student performance from grade 3 and up in reading, mathematics, and, beginning in the 2007–2008 school year, science;
- Set “highly qualified” teacher requirements for both elementary and secondary teachers;
- Provide detailed school and district performance reports to parents and the public, including the separate reporting of student. (p. 1)

Increased accountability that is required of schools and teachers is one of the strongest points by supporters of this initiative (Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010). Schools must pass a yearly test living up to required standards, which determined future additional funding (Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010). The NCLB became the platform for what is now known to be standard-based accountability (Hamilton, 2007).

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

AYP is a measurement established by the U.S. federal NCLB Act that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine the academic performance of schools and school districts in the country according to results on standardized tests (CDE, 2015b; U.S. Department of Education, 2015a).

**CCSS**

The CCSS was launched in 2009 by the National Governors Association Center (NGA), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (Bamberger et al., 2012; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015). State legislators in the country, 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia, realized the value of consistent, real-
world learning goals and launched this effort to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduated high school prepared for college, career, and life (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015).

By this time period, every state had developed their own learning standards, and had established a definition of sufficient student proficiency towards graduation or higher education (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015). The legislators desired to institute common standards across the country, which would not define the student by their state (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015; Stancavage & Bohrnstedt, 2013). This process solicited the support from best state standards already in existence, experienced teachers, content experts, states, leading thinkers, and the public (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2015).

**California State Assessments and Accountability**

Standardized testing has been in existence since the 1960s in the state of CA, assessing students to establish standards and reporting through an established accountability structure (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; California Legislative Information, 2015a; CDE, 2015d). After the NCLB act, CA, like the other states, had the same federal mandates of academic accountability (CDE, 2015m). In 1999 State legislators passed the PSAA, which was the first step in developing an accountability system for districts, schools, and students (CDE, 2015k, 2015m).

Statewide tests used in CA before 1990 were designed primarily for providing only sample scores for a school, with very little accountability for district, school, or child’s performance (CDE, 2015m; Hamilton, 2007). Eventually CA Legislators and the
CDE developed programs and systems to address the mandates of the NCLB requirements. A summary of the available information representing the timeline of state accountability assessments is found in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of the History of California State Assessments and Accountability Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Legislation established first statewide testing program in reading, writing and math at grades 5, 8 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>California Assessment Program (CAP) created to test students in reading in grades 2 and 3 and reading, writing and math in grades 6 and 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) established to test grades 4, 5, 8 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>State law creates Pupil Testing Incentive Program (PTIP) to test reading, writing and math in grades 2-10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State law calls for content and performance standards and authorized Assessment of Applied Academic Skills in reading, writing, mathematics, history and science at grades 4, 5, 8 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>SAT-9 given as part of STAR program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English and math and a test in Spanish for students with limited English proficiency added to STAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School Exit Exam authorized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 establishes Academic Performance Index (API) with growth targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$227 million in Governor's Performance Awards given for API growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>CSTs in history and science for grades 9-11 and writing tests for grades 4 and 7 added to STAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit Exam given to volunteer ninth-graders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California English Language Development Test first given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Exit Exam given to 10th-graders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAR program reauthorized to 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Grade 9 history CST moves to grade 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAT/6 replaces SAT-9 for STAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) added to STAR for students with significant cognitive disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit Exam given to 10th- and 11th- graders who hadn’t passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit Exam graduation requirement postponed to 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Grade 5 science CST added to STAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Board authorizes development of science tests in grades 8 and 10 for No Child Left Behind requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redesigned, shortened Exit Exam first given to Class of 2006. Statewide, 75 percent passed English, 74 percent passed math.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
California Public Schools Act (PSSA)

The PSAA was passed in 1999 with the purpose of developing a system of accountability in student performance of schools and districts in California (CDE, 2015k; Ishimaru, 2013). Its goal is schools and districts to improve and measure student performance in academic achievement (CDE, 2015k).

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)

In 1999 state legislators passed the PSAA, which included the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) system (Andreyko, 2010; California Legislative Information, 2015a; CDE, 2015m; Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). The objective was to improve the student achievement for all students through assessments and accountability reporting (Andreyko, 2010; CDE, 2015b, 2015m).

The CDE, under the STAR program, selected assessments which included the CST, California Achievement Test (CAP), and the CAHSEE (CDE, 2015g, 2015k, 2015m).

California Standardized Test (CST)

All students were assessed by CST, which assessed student academic performance in certain content standards in all core subject areas, (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015). Each spring, CA school students in grades two through eleven took a STAR test developed by grade and subject, unless a parent or guardian submits a written request exempting those (Star Sample Questions, 2015). Student scores were released in mid-August and reported by the school to parents and all involved (CDE, 2015a).
This accountability was measured annually through the API report (CDE, 2015a). The CDE used the API as a measurement system student achievement measured by state, district, school, and student (CDE, 2015a).

**CSHSEE**

The CAHSEE is a competency exam that must be taken and passed by CA high school students in order to receive a high school diploma (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012). Students must either pass the examination, or meet exemption requirements for eligible students with disabilities under the CAHSEE EC (1990), or obtain a local waiver also protected under the CAHSEE EC.

The purpose is to improve student achievement in public high schools and ensure grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012). This test was developed in 1999 by the CDE with the objective to extend performance of students in the state of CA (CDE, 2015g). It was administered effectively in 2006 to the first student group in CA (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012).

With the introduction of Common Core, and Assembly Bill 484, the future of the CAHSEE is uncertain (Baron, 2013; Nichols, 2010). However, the test is still currently in administration (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012).

In July 2015 Senator Carol Liu authored a Senate Bill 172 which would suspend the CAHSEE for three years beginning with year 2016 (California Legislative Information, 2015b; CDE, 2015). In August 2015 the CA Senate authored another bill (Senate Bill 725) discontinuing the CAHSEE providing that the test not be required for a high school diploma (California Legislative Information, 2015c; CDE, 2015)
**Academic Performance Index (API)**

The API is a measurement of academic performance and progress of individual schools and districts in CA (Exemption for Eligible Students With Disabilities, 2009; Ed-Data, 2015b) and the results are calculated and posted on the CDE website (CDE, 2015a; Ed-Data, 1996, 2015b).

API is one of the main components of the PSAA passed by CA legislature in 1999 (CDE, 2015a; Ed-Data, 2015a, 2015b; Wikipedia, 2015). API scores ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000 (CDE, 2015a; Ed-Data, 2015a, 2015b; Wikipedia, 2015). It is calculated using results of the STAR program and the CAHSEE (CDE, 2015a; Ed-Data, 2015a, 2015b; Wikipedia, 2015).

**California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP)**

The STAR program was suspended in 2013 by Assembly Bill 484 and a new program called the CASPP was established (California Legislative Information, 2015a; CDE, 2015d). This program addresses the CCSS through an assessment structure replacing the CST called Smarter Balanced Testing. This assessment structure is mostly computer based, requiring students to take the test online (CDE, 2015e). It is also self-paced and individualized to the student taking the test (CDE, 2015l; Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium, 2015). CA students in third, eighth and 11th grade are expected to participate in the test in 2015 (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; CDE, 2015e, 2015l). Other assessments were designed based on students with cognitive disabilities, and certain language barriers (CDE, 2015f, 2015m).

However, students are still held to the same state assessment structures as the neighboring comprehensive high schools (CDE, 2015m). Currently, the accountability
structure is based on the CCSS, previously California State Testing (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, 2015; California Legislative Information, 2015a; CDE, 2015d, 2015e).

With the introduction of Common Core, and Assembly Bill 484, the future of the CAHSEE is uncertain (Baron, 2013; Nichols, 2010). However, the test is still currently in administration (CDE, 2015g; Luttrell, 2012).

**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)**

The SBAC System utilizes computer-adaptive test and performance task that allow students to show what they know and are able to do (CDE, 2015d; Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium, 2015). The SBAC was created in 2010 to support the CCSS, which was this system is based on the CCSS for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics (CDE, 2015l; Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium, 2015). The SBAC system has three components: (a) Summative Assessments, (b) Optional Interim Assessments, and (c) Formative Practice Assessment, designed to support teaching and learning throughout the year (CDE, 2015l; Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium, 2015).

**Summative assessments (SA).** The SA test are given to grades three through eight and 11 for ELA and mathematics, and are administered as part of the CAASPP system (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015). It is administered during the last 12 weeks of the school year and consists of a computer adaptive test and performance task which are computer based, but not computer adaptive (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015).

**Optional interim assessments (OIA).** The OIA, available to all grades in ELA and mathematics, provides information that can be used to monitor student progress
toward mastery of the CCSS (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015). These assessments provide information on student progress throughout the year, and also computer based with performance task (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015).

**Digital library.** The digital library is formative assessments delivered in professional development materials, resources, and tools aligned to the CCSS and SBAC targets. These materials are assessable to teachers to supplement instruction (CDE, 2015l; SBAC, 2015).

**Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM)**

The ASAM was also established out of the PSAA of 1999, which required the state to develop an alternative accountability system for schools supporting alternative schools (CDE, 2015b). Prior to the passage of NCLB, CA attempted to address the accountability differences of alternative programs by approving the ASAM in 2000 (CDE, 2015b; Ford, 2015).

Alternative schools include a number of approaches to teaching and learning different from traditional schools (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2008; Hill, 2007). The PSAA developed the ASAM in response to criticism that alternative schools were becoming dumping grounds and not effectively serving its student’s academic needs (CDE, 2015b; Education Seattle PI, 2015). Benefits of the ASAM were that it assessed the schools with fewer than 100 students, which was usually schools under the jurisdiction of the county, community day schools, and continuation schools (Alameda County of Education, 2015; Education Seattle PI, 2015). This addressed the gap in standardized tests, which could not measure small populations (CDE, 2015a; S. CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).
Performance Indicators

Performance indicators were selected by school districts or county offices of education to be approved and sent to the CDE for evaluation and reporting (CDE, 2015b; CSDE, 2001). Schools participating in the ASAM selected three of the fifteen indicators, and those three indicators comprised their school ASAM report (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Ford, 2015). The CDE would then collect and post the reported data supporting these indicators for the school year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Ford, 2015).

The ASAM requires schools to show improvement in 15 indicators such as: (a) improved student behavior, (b) attendance, and (c) suspension (CDE, 2008; CSDE, 2001). It particularly provided assessment data in indicators such as reading, writing, and math readiness, and credit completion (CDE, 2008; CSDE, 2001). The 15 indicators as defined in a report to CDE by WestEd in 2009 are included in Table 2.

Table 2

Alternative Schools Accountability Model Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Number and Name</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Selection Restrictions</th>
<th>Data Reporting Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improved Student Behavior</td>
<td>Behavior and pre-learning readiness</td>
<td>May not be selected by juvenile court or California Education Authority, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) schools.</td>
<td>At least 65% of students must receive in-class instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Suspension</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only one of Indicators 1 or 2 may be selected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student Punctuality</td>
<td>On-time attendance and student engagement</td>
<td>May not be selected by juvenile court or DJJ schools.</td>
<td>At least 65% of students must receive in-class instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sustained Daily Attendance</td>
<td>Holding power and student persistence</td>
<td>Only one of Indicators 3, 4, or 6 may be selected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table 2

**Alternative Schools Accountability Model Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Number and Name</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Selection Restrictions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic and Completion Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Student Persistence</td>
<td>Holding power and student persistence</td>
<td>May not be selected by juvenile court or DJJ schools.</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Attendance</td>
<td>Attendance and persistence</td>
<td>May not be selected by juvenile court or DJJ schools.</td>
<td>At least 65% of students must receive in-class instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. California English Language Development Test – No Longer Used in ASAM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic and Completion Indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Writing Achievement</td>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>Pre-post assessment instrument must be selected from those approved for ASAM.</td>
<td>The number of valid test results must be at least 25% of the total long-term enrollment and not fewer than 11 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reading Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Math Achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.¹ Promotion to Next Grade</td>
<td>Grade completion and academic progress</td>
<td>Schools serving grades K-6 (elementary school)².</td>
<td>Long-term enrollment is 100 or more students - or - Students in the grade range represent 25% or more of the school’s total long-term enrollment and not fewer than 11 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 A/B.¹ Course Completion</td>
<td>Course completion and performance</td>
<td>Schools serving grades 6-8 (middle school) may select one method, either 12A/B or 12C².</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 C.¹ Average Course Completion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 A.¹ Credit Completion</td>
<td>Credit completion and academic progress</td>
<td>Schools serving grades 9-12 (high school) may select one method, either 13A or 13B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13B.¹ Average Credit Completion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 2

**Alternative Schools Accountability Model Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Number and Name</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Selection Restrictions</th>
<th>Data Reporting Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. High School Graduation</td>
<td>Credit and program completion</td>
<td>Schools serving grades 9-12 (high school)</td>
<td>No fewer than 11 students representing 15% of the school’s total long-term high school enrollment eligible for graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15A. General Educational Development (GED) Completion</td>
<td>Program completion</td>
<td>Schools serving grades 9-12 (high school) may select <strong>one</strong> method, either 15A, 15B, or 15C.</td>
<td>No fewer than 11 eligible students representing a minimum of 15% of the school’s total long-term high school enrollment taking the indicated exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15B. California High School Proficiency Examination Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15C. GED Section Completion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barriers within the ASAM.** The ASAM itself could not provide adequate statewide measurement, which would align to the purpose and expectations of NCLB (Ford, 2015; Ravitch, 2002). Participation in this system was voluntary and with approximately 1,000 schools who participated (CDE, 2015b). Inconsistent school reporting made it very difficult for appropriate posting by the state (CDE, 2015b).

J. R. De Velasco and McLaughlin (2012) argued that the ASAM sent mixed messages of accountability at the school level with principals and school instructional
leaders (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). It honored continuation schools disproportionality for enrollment with students with special needs such as English language learners, foster care, student parents, and alcohol and drug abuse, more so than comprehensive high schools, however principals expressed frustration that the ASAM academic engagement measures were not incorporated into state and federal reporting (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012).

Because this system was voluntary, not every school participated invalidating the state reports (CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015). It was discontinued in 2009 to 2010 year due to budget constraints, which required continuation high schools to report under the API accountability model (CDE, 2015b; Education Seattle PI, 2015; Ford, 2015). With the CCSS adoption, the state has yet to fully develop a new model of accountability for continuation high schools, however there are conversations and pilots occurring (Ford, 2015).

Academic achievement refers to the number of students who are able to meet the minimum proficiency targets defined by the state, usually on a state approved assessment (CDE, 2015m; CSDE, 2001; Ford, 2015). However although the word achievement is used, a criterion based on statewide assessment is not addressed as one of the chosen ASAM indicators (Ford, 2015).

**Discrepancies in State Assessment Methods for Continuation High Schools**

The mandates of the NCLB have established the mindset of accountability systems related to states, districts, schools, teachers, and students (Brand, 2011; Ford, 2015). The structure and universal application of both the PSAA and the CAHSEE demonstrated CAs intentions to hold all students to the same academic standards (J. R. de
Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). CA has applied high stakes systems which have been modified and adjusted over the years since the NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a; Vargas, 2013).

Currently, there are no state assessments or accountability systems that effectively measure student achievement for students who attend continuation high schools. Most students who attend these schools are transient making it difficult to effectively evaluate, and so few students are even tested on school campuses that the API and other state reports give invalid reports (CDE, 2015a, 2015m; Denham, 1996).

The partnership of the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University School of Education, and the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute of Law and Social Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, and J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. conducted a multi-year study of continuation high schools in California (as cited in J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). In their second in the series of reports from the California Alternative Education Research Project, they issued a report titled, *Raising the Bar, Building Capacity: Driving Improvement in California’s Continuation High Schools* (as cited in J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). In this report J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) writes:

> It is exceedingly difficult to ascertain how well continuations high schools do in the aggregate at helping students succeed in the absence of a longitudinal data system that would enable researchers to track student progress across educational settings over time. We would need a data system that allowed us to assess continuation students by comparing them to students in comprehensive schools who have similar prior performance and behavioral characteristics. In the absence
of such a data system, academic comparisons between continuation and comprehensive schools can be highly misleading. (p. 3)

J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) also stated in their interviews with teachers, that core content teachers in mathematics and English language, argued that students were not effectively receiving instruction delivering curriculum that met the common state content standards (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012).

In 2008 the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities and the National Center for Urban School Transition created a report which was presented by WestEd titled Alternate Education Options: A Descriptive Study of California Continuation High Schools (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008).

J. R. de Velasco and McLaughlin (2012) write:

Our interviews with site leaders and teachers confirmed that at the school level, district and community members often continue to hold them to lower performance expectations. As a practical consequence of systematic neglect, continuation schools often operate within a weaker accountability system that contains fewer incentives for promoting student success than the accountability system as applied to comprehensive schools. (p. 5)

Students who attend these schools are usually juniors or seniors between the ages of 16 to 18 years not attending longer than a year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Putney, 2010). This makes it difficult to effectively assess the student population, particularly the seniors, who usually make up a major part of the school student population (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008)

The policy context of continuation high schools, that (a) continuation high schools lack any formal structure that can be aligned with consistent statewide policy or standards of accountability, and (b) teachers lack the institutional direction needed to understand their purpose, and how to achieve it. (p. 14)

J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) report in the *California Alternative Research Project* attempted to assess the school level performance of continuation high schools in CA (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008). They examined performance data from the STAR system which provided data for the API, and CAHSEE data (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008). The results of these reports established that 72% of the CA continuation schools met the minimum student enrollment thresholds for even receiving an API score (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008). Their report further concluded:

Further, since meeting this enrollment threshold changes from year to year, the WestEd researchers were able to find only 229 continuation schools in the STAR system that meet enrollment thresholds for receiving an API score for three years consecutively. This was less than one-half of the total 519 continuation schools statewide. Based on an analysis of these remaining 229 schools, WestEd found 23 schools (or roughly 10% of the sample) that could be characterized as “beating the odds” by performing better than expected, on state and federal accountability systems, given the demographic characteristics of students enrolled. But the data do not allow us to thoroughly examine why some schools do better than others and to determine whether the 10% figure for “beating the odds schools” is high or
low. No student performance trend data can be developed for the other half of continuation schools. (p. 5)

Williamson (2008) in *Legislative History of Alternative Education: The Policy Context of Continuation High School* argued that the policies in CA lacked any formal structural alignment with standards of accountability.

**Transiency**

Transiency refers to the adjusted number of students entering and leaving school during the school year (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2012; Probst, 1998). Students who attend continuation high schools are more likely to spend less time in any school, usually moving from one school to another (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). Most students attending continuation high schools are transitory and usually in attendance no more than a year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996).

This makes it difficult to effectively evaluate the student, or produce proper measurement of student performance (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). Only long term students in CA, which are students enrolled over 90 consecutive days, are counted when calculating any adequate percentage data (Ford, 2015).

Students are either transferring back to comprehensive schools, while new students transfer in throughout the year (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Probst, 1998). Most students are juniors and or seniors who only have a year at the most before graduating, matriculating to adult school programs, or dropping out altogether. Due to this transiency, the outcome of test results will not show a true reflection of student academic performance (Denham, 1996; Sanderson, 2004).
J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al. (2008) report in the 2004 and 2006 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) that 17% of continuation students surveyed reported changing their place of residence two or more times in the past year. This same report indicates that 47% of continuation students reported fewer than 90 days enrollment in the continuation high school (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008).

Class changes are more frequent than comprehensive high schools not allowing time for appropriate formative assessments that are usually aligned to the key standards tested in state standardized assessments (Coffey, 2015). These assessments and reporting structures were designed to address student’s abilities to master certain key standards established by the state, however this may not be an appropriate mode of measurement for students attending continuation high schools (CDE, 2015a; CSDE, 2001; Education Seattle PI, 2015).

**Summary**

CA continuation high schools have been around for the past century with the main purpose of serving the specific needs of students, while maintaining an effective economic and social society (Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008). Education itself has been the topic of discussion in the United States with legislators and educators dating back to the consolidation movement of the mid-nineteenth century (Burger, 2006; Loomis, 2011). With the turn of the twentieth century education has been challenged with different educational movements, historical events that have influenced the economic and global competition in the United States and the immigration and adjustments of different ethnicities (Loomis, 2011; Luttrell, 2012). The result of these
adjustments has developed a population of students who do not fit into the norm of the educational structures.

The publication of A Nation at Risk shifted the modification of governance from the local boards of education to the state and federal governments exposing this population of at risk students (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Smith & Fey, 2000). In 1965 CA legislators mandated that local districts establish the current continuation high schools to support the at risk population (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996; Luttrell, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008).

The NCLB as a result of the ESEA brought attention to the quality of education and accountability (Herman & Haertel, 2005; Stecher et al., 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). In 1999 The PSAA was passed with the purpose of developing a system of accountability in student performance of schools and districts in CA (CDE, 2015k; Ishimaru, 2013). This began the formal structure of a student accountability model with the establishment of academic standards assessments and measurement. These standards currently modified to the CCSS of today (Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010).

This system of accountability has left gaps in supporting continuation high schools in CA (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). The ASAM was as attempt by CA to appropriately measure the academic achievement of continuation high schools, but proved ineffective (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Ford, 2015). To date, there
are no effective assessment methods for continuation high schools (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study identifies appropriate assessment methods and assessment tools for measuring the academic achievement of students in CA continuation high schools. At present there is no required academic assessment process for CA continuation high school students. This study will identify appropriate assessment methods and assessment tools for developing an academic assessment process for CA continuation high school students.

Chapter III begins with a review of the purpose of the study and the research questions. An explanation of the research design including the population and sample studied, the instrumentation used, the instrument's reliability and validity, the procedures used, and a description of the data collection follows. Finally, the limitations for the study, and a brief summary of Chapter III and the concluding two chapters of the study close this chapter.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for CA continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method.

Research Questions

Round 1

1. What are effective assessment methods that should be used in CA continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success according to experts in CA continuation education?
Round 2

2. How do experts in CA continuation education rate the assessment methods identified in Research Question 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success?

Round 3

3. What assessment tools do experts in CA continuation education identify as most effective for each of the five most effective methods identified in Research Question 2 to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

Research Design

The Delphi technique was developed at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s by Olaf Helmer and Norman Dalkey (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). The name Delphi comes from a Greek oracle at Delphi, which was an ancient site of worship of the Greek god Apollos (Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). It was first used in the 1950s as a discretionary research method in the military, surveying the opinions of military experts for confidential purposes (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007).

This widely used method gathers a convergence of opinions from experts on a specific topic for the purposes of developing policy, or future planning (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). It is characterized by a communication process that details discussions for goals, policy research, or generating new knowledge or ideas for planning (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). It is most useful in
attaining independent, and anonymous judgments from experts on complex matters particularly when information is limited (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Yousuf, 2007).

The Delphi technique uses surveys and questionnaires to gather data from experts avoiding face-to-face meetings (Watson, 2008). The questioning and surveying process is usually conducted in three to four rounds of questioning (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). The multiple rounds also allow participants to adjust their response based on feedback. The anonymous nature of questionnaires and surveys allows open honesty and freedom of expression avoiding certain distracting group dynamics from the experts, which challenges strengthen their knowledge on the subject or modify opinions (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007).

**General Process**

The intent is to generate healthy divergence between the experts to eventual consensus to motivate and challenge new ideas for future policy (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). Generally, the process is facilitated in three to four rounds of questioning with the use if surveys and follow up questions based feedback and responses (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Yousuf, 2007). The following process, recommended by Linstone and Turoff (2011), was used in implementing the Delphi method for this study:

1. Monitor team devoting a considerable amount of time to carefully reformulating the obvious issues.
2. Seeding the list with an initial range of options but allowing for the respondents to add to the lists.
3. Asking for positions on an item and underlying assumptions in the first round.
Purpose of this Method

There has been limited research on the assessment methods for continuation high schools in CA (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). To date, state legislation and agencies have failed to produce an effective state method, or policy, to give relevant data for academic improvement and accountability (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Denham, 1996). The Policy Delphi technique has been proven effective in seeking views from experts for resolution of policy issues (Hahn & Rayens, 1999; Linstone & Turoff, 2011).

This method will survey experts from the CCEA, which is an organization of educators and administrators, who work in continuation high schools (California Continuation Education Association, 2015). This is an organization formed in 1962 to advocate for the interest of continuation school students and staff (California Continuation Education Association, 2015). This study will also seek experts from the Education Options Council of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). Due to the lack of research and work in state academic achievement accountability in CA, surveying experts would lay a foundation.

Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalize results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study the population is all Continuation School Administrators in the State of California. There are approximately 500 continuation schools in CA, each with an administrator.
Choosing the appropriate experts for a Delphi study is the most important step in the entire process in order to secure the quality of results (Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007). The credibility of the experts and overall selection process will determine reliability of the research and foundation for future study (Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007).

**Target Population**

The target population for this study was CA continuation school administrators and teachers with over three years of experience chosen from the members of the California Continuation Education Association (CCEA) and members of the ACSA Educational Options Committee.

The goal of CCEA is to advocate for continuation education and the students and staff involved (California Continuation Education Association, 2015). The members consist of teachers and administrators that are employed or have experience, in continuation high schools (California Continuation Education Association, 2015). There are approximately 40 administrators and teachers who were targeted members of CCEA.

The ACSA Education Options Committee is a council of administrators working in alternative education throughout the state of CA who meet quarterly throughout the year (Association of California School Administrators, 2008). Each member represents one of 19 regions in the state of CA, with the purpose to support and advocacy to alternative education in CA (Association of California School Administrators, 2008). There are 19 administrators and teachers, one from each ACSA region, on this committee.
Sample

The sample group can be defined as a group of individuals from whom data are collected (Patton, 2002). The sample can be selected from a larger group of person(s) identified as the population or a group of subjects from whom data are collected (Patton, 2002).

The sample for this study consisted of 40 members of CCEA and ten members of the ACSA Educational Options Committee that met the following criteria:

1. Three or more years of experience as a continuation education administrator or teacher.
2. A member of CCEA, the ACSA Educational Options Committee, or member of both.
3. Identified experience in administering academic assessment to continuation high school students.

Sample Selection Process

CCEA. Potential CCEA panel members were identified during the CCEA State Conference. Names were identified during an arranged workshop presentation discussing continuation school state assessment methods. During this workshop:

1. A list was passed around soliciting name, position, and district, city of school, phone number, and email address.
2. Respondents were asked to give their years of experience in continuation education, verify membership in either CCEA, ACSA Educational Options
Committee, or both, and to list experience administering academic assessment to continuation school students.

3. Following the meeting, respondents meeting the selection criteria were identified and placed on a list.

4. Ten respondents that met the selection criteria were chosen at random to participate.

5. Selected respondents were contacted to secure their participation. If a selected person declined to participate, another respondent was chosen to replace them using the same process.

**ACSA.** Another group was selected during an ACSA Education Options Council Meeting. A presentation was given to the group during a quarterly meeting. During this meeting:

1. A list was passed around soliciting name, position, and district, city of school, phone number, and email address.

2. Respondents were asked to give their years of experience in continuation education, verify membership in either CCEA, ACSA Educational Options Committee, or both, and to list experience administering academic assessment to continuation school students.

3. Following the meeting, respondents meeting the selection criteria were identified and placed on a list.

4. Ten respondents that met the selection criteria were chosen at random to participate.
5. Selected respondents were contacted to secure their participation. If a selected person declined to participate, another respondent was chosen to replace them using the same process.

The selected group of 10 members from each organization was provided the questionnaire in round one of the study. Participants were informed that all information gathered for this study would be kept confidential. All hard data were stored in a locked file cabinet and all electronic data were stored in a password protected electronic file to which the researcher had sole access. Following the completion of the study, all data were destroyed.

**Instrumentation**

This study used an online survey application called Survey Monkey, and email as modes of collecting data and communicating with the experts. Several rounds of information were gathered and feedback was utilized to achieve consensus among the Delphi panel of experts (Watson, 2008; Zeedick, 2010). This study employed three rounds of data gathering and feedback using an Internet-based survey application and focus group discussion for all rounds of the Delphi (Zeedick, 2010) (see Appendix B, C, and D).

The data gathered from each round of surveys was used to generate the survey for the next survey

**Round 1**

The Round 1 instrument asked an open ended question: *What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California continuation high school to*
accurately assess student academic achievement and success? Responses were placed into a list for use in Round 2.

**Round 2**

The Round 2 instrument consisted of a list of the methods identified in Round 1 using a Likert scale for rating each method. Respondents were asked to rate each method on a scale of from 6 to 1 with 6 being Very Effective and 1 being Very Ineffective.

**Round 3**

The Round 3 instrument consisted of an open ended question for each of the five methods rated most important from Round 2. The question was: *What are the most effective tools necessary to implement each method?*

All information gathered was anonymous, preventing bias from panel experts (Watson, 2008; Zeedick, 2010).

**Validity**

*Validity* refers to the appropriateness of use and the proposed interpretation of the scores for a given purpose under a prescribed set of conditions. Validity is the most fundamental consideration in developing and evaluating the extent to which an instrument is doing what it is supposed to do. Crocker and Algina (1986) refer to Cronbach’s description of “validation as the process by which a test developer or test user collects evidence to support the types of inferences that are to be drawn from test scores” (p. 217).

Content validity was essentially “built-in” with the “expert review” of each round of the Delphi technique. Also, content validity was ensured through the development of
the instruments and the experts’ responses to what they considered to be the most important assessment methods and assessment tools.

**Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of such measurements when the testing procedure is repeated on a population of individuals or groups (American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education [APA, AERA, NCME], 1999). Reliability also refers to the extent to which the responses are free of measurement error. As such, the responses should be the same, or close to the same, every time the measurement is repeated on the same group, sample, or population. To achieve reliable results, the instruments were constructed so as to minimize random error in responses. To assure consistency, a field test was conducted prior to the administration of the process.

**Field Test**

To establish reliability, a field test of the instruments and the process was conducted with non-participating individuals who met the selection criteria prior to the actual administration of the process. Four qualifying continuation school administrators were asked to participate in the field test. The participants completed the instruments following the process for each Round. Following each round, participants gave feedback to the researcher regarding structure of the instruments, clarity of instructions and questions, and general feedback regarding use of and completion of the instruments. The instruments were adjusted according to the feedback given by the participants.
Data Collection

Prior to the collection of any data for this study, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) (see Appendix E).

Feedback from each participant will be anonymous allowing freedom of feedback, and there was no discussion during the surveying period to avoid potential biasness or influences from (Linstone & Turoff, 2011; Yousuf, 2007).

Round 1

The open ended survey question was sent to the panelist via Survey Monkey and responses were collected using the Survey Monkey software. The question was: What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success according to experts in California Continuation Education? The responses were placed into a list to be used as the basis for Round 2.

Round 2

The first round methods were placed into a list and used to generate a rating survey for each method identified in Round 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success. In this survey round the panel members were asked to use a Likert scale to rank their individual methods based on 6 as a Very Effective method down to 1 as a Very Ineffective method. The survey was sent out and responses were collected using the Survey Monkey software. The top five assessment methods were identified based upon the ratings from the Round 2 survey and used for Round 3 (Linstone & Turoff, 2011; Yousuf, 2007).
Round 3

For Round 3 the experts were given an open ended survey that asked them to identify the most appropriate assessment tools for each of the five most effective assessment methods identified in Research Question 2. The responses were coded and organized into common activities and themes.

Data Analysis

Round 1

Responses from Research Question 1: What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success? Results were collected from the Survey Monkey responses.

The researcher identified the different responses as to appropriate methods of assessment. When similar responses were received, the researcher consolidated those responses and created a single response that included the similar material from each response. The responses were placed into a list to be used as the basis for Round 2.

Round 2

Using the list of assessment methods identified in Round 1, a survey was created asking the respondents to rate the effectiveness of each assessment method using the following question: Please rate the effectiveness of each of the identified assessment methods listed in this survey for assessing academic achievement for California Continuation High School Students. The Likert Scale used for the ratings was:

6 – Very Effective

5 – Somewhat Effective
4 – Slightly Effective
3 – Slightly Ineffective
2 – Somewhat Ineffective
1 – Totally Ineffective

Using the mean score ratings for each of the identified assessment methods, the researcher used the five highest rated assessment methods to create a list of assessment methods for Round 3.

**Round 3**

Using the five highest rated assessment methods from Research Question 2, the researcher created a survey with a qualitative open ended question: *For each of the identified assessment methods, what assessment tools would you identify as most effective for implementing the assessment method?*

The researcher gathered the responses via Survey Monkey. The responses were then placed into separate data matrices for each of the highest rated assessment methods. From the data matrices the most appropriate assessment tool for each assessment method was identified.

**Limitations**

This study was limited by the Policy Delphi research process, which sought the input of a panel of experts in the area of continuation high schools and assessment. The experts were selected from the CCEA and ACSA Education Options Council and the California Continuation High School Conference.

The knowledge and expertise of the selected experts is a limitation.
Another limitation is the honesty of the experts’ responses; although honesty is assumed it cannot be guaranteed.

Although steps were taken to assure content validity, it is possible that some inconsistency may evolve through the process.

Although a field test was conducted to assure reliability, it is possible that some inconsistency may exist in the process.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology of a Policy Delphi research study regarding effective assessment methods of continuation high schools. This chapter also described this Delphi study, the study’s theoretical framework, the purpose, research design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, collection and analysis of data. This chapter will be followed by Chapter IV, Data Analysis, and by Chapter V, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Action.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter IV provides a frame of reference and understanding of the research through the presentation and analysis of data and through a summary of findings for the current study. The chapter indicates the purpose of the study and the research questions. It also offers a description of the methodology used, the population and sample. Also included in this chapter are conclusions and implications for future research (Brand, 2011; Ford, 2015).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for CA continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method.

Research Questions

Round 1

1. What are effective assessment methods that should be used in CA continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success according to experts in CA continuation education?

Round 2

2. How do experts in CA continuation education rate the assessment methods identified in Research Question 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success?
Round 3

3. What assessment tools do experts in CA continuation education identify as most effective for each of the five most effective methods identified in Research Question 2 to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The primary purpose for this study was to identify the most effective state assessment methods for CA continuation high schools. This method utilized a Policy Delphi process to gather consensus from continuation high school administrators and teachers. This widely used method gathers a convergence of opinions from experts on a specific topic for the purposes of developing policy, or future planning (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007).

This researcher used an online survey application called Survey Monkey and email as modes of collecting data and communicating with the experts. Several rounds of information were gathered and feedback was utilized to achieve consensus among the Delphi panel of experts (Watson, 2008; Zeedick, 2010). This study employed three rounds of data gathering and feedback using an Internet-based survey application and focus group discussion for all rounds of the Delphi (Zeedick, 2010). The data gathered from each round of surveys was used to generate the survey for the next round.

The first questionnaire asked an open ended question “What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student achievement and success?” Responses from this survey were coded by themes and placed on the second questionnaire. The second questionnaire was
a Likert-scale with identified assessment methods from the first questionnaire to be rated by levels of effectiveness. The assessment methods were rated by weighted mean scores.

The top six were placed on the third and final questionnaire, which asked the experts to identify the barriers, facilitators, and implementation strategies of each the six assessment methods identified from the second questionnaire.

Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalize results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study the population includes all Continuation School Administrators and teachers in the State of CA. There are approximately 500 continuation schools in CA, each with an administrator.

Target Population

The target population for this study was CA continuation school administrators and teachers with over three years of experience chosen from the members of the CCEA and members of the ACSA Educational Options Committee. There are approximately 40 administrators and teachers who were targeted members of CCEA, and 19 forms the ACSA Education Options Committee.

The first questionnaire with the consent form attached was sent to the targeted population encouraging them to forward the link to other administrators or teachers fitting the criteria. The questionnaire consisted of 10 multiple choice and four open ended questions for consent and demographic purposes and the open ended Delphi question. There were 58 who responded to the first survey with 45 who actually qualified
for the research. The 13 who were not qualified (7 teachers and 6 administrators) were based on years of experience in continuation high schools.

The second survey was a Likert scale requiring the respondent to rate each listed assessment method identified in the first survey. There were 23 assessment methods listed which were coded from the first survey. The rating system was ranked (least effective, not very effective, moderately effective, effective, very effective, and highly effective). Twenty-five of the 47 respondents actually responded to the survey.

The third survey listed the top six assessment methods and asked the panelist to identify facilitators, barriers, and implementation strategies of the selected assessment methods. There were 14 respondents (10 administrators, 4 teachers) who responded.

**Sample**

The sample population for this study comprised 19 Principals, 5 Assistant Principals, and 19 Teachers. Of which were 42% males and 58% females. The ethnicity of these participants encompassed: (a) 2.27% Indian of Native American, (b) 6.82% Asian or Pacific Islander, (c) 4.55% African American, (d) 6.82% Hispanic American, (e) 77.27% Caucasian, and (f) 2.27% Multiple Ethnicity.

From this sample population there were 13.33% specified to have 3 to 5 years’ experience in continuation high schools. Additionally, 28.89% indicated 5 to 10 years, and 44.44% specified 10 to 20 years. There were 13.33% who indicated more than 20 years of experience.

Demographically, the participants represented: (a) 15 respondents (34.09%) from the San Francisco regional area, (b) 8 respondents (18.18%) from the Northern area, (c) 6 respondents (13.64%) from the Central Valley area, (d) 8 respondents (18.18%) from the
Los Angeles/Orange County area, (e) 4 respondents (9.09%) from the dessert area, and (f) 3 respondents (6.82%) from the San Diego/Imperial area.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Delphi Round 1

The open ended survey question was sent to the panelist via Survey Monkey and responses were collected using the Survey Monkey software. The questions went to 56 respondents giving them the option to send the survey link to others fitting the criteria.

The following statement was provided to clarify the term “state-assessment method”: For the purposes of this study, State assessment methods for California continuation high schools are assessments to measure and report student achievement for students that attend California continuation high schools, however still holding them responsible for the same standards as students attending comprehensive high schools. You may list as many as you feel necessary.

Delphi Round I, research question I. The question was: What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success? Responses from the first question in Round 1 of the Delphi were extracted and thematically consolidated based on the assessment methods identified by the panelist.

The questions were distributed to 56 respondents giving them the option to send the survey link to others fitting the criteria. Fifty-eight respondents responded to the survey. Forty-five of the 58 met the criteria and 13 had to be eliminated from the study based on years of continuation high school experience.
Responses were thematically coded and categorized into 23 identified state assessment method suggestions. Suggestions ranged from 1-7 respondents for each identified assessment method.

Members of the expert panel identified 23 responses related to effective state assessments for CA continuation high schools. The two highest identified were Assessments which measure graduation rates, and CAHSEE, both with (7 of 23 methods identified). Other areas cited include: There is no known assessment method currently, it will need to be developed by a team of experts (6 of 23 methods identified); CAHSEE with modifications (5 of 23 methods identified); ASAM with modifications (4 of 23 methods identified); Smaller more frequently administered assessments; Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year; and SBAC with modifications; each had 3 of the 23 methods identified.

Other methods identified were: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP); Presentations, Projects, or Labs; "Save Rate" method; The same as comprehensive schools; and Written assessments who each had 2 of the 23 methods identified. CAASPP with modifications; Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR); Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) with modifications; Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment; State assessments which emphasize improvement; Gates MacGinitie; Gameafication assessment methods; Early Admissions Program Testing; Read 180; and Scholastic Reading/Math Inventory (SRI) assessment all had 1 of the 23 methods identified (see Table 3).
Table 3

Round 1: Identified Assessment Methods from Panelist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic Reading/Math Inventory (SRI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Admissions Program Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gameafication assessment methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates MacGinitie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State assessments which emphasize...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back the Standardized Testing and...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back the Standardized Testing and...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAASPP with modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same as comprehensive schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Save Rate&quot; method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations, Projects, or Labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Assessment of Student Performance...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller more frequently administered...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smarter Balanced Testing (SBAC) with...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre/Post test given multiple times throughout...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Schools Accountability Model...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAHSEE with modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no known assessment method...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments which measure graduation rates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delphi Round 2

The Round 2 instrument consisted of a list of the methods identified in Round 1 using a Likert scale for rating each method. The methods were placed into a list and used to generate a rating survey for each method identified in Round 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success.

In this survey round the panel members were asked to use a Likert scale to rank their individual methods based on the scale: 6 as a Very Effective method down to 1 as a Very Ineffective method. The survey was sent out and responses were collected using the Survey Monkey software.
There were 25 expert respondents who responded to the second survey ranking identified assessment methods ranging from 2-4.38 based on mean scores (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Round 2: Identified Assessment Methods and Mean Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Save Rate” method</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations, Projects, or Labs</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State assessments which emphasize improvement</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller more frequently administered assessments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no known assessment method currently. It will need to be developed by a team of experts</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written assessments</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic Reading/Math Inventory (SRI) assessment</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments which measure graduation rates</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read 180</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAHSEE with modifications</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) with modifications</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gameafication assessment methods</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates MacGinitie</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Admissions Program Testing</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smarter Balanced Testing (SBAC) with modifications</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAASPP with modifications</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same as comprehensive schools</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) with modifications</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top rated state assessment method for CA continuation high school was:

*Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year*, with a mean score of 4.38. This method was ranked highly among the 21 of the 25 expert respondents who responded.
Four respondents ranked it moderately effective, 7 respondents ranked it as effective, 8 respondents ranked it as very effective, and 2 as highly effective (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Pre/Posttest Given Multiple Times Throughout the Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 21; Mean Score = 4.38.

The second highest ranked method was: *save rate* method with a mean score of 4.15. This method was ranked by 1 respondent for least effective, 2 respondents not very effective, 3 respondents moderately effective, 6 respondents effective, 3 respondents very effective, and 5 respondents highly effective, with a total number of 20 respondents who responded (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Save Rate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 20; mean Score = 4.15.

The third highest ranked was: *Presentations, projects, or labs,* with a mean score of 4.08. This method was ranked by 2 respondents for least effective, 3 not very effective, 2 moderately effective, 4 effective, 10 very effective, and 3 highly effective (see Table 7).

*State assessments which emphasize improvement,* was ranked 4.04 by 24 of the 25 expert respondents. This method was ranked by 1 respondent as least effective, 1 not
very effective, 7 moderately effective, 6 effective, 5 very effective, and 4 highly effective (see Table 8).

Table 7

*Presentations, Projects, or Labs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 24; Mean Score = 4.08.

Table 8

*State Assessments which Emphasize Improvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>29.71%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 24; Mean Score = 4.04.

*Smaller more frequently administered assessments,* was ranked by 23 of 25 respondents with a mean score of 4.00. This method was ranked by 5 respondents as moderately effective, 14 effective, 3 very effective, and 1 highly effective (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Smaller More Frequently Administered Assessments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>60.87%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 23; Mean Score = 4.00.

There were 23 expert respondents who responded to the assessment methods:

There is no known assessment method currently. It will need to be developed by a team.
of experts, with a mean score of 3.83. This method was ranked by 3 respondents to be least effective, 3 not very effective, 3 moderately effective, 6 effective, 2 very effective, and 6 highly effective (see Table 10).

Table 10

*There is no Known Assessment Method Currently. It will Need to be Developed by a Team of Experts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 23; Mean Score = 3.83

There were 24 expert respondents who responded to the assessment method:

**Written assessments,** with a mean score of 3.75. This method was ranked by 1 respondent as least effective, 1 not very effective, 6 moderately effective, 11 effective, 5 very effective, and 0 highly effective.

Table 11

**Written Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>45.83%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 24; Mean Score = 3.75.

There were 20 expert respondents who responded to *Scholastic Reading/Math Inventory (SRI)* assessment, with a mean score of 3.70. This method was ranked by 1 respondent as least effective, 2 not very effective, 5 moderately effective, 8 effective, 2 very effective, and 2 highly effective (see Table 12).
Table 12

*Reading/Math Inventory (SRI) Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 20; Mean Score = 3.75.

There were 24 respondents who ranked assessments which measure graduation rates, with a mean score of 3.63. This method was ranked by 3 respondents as least effective, 3 not very effective, 6 moderately effective, 4 effective, 4 very effective, and 4 highly effective (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Assessments which Measure Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 24; Mean Score = 3.63.

There were 19 of the 25 expert respondents who responded to *Read 180*, with a mean score of 3.53. This method was ranked by 6 respondents as not very effective, 3 moderately effective, 6 effective, 2 very effective, and 2 highly effective (see Table 14).

There were 24 of the 25 expert respondents who responded to *CAHSEE with modifications*, with a mean score of 3.29. This method was ranked by 3 respondents as least effective, 4 not very effective, 8 moderately effective, 2 effective, 6 very effective, and 1 highly effective (see Table 15).
Table 14

*Read 180*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 19; Mean Score = 3.53.

Table 15

*CAHSEE with Modifications*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 21; Mean Score = 3.29.

There were 23 of 25 respondents who responded to *California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)*, with a mean score of 3.22. This method was ranked by 2 respondents least effective, 5 not very effective, 8 moderately effective, 3 effective, 4 very effective and 1 highly effective (see Table 16).

Table 16

*CAHSEE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 23; Mean Score = 3.22.

There were 20 of 25 experts who responded to *Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) with modifications*, with a mean score of 3.20. This method was ranked
by 3 respondents as least effective, 3 not very effective, 4 moderately effective, 7
effective, 3 very effective, and 0 highly effective.

Table 17

*Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 20; Mean Score = 3.20.

There were 17 of 25 expert respondents who responded to *Gameafication*
assessment methods, with a mean score of 3.12. This method was ranked by 1
respondent as least effective, 4 not very effective, 7 moderately effective, 2 effective, 3
very effective, and 0 highly effective (see Table 18).

Table 18

*Gameafication Assessment Methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 17; Mean Score = 3.12.

There were 17 of 25 expert panelist who responded to *Gates MacGinitie*, as an
effective state assessment method, with a mean score of 2.88. This method was ranked
by 3 respondents as least effective, 4 respondents as not very effective, 5 moderately
effective, 3 effective, 1 very effective and 1 highly effective (see Table 19).

There were 20 of 25 expert panelist who responded to *early admissions program*
testing, with a mean score of 2.85. This method was ranked by 1 respondent as least
effective, 8 not very effective, 4 moderately effective, 7 effective, and 0 for very and highly effective (see Table 20).

Table 19

Gates MacGinitie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>25.53%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 17; Mean Score = 2.88.

Table 20

Early Admissions Program Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 20; Mean Score = 2.85.

There were 23 of 25 expert panelist who responded to Smarter Balanced Testing (SBAC) with modifications, with a mean score of 2.7. This method was ranked by 3 respondents as least effective, 6 not very effective, 10 moderately effective, 3 effective, 1 very effective, and 0 highly effective (see Table 21).

Table 21

Smarter Balanced Testing (SBAC) with Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 23; Mean Score = 2.70.
There were 17 of 25 expert respondents who responded to *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments*, with a mean score of 2.65. This method was ranked by 2 respondents as least effective, 3 not very effective, 11 moderately effective, 1 effective, 3 very effective, and 0 highly effective (see Table 22).

Table 22

*Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Assessments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 17; Mean Score = 2.65.

There were 21 of 25 expert respondents who responded to *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)*, with a mean score of 2.62. This method was ranked by 1 responded as least effective, 10 not very effective, 7 moderately effective, 2 effective, 1 very effective, and 0 highly effective (see Table 23).

Table 23

*California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total Respondents = 21; Mean Score = 2.62.

There were 21 of 25 expert respondents who responded to *CAASPP with modification*, with a mean score of 2.57. This method was ranked by 1 respondent as
least effective, 9 not very effective, 9 moderately effective, 2 effective, and 0 very and highly effective (see Table 24).

Table 24

CAASPP with Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 21; Mean Score = 2.57.

There were 22 of 25 expert panelist who responded to the same as comprehensive schools, with a mean score of 2.55. This method was ranked by 5 respondents as least effective, 8 not very effective, 4 moderately effective, 3 effective, 1 very effective, and 1 highly effective (see Table 25).

Table 25

Same as Comprehensive Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.73%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 22; Mean Score = 2.55

There were 24 of 25 expert panelist who responded to bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) with modifications, with a mean score of 2.04. This method was ranked by 8 respondents as least effective, 8 not very effective, 7 moderately effective, 1 effective, and 0 very and highly effective (see Table 26).
There were 24 of 25 expert respondents who responded to bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), with a mean score of 2. This method was ranked by 8 respondents as least effective, 9 not very effective, 6 moderately effective, 1 effective, and 0 very and highly effective (see Table 27).

Table 27

Bring Back the STAR Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Effective</th>
<th>Not Very Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Respondents = 21; Mean Score = 2.00.

Delphi Round 3

The third round of the Delphi study included six open-ended questions responding to the top six assessment methods based on the mean scores in the second survey. There were 18 expert respondents who responded to the third survey sent out to the same population of continuation high school administrators and teachers. The top assessment methods were:

- Developing a new assessment method with a team or committee of experts was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators
and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

- "Save Rate" method was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

- Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

- Presentations, Projects and Labs were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

- State assessments which emphasize improvement were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

- Smaller more frequently administered test was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

Clarification was provided for the commonly used terms contained within the
research questions. Facilitators were defined as a resource or person that facilitates successful implementation. Barriers were defined as anything that prohibited or hindered the progress of successful implementation. Implementation referred to the steps that needed to be put in place during the implementation progress of each identified method.

Other terms used by the expert panelist were California Department of Education (CDE), State Board of Education (SBE), California Continuation High Schools (CCHS), Project Based Learning (PBL), California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), Career Technical Education (CTE), and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

Delphi round 3, research question 1. Developing a new assessment method with a team or committee of experts was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

In the Delphi Round 3, expert panel members were asked to identify the facilitators, barriers, and implementation strategies or approaches to the six assessment methods identified in Delphi Round 2. The responses from the first question in Round 3 were extracted and thematically categorized as a facilitator, barrier, or as an implementation strategies.

Sixteen of the 18 expert panelist responded to this open ended question related to Developing a new team of experts, and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementation strategies. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents in their responses.
Facilitators. Expert panelist agreed that assembling the team of experts was the main facilitator in developing a new state assessment method for California continuation high schools. Table 28 indicates that 15 out of 18 respondents agreed to the team of experts as the main facilitator. Five out of 18 respondents indicated that the Association of California Education Options Council as facilitators to the team of experts.

Additional facilitators for this method included: The California Department of Education, past assessments as templates, teachers, local community college programs, and State Board of Education and were identified by 2 out of 18 respondents as facilitators and state leadership and researching best practices were identified by 1 out of 18 respondents as facilitators (see Table 28).

Table 28

Facilitators to Developing a Team of Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team of Experts</td>
<td>15 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Option Council</td>
<td>5 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Assessments as Templates</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community College Programs</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Board of Education</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Leadership</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices Across the State</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barriers. Even though 16 of the 18 responded there was very little consistency among the panelist. The highest cited barriers were the lack of knowledge among the state leadership (5 out of 18), and cooperation at the state levels/bureaucracy (4 out of 18). The method being a potential tedious process, and the unknown were both cited (3 out of 18) respondents as a barrier. The CDE, time and involvement, demographics,
different student needs, current assessments, and getting input, were each represented by one panelist (1 out of 18) as a barrier (see Table 29).

Table 29

Barriers with Developing a Team of Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Knowledge of CCHS Education at the Local and State Levels</td>
<td>5 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation at the State Levels/Bureaucracy</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lengthy and Tedious Process</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unknown</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a Team of Experts</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Academic Levels</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Department of Education (CDE)</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Involvement</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Needs of the Students</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assessments</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Input</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementation. The majority of respondents cited assembling a team of experts (10 out of 18) as the number one recommendation for the implementation. Looking at local community college exams, work with legislators, CDE, and CBE, and using the Education Options Council, were each cited by 2 out of 18 of the respondents. Surveying student populations, and conducting a pilot test, were each represented by one respondent (1 out of 18) (see Table 30).

Table 30

Implementation Ideas with Developing a Team of Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assemble a Team of Experts</td>
<td>10 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at Local Community College Exams</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Legislators, CDE, CBE</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 30

*Implementation ideas with developing a team of experts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use Education Options Council</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile Best Practices from Experts</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Student Populations</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Test</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delphi round 3, research question 2.** "Save Rate" method was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

Twelve of the 18 expert panelist responded to this open ended question related to Save Rate and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents in their responses.

**Facilitators.** The facilitators most frequently cited as using the Save Rate were working with the Education Council, and the indicators (2 out of 18). SBE and LCAP funding were cited each by 1 out of 18 panelist (see Table 31).

Table 31

*Facilitators with the “Save Rate”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Options Council</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Board Superintendent (SBE) Approval</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCAP Funding</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barriers.** The highest cited barriers to using the Save Rate as a method were the lack of knowledge of Save Rate, and it is not an established assessment tool, were each
cited by 4 out of 18 respondents. The SBE was cited by 2 out of 18 respondents as a barrier, and Transiency and the CDE were each cited by one respondent (1 out of 18) (see Table 32).

Table 32

Barriers with the “Save Rate”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Knowledge of Save Rate</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not an academic assessment tool</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Board of Education (SBE)</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transiency</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Department of Education (CDE)</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation.** There was not much response to implementation strategies for the “Save Rate” method. Two out of 18 responded to assistance from state leadership, while the other implementation strategies: need for training, consistency in extracting relevant data, query from student data systems, academic measurements, and Educational Options Council, were each cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 33).

Table 33

Implementations with the “Save Rate”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementations</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance from State Leadership</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will need to be training</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency in extracting relevant data</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query from student data systems</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Measurements will need to put in place</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work through Education Options Council</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delphi round 3, research question 3.** Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?
Fifteen of the 18 respondents responded to this open ended question related to *Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year* and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents in their responses.

**Facilitators.** Eighty-three percent of the respondents responded to facilitators for *Pre and Posttest*, where 4 out of 18 stated that it needs to be a *reliable form of measurement*. Three 3 out of 18 cited that *Pre and Posttest* worked with transiency, and 2 out of 18 cited that it *would be aligned to instructional planning* (see Table 34).

Table 34

**Facilitators with Pre and Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The measurement would be reliable</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works with transiency</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be aligned to instructional planning</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barriers.** The barrier most named with *Pre and Posttest* were *establishing proper staffing and preparation* (5 out of 18), and *building consensus among all local districts* (4 out of 18). *There would be too many tests*, and *could lose student interest* were both cited (3 out of 18), and lastly, *transiency* receiving 2 out of 18. (see Table 35).

Table 35

**Barriers with Pre and Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing proper staffing and preparation</td>
<td>5 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A challenge with developing a consensus among all local districts</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There would be too many tests</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could lose student interest</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transiency would be a challenge</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation. Only 2 out of 18 believed *there should be proper calendaring*, and *the test should be flexible to transiency*. The other implementation recommendations: *developing a state reporting system, the test being valid, reliable, and aligned to comprehensive schools, feedback given in a timely matter, involving faculty*, were each cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 36).

Table 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be proper calendaring (quarterly, semester, etc.)</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The test would need to be flexible to transiency</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A state reporting system would need to be developed</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test would have to be valid, reliable, and aligned to comprehensive schools</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback should be given in a timely matter</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty will need to be involved</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delphi round 3, research question 4. *Presentations, Projects and Labs were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*

Even though *presentations, projects, and labs* were rated as one of the highest assessment methods in the second survey, it was not responded well by the panelist. Eleven of the 18 expert respondents cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents in their responses.

Facilitators. There were only 5 responses to the facilitators for this assessment method, with 2 out of 18 citing it being *aligned to real work experience*, and the others
supported project based learning, flexible with transiency, and community involvement cited by only 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 37).

Table 37

**Facilitators with Presentations, Projects, or Labs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aligned to real work experience</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Project Based Learning</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible with transiency</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barriers.** The majority of barriers cited were: *consistency from districts statewide* (4 out of 18), *developing a scoring system* (3 out of 18), *the unknown* (2 out of 18), *lack of consistency*, *resistance from legislators, CDE, and CBE*, *open to subjectivity*, and *student anxiety* were each cited by 1 out of 18 (see Table 38).

Table 38

**Barriers with Presentations, Projects, or Labs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistency from districts statewide</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a scoring system</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unknown</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistency</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance from Legislators, CDE, and CBE</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to subjectivity</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Anxiety</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation.** All implementation strategies: *autonomy given to local levels, alignment to PBL and CTE, professional development, exit interviews attached*, and *allowing it to be voluntary*, were each cited by one person (1 out of 18) (see Table 39).
Table 39

*Implementation with Presentations, Projects, or Labs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy given to local levels</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment to PBL and CTE</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit interviews attached</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should be voluntary</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delphi round 3, research question 5.** *State assessments which emphasize improvement were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*

Twelve of the 18 expert panelist responded to this open ended question related to *State assessments which emphasize improvement* and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents in their responses.

**Facilitators.** Two out of the 18 respondents cited *small school size*, and the *CAHSEE* as facilitators to emphasizing improvement as an appropriate state assessment method. The *CAASP, teachers, and students* were each cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 40).

Table 40

*Facilitators State Assessments which Emphasize Improvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small school size</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASHEE</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAASP, SBAC</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Barriers.** Three of the 18 respondents cited *consistency from school to school* as a barrier to emphasizing improvement. Two of the 18 respondents cited the assessment method *not practical to continuation education*. *Majority 12th grade populations, not aligning to standard mastery, transiency, and professional development* were cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 41).

Table 41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistency from school to school</td>
<td>3 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not practical to continuation education</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority 12th grade populations</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not align to standard mastery</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transiency</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation.** There were three respondents whose responses related to the implementation strategies for *emphasizing improvement* as an assessment method. Two respondents out of 18 cited *consistency with the CAASPP*. One respondent out of 18 cited that a *diagnostic component should be embedded* in this assessment method (see Table 42).

Table 42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should be consistence with CAASPP</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A diagnostic component should be embedded</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Delphi round 3, research question 6.** *Smaller more frequently administered test* was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. *What do you see as facilitators and*
barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

Twelve of the 18 expert panelist responded to this open ended question related to smaller more frequently administered test and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all respondents.

**Facilitators.** Even though there were 12 respondents who responded to Research Question 6, there were only four who cited facilitators. Each facilitator: teachers, state leadership, student buy-in, and alignment to curriculum, were each cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 43).

Table 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Leadership</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Buy-in</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligns with Curriculum</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Barriers.** Establishing consensus and resources and planning were each cited by 4 out of 18 respondents as a barrier, and professional development, and attendance were each cited by 1 out of 18 (see Table 44).

Table 44

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing Consensus</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and planning</td>
<td>4 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Implementation.** Two out of 18 respondents cited adding a diagnostic component, and given autonomy locally as an implementation strategy. Establishing consensus, professional development, and developing a state reporting system were each cited by 1 out of 18 respondents (see Table 45).

Table 45

**Implementation with Smaller more Frequently Administered Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be a diagnostic component</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy given locally</td>
<td>2 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus should be established</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a state reporting system</td>
<td>1 out of 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The purpose of this policy Delphi study was to ask CA continuation high school administrators and teachers what effective state assessment methods they recommend for CA continuation high schools. Forty-five respondents provided their expert opinions of effective state assessment methods in Round 1. Twenty-five expert respondents rated the top 23 effective state assessment methods in Round 2 of the research. In the final Round 3 survey 14 of the respondents provided their expert opinions on the facilitators, barriers and recommendations for current top six effective state assessment methods identified in Round 2.

**Closing Remarks**

From this research there appears to be consensus among the respondents that there should be a team of experts with the support of state leadership in developing these assessments. However, there is a lack of confidence by the respondents with state
leadership, and a gap of consensus on the assessment methods themselves. More detail will be provided in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Since NCLB was enacted, there has been urgency in the overall academic accountability for all students nationwide. State leadership and educational experts have since made it a priority in the state of CA, through an enhanced focus on standards-based instruction and accountability (Ford, 2015; Hamilton, 2007). CA continuation high schools have fallen short despite this urgency due mainly to the criteria that “all” students would perform at grade level, specifically when it came to academic achievement and accountability (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2008; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012). Due the nature of CA continuation high schools (transiency, grade levels, low numbers, etc.) it has been impossible to adequately measure student academic achievement levels effectively (J. R. de Velasco, Austin et al., 2012; Probst, 1998).

This flaw has left gaps in the overall structure of academic accountability in the state of CA. Thousands of students are unsuccessfully leaving comprehensive high schools behind in academic skills and credits towards graduation, failing in courses needed towards graduation, struggling under the life hardships of students identified as “at risk,” into CCHS (CDE, 2015i; Schiber, 2006). In these settings they are gaining credits at a faster pace than that of students attending comprehensive high schools, and site leaders have no standard answer to the question of expected mastery of the standards needed to pass the classes (Denham, 1996; Ramstetter, 2013). These same students are graduating from the schools with high school diplomas and set out to compete for jobs and postsecondary opportunities (Burger, 2006; McCaffrey, 2011; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Rumberger, 2011).
There has been limited research on appropriate state assessment methods for CCHS making it difficult to discuss statewide (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013). The subject has been mentioned in some reports and other writings, but not at a level of importance (CDE, 2015h; J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013). This is even a restricted discussion among the continuation high school experts (J. R. de Velasco & McLaughlin, 2012; Perez & Johnson, 2008; Vargas, 2013). In the focus group discussions most stated to have thought about it, but never really discussed it formally with their districts or at their school sites.

The intent of this study was to bring awareness of the issues to the forefront and encourage the much needed conversations amongst state leadership and experts in hopes of informing state policies and practice in building an appropriate assessment method that would effectively measure the academic achievement of the students attending CA continuation high schools.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for CA continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method.

**Research Questions**

**Round 1**

1. What are effective assessment methods that should be used in CA continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success
according to experts in CA continuation education?

Round 2

2. How do experts in CA continuation education rate the assessment methods identified in Research Question 1 as to their effectiveness in accurately assessing student academic achievement and success?

Round 3

3. What assessment tools do experts in CA continuation education identify as most effective for each of the five most effective methods identified in Research Question 2 to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

Methodology

The primary purpose for this study was to identify the most effective state assessment methods for CA continuation high schools. This method utilized a Policy Delphi process to gather consensus from continuation high school administrators and teachers. This widely used method gathers a convergence of opinions from experts on a specific topic for the purposes of developing policy, or future planning (Sandford & Chia-Chien, 2007; Watson, 2008; Yousuf, 2007).

This study used an online survey application called Survey Monkey, and email as modes of collecting data and communicating with the experts. Several rounds of information were gathered and feedback was utilized to achieve consensus among the Delphi panel of experts (Watson, 2008; Zeedick, 2010). This study employed three rounds of data gathering and feedback using an Internet-based survey application and
focus group discussion for all rounds of the Delphi (Zeedick, 2010). The data gathered from each round of surveys was used to generate the survey for the next survey.

The first questionnaire asked an open ended question: *What are appropriate assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student achievement and success?* Responses from this survey were coded by themes and used for the second questionnaire. The second questionnaire was a Likert-scale with identified assessment methods from the first questionnaire to be rated by levels of effectiveness. The assessment methods were rated by weighted mean scores.

The top six were placed on the third and final questionnaire, which asked the experts to identify the barriers, facilitators, and implementation strategies of each of the six assessment methods identified from the second questionnaire.

**Population**

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalize results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study the population is all continuation school administrators and teachers in the State of CA. There are approximately 500 continuation schools in CA, each with at least one administrator.

**Target Population**

The target population for this study was CA continuation school administrators and teachers with over three years of experience chosen from the members of the CCEA and members of the ACSA Educational Options Committee. There are approximately 40 administrators and teachers who were targeted members of CCEA, and 19 form the
ACSA Education Options Committee. The researcher posted the survey on the CCEA Face Book page for more respondents.

The first questionnaire with the consent form attached was sent to the targeted population encouraging them to forward the link to other administrators or teachers fitting the criteria. The questionnaire consisted of 10 multiple choice and four open ended questions for consent and demographic purposes and the open ended Delphi question. There were 58 who responded to the first survey with 45 who actually qualified for the research. There were 13 who did not qualify and therefore were not able to participate in the study because they did not meet the minimum years of experience in continuation high schools.

The second survey was a Likert-scale requiring the respondent to rate each listed assessment method identified in the first survey. There were 23 assessment methods listed which were coded from the first survey. The rating system was ranked as (a) least effective, (b) not very effective, (c) moderately effective, (d) effective, (e) very effective, and (f) highly effective. Twenty-five of the 47 respondents participated in the survey.

The third survey listed the top six assessment methods and asked the panelist to identify facilitators, barriers, and implementation strategies of the selected assessment methods. There were 14 panelists who responded.

Sample

The sample population for this study comprised 19 principals, 5 assistant principals, and 19 teachers; of which were 42% males and 58% females. The ethnicity of these participants encompassed: (a) 2.27% Indian or Native American, (b) 6.82% Asian
or Pacific Islander, (c) 4.55% African American, (d) 6.82% Hispanic American, (e) 77.27% Caucasian, and (f) 2.27% Multiple Ethnicity.

From this sample population (a) 13.33% specified to have 3 to 5 years’ experience in continuation high schools, (b) 28.89% indicated 5 to 10 years, (c) 44.44% 10 to 20 years, and (d) 13.33% who indicated more than 20 years’ experience in continuation high school.

Demographically, the participants represented: (a) 34.09% from the San Francisco regional area, (b) 18.18% from the Northern area, (c) 13.64% from the Central Valley area, (d) 18.18% from the Los Angeles/Orange County area, (e) 19.09% from the dessert area, and (f) 6.82% from the San Diego/Imperial area.

**Major Findings**

The findings of this study identified major elements that were not formally discussed prior to this study. It identified potential accurate methods and tools for assessment and accountability to accurately monitor student achievement in CA continuation high schools. At present there is no research based, mandated assessment methods to measure academic achievement in CA continuation high schools. These findings are also the starting point in filling a gap in the existing body of knowledge of CA accountability structures and measurements for the academic achievement of students attending continuation high schools.

A summary of the key findings are presented in this chapter as determined in Chapter IV. Major findings from each round of the Delphi study are presented and organized by research question and by round.
**Delphi Round 1**

In addition to questions for demographic purposes, Round 1 of the Delphi study included an open-ended question that was designed to solicit a broad range of responses. The question was posed to a panel of administrators and teachers with continuation high school experience via an electronic questionnaire.

**Delphi round 1, research question 1.** What are appropriate state assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

An expert panel of continuation high school administrators was asked to identify appropriate state assessment methods that should be used in CA continuation high schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success. There were 23 methods identified by the panelists with the top three: *methods that assessed graduation rates, the CAHSEE, and that there would to be an assessment process developed by experts due to no known assessment method.*

Analysis of the responses identified significant findings. The first finding indicated the lack of confidence in the state leadership or others responsible for the development of the current assessment methods, stating that there was no evidence of consideration for continuation high schools in the development.

The second finding was a belief that there were no current assessments developed to accurately measure students attending continuation high schools. They wrote that the assessment methods should be designed by experts with state leadership assistance. The third finding was a higher number of experts who believed that the CAHSEE, or an assessment which would measure student’s ability to demonstrate readiness towards
graduation, was the most appropriate measurement of academic success. However, some felt that with minor modifications the CAHSEE could potentially be the assessment method used state wide.

What is major regarding these findings is the discrepancy in student academic expectations. The experts thematically responded to assessments which were summative or comprehensive in nature which would measure the student’s ability to demonstrate abilities towards graduation. In the beginning of this study it was hypothesized that continuation high school students were included in the “all” indicated in the expectations following the NCLB (Brand, 2011; Hamilton, 2007; Stecher et al., 2010).

The student’s ability to show mastery of learning standards was not a priority to the experts. Based on this research, the experts felt that the students attending CA continuation high schools were not concerned with state standardized test. One expert wrote: “Our students don’t care about standardized tests. Most just do the bare minimum to get by. The only standardized test they would work towards was the CAHSEE”

Another element that was common among the experts was time. Seniors make up a major part of the student population attending CA continuation high schools, which most enroll with credit deficiencies.

Another expert stated: “Test used should be aligned with our mission of increasing the student’s chance of getting a diploma in the short time we have them. Recognize that the testing does little, at this point for the student.”

There was a lack of confidence in the standards themselves, with the experts writing that they should be the ones developing the standards and assessments for CA continuation high schools. The experts also supported assessment indicators which
would measure the student’s abilities towards vocational or adult living skills. One expert wrote, “The transient rate of our students is high and we should not be held responsible for what the students have learned unless they have been with us for a significant amount of time. The focus should be on creating literate adults and teaching skills to make them fire-able.”

There were however, experts who felt that the students should master academic expectations, but they should be basic and measured in a test such as community college diagnostics or the CAHSEE.

**Delphi Round 2**

All 23 identified assessment methods were analyzed and categorized into a Likert scale, and given in Round 2. Expert panelists were asked to rate the degree of importance in six levels of effectiveness (a) least effective, (b) not very effective, (c) moderately effective, (d) effective, very effective, and (e) highly effective. Methods were ranked by the mean score ratings on the Likert scale of respondents to the assessment methods.

One major finding was the top assessment methods identified by the expert panelists. Twenty-three assessment methods were identified by the coding and categorization of responses from the panelists in the first round of surveys. The experts mentioned methods related assessments towards graduation more frequently than the other 23 identified. However, in the second round, they rated smaller more frequently administered assessments such as pre and post assessment methods.

Based on the rating of degree of effectiveness the panelists identified:

*Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year with a mean score of 4.38, Save Rate method with a mean score of 4.15, Presentations, Projects, or Labs with a mean*
score of 4.08, State Assessments which emphasize improvement with a mean score of 4.04, Smaller more frequently administered assessments, and No known effective method. It would have to be developed by a team of experts.

There was a high mean score supporting the Save Rate method as an appropriate assessment method. The Save Rate method is a rating system measuring numbers of identified students exiting alternative education programs based on the school district. Its measurement indicators are based on LCAP goals. This would support findings from Round 1 indicating that there are panelists who believe that academic achievement does not necessarily have to be based on standard mastery, but on a student’s ability to graduate successfully from school.

There was a 71% positive rating supporting presentations, projects, and labs. This would indicate a belief in a more creative and project based way of measuring and demonstrating academic achievement other than traditional methods. This also validated the expert’s response to the first survey supporting the student’s ability to demonstrate vocational skills towards adult life and graduation.

**Delphi Round 3**

The third round of the Delphi study included six open-ended questions responding to the top six assessment methods based on the mean scores in the second survey. There were 18 expert panelists who responded to the third survey sent out to the same population of continuation high school administrators and teachers. These open-ended questions were designed to solicit a broad range of responses regarding the most effective state assessment method. The open-ended questions were also designed to identify the most effective for identifying the facilitators, barriers, and implementation processes.
Delphi round 3, research question 1. Developing a new assessment method with a team or committee of experts was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

Facilitators. Expert panelists agreed that developing a team or committee of experts to design an assessment process as the best assessment method for CA continuation high schools. This method received the most responses than the others from the expert panelists. The experts expressed in their responses concern in the abilities of state leadership in developing the proper indicators to practically measure the student’s academic performance. They believed the continuation expertise should be the main facilitator but also felt that state leadership such as: legislators, CDE, and specific committees should assist as facilitators and be involved in the process.

Based on the first two surveys, this would validate the expert’s writings related to their lack of confidence in the current assessments and the people who have developed them. Also, this would indicate their lack of support in the current standards in which the students are measured.

There was also agreement among the panelists that the ACSA Education Option Council to be a facilitator and resource to the expert body of developers of the state assessment methods. This is an already established state expert group working on methods to strengthen alternative education statewide. Most all members of CCEA are familiar with the Education Options Council which would indicate the response of them as a facilitator.
The other facilitators listed had very little consensus among the panelists. They, however showed interest in former assessments or past practices as a building point, which would indicate why panelists rated past tests with modifications somewhat high. Other facilitators listed were teachers, community college exams, and even the state leadership. This would indicate that some panelists believed that the state leadership would still need to be involved in some capacity during the process of developing state assessment methods.

**Barriers.** As it related to the barriers, the respondents rated the state leadership and cooperation from them as the biggest barrier. Again in their responses to the open ended questions, the experts indicate their beliefs that CA continuation high schools are not considered while developing state standards or methods to measure academic achievement. This would indicate a lack of confidence of the panelists in the state leadership. The state leadership represented legislators, CDE, and the CBE. The feedback from this open ended question indicated that some panelists felt that the state leadership has shown little interest in continuation education and a lack of priority in setting policies in assessment or practices related to continuation education.

Working with experts to develop an assessment specifically for continuation high schools being a new paradigm in research and formal discussion, was listed as a barrier. Some panelists felt that more discussion and research will be needed to continue this process and the unknown and process itself will take a great deal of work and time to effectively develop an appropriate assessment method.

Other barriers listed include: *establishing the team of experts, student academic levels, time, demographics student needs, current assessments* and *getting the input*, were
listed as barriers by just one or two respondents. This would indicate that the work needed in completing this task will take effort, and the work will have to include the specific needs of the students.

**Implementations.** The biggest consensus of implementation strategies was around the assembling of the experts. The responses in this open ended question expressed concerns and suggestions from the panelists in the process of how this team should be developed. Some felt that this panel should be *developed from the Education Options Council*; some felt that it should be *facilitated with state leadership*. One or two of the panel members advised *building from past assessments and practices from experts*, and *surveying the student populations*.

**Delphi round 3, research question 2.** "Save Rate" method was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. *What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*

The Save Rate method is not an assessment method, however was selected by the expert panelist. The Save Rate method is a data system measuring progress of students in alternative education programs. This method is based on a report in the form of a spreadsheet who displays indicators such as; suspension numbers, Credit completion, California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) related to student movement, school of attendance, graduation date, or drop date. A student is considered saved if they have graduated from their alternative program verses students who have dropped out of school. This method is in the development stage supported by the Education Options Council of ACSA.
Facilitators. This method, even though highly rated, had little responses from the expert panelists regarding facilitators. Twenty-eight percent of the 18 panelists responded to this portion of the open ended question. Each facilitator only had one to two respondents. The facilitators were the Education Options Council, and the indicators which are being used for student success measurement. The Save Rate method is actually driven by the Education Options Council. This is a method which this council is currently developing and presenting to state leadership. Members of this council participated in the surveys, which would indicate certain panelists’ interest in this method. The indicators used for measurement are based the LCAP goals.

Panelists’ responses who believe the Save Rate method as an appropriate assessment method state that the measurement of success of students who have exited the alternative education programs is measurement enough. That, due to the high numbers of seniors, measurement of academic achievement at the continuation high school level is not necessary. This would further support expert’s beliefs that measuring based on current state standards are not practical indicators for student success in continuation high schools.

One expert wrote regarding the Save Rate: “One of the indicators of Save Rate is the credit completion; monitoring student progress in classes, intervening with those that are not being successful and providing additional intervention programs after school is a viable option for staff.”
**Barriers.** The Save Rate method is a new process that is currently being worked on by the Education Options Council. It has not been advertised outside of the council. Panelists who found barriers to the Save Rate method were not familiar with it, and stated the lack of knowledge itself to be the barrier. Twenty-two percent of the panelists believed the fact that it did not measure academic success to be a barrier. One to 2 of the panelists felt state leadership and transiency to be barriers as well.

**Implementation.** This element had very little response from the panelists, with only two responding to gaining state leadership as an implementation strategy. The other implementation strategies were gaining professional development, and establishing a consistent way of extracting the data. Others felt that this would have to be driven through the Education Options Council.

**Delphi round 3, research question 3.** *Pre/Posttest given multiple times throughout the year was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*

**Facilitators.** Eighty-three percent of the panelists responded to this open ended question, however like the other questions not all responded consistently to all elements. Panelists who responded felt this to be a reliable form of measurement. Panelists who responded believed this to be the most reliable form of assessment which would support the transiency related to continuation high schools. Assessing a student before and after can show growth in proficiency and assessing the student at different times of the year can catch the students who may leave or enroll during the year. Other panelists felt this
method to be the most formative form of assessment methods working with the pace of instruction.

**Barriers.** Of the panelists who responded some felt that this method would be unrealistic in that there would be too many tests or that it would be difficult to maintain consistency statewide. Others believed the staffing would be a challenge as well, and students would lose interest due to the number of test.

**Implementation.** The experts believed that there would have to be consensus in frequency of the administration of the test. Of the very few panelists responded to the implementation of pre and posttest. Some felt that due to student transiency assessments should be practical and flexible. Others felt that there should be timely responses to the test, and a mechanism supporting faculty involvement.

**Delphi round 3, research question 4.** *Presentations, Projects and Labs were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*

Even though *Presentations, Projects, and Labs* were rated as one of the highest assessment methods in the second survey, it was not responded well by the panelist. Sixty-one percent of the expert panelists responded and cited current facilitators, barriers, and implementations. However, not all elements (facilitators, barriers, and implementations) were consistently cited by all panelists in their responses.

**Facilitators.** The biggest facilitator panelists believed was how working with *presentations, projects, and labs* aligned with vocation, project based learning, or real life skills. Overall the expert believed real life skills, project-based learning, and vocation as
more appropriate indicators than the mastery of the currently established standards. One panelist wrote: “Presentations and projects are needed in any job capacity. By measuring these skills, the student may view his or her developments over the short time they are enrolled in a continuation school.

Another wrote: “These are real work experiences that students need to have prior to entering the world of work. The implementation at CCHS is just a matter of district/sites deciding that this is part of the curriculum and get trained.”

**Barriers.** Panelists felt overall that it would be difficult to establish consistency particularly with assessments and a scoring system. There was one member who suggested that this method would leave too much room for subjectivity, and another member stated that there was fear of the unknown.

**Implementation.** Of the panelists who responded, autonomy was suggested as an implementation strategy of this method. Each implementation strategy was suggested by one member of the panel of experts. One stated that autonomy would have to be given to each district for this method to be successful. Other suggestions were to align this with PBL or CTE, or making it voluntary. Another member stated that it should be assessed by exit interviews.

**Delphi round 3, research question 5.** *State assessments which emphasize improvement were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?*
Facilitators. There were only two panelists who even responded to this element indicating a change of interest in this method. However, a strong point brought out by the two was the small size of the schools. The panelists felt the small size gave each school the flexibility to provide creative ways to assess and measure the improvement of each student.

One of the beliefs of the experts in the other rounds, particularly with the teachers, was basic academic skills were more important than actual standard mastery. Experts wrote in the open ended questions of the first round that students enrolled mostly at low levels, requiring more scaffolding in instruction not giving them enough time to bring the students to mastery levels before graduation. However measuring the growth of the academic levels would indicate the student’s growth potential as well hold the school accountable to student learning.

Barriers. Like other methods listed some members felt that a barrier to be a lack of consistency form school to school. The majority of all CA continuation high schools consist of mostly seniors attending. Panel members felt that this, along with transiency would be a barrier to assessing accurately. Another member stated that improvement does not necessarily equate with mastery of standards instructed. Another felt that this method was not practical to continuation high schools.

Implementation. Only two panel members responded to this element of the open ended question. One member stated that this method should be aligned to CAASPP, and another felt that there should be a diagnostic component embedded with in this method.

Delphi round 3, research question 6. Smaller more frequently administered test was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and
barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

**Facilitators.** There was very little response to this method with four facilitators. Each facilitator had only one respondent, indicating little interest in this method the third round. The facilitators listed were teachers, student buy-in, aligned to curriculum, and state leadership.

Responses to the open ended questions centered on the alignment of this method to vocational training and project based learning as a strong facilitator. The experts that responded seemed to believe that this method best prepared students for real life in adulthood and post-secondary education.

**Barriers.** As it related to the barriers, there were more responses which would indicate a change in mind of the panelist this round. Some panelist stated that establishing resources, planning, and consensus would be a challenge to the process, and one member felt that student attendance would also be a barrier.

**Implementation.** Two members each felt that there should be a diagnostic component and autonomy for this process. Other implementation strategies were establishing consensus and a state reporting system.

**Unexpected Findings**

A major unexpected finding was a discrepancy among the experts regarding the actual academic expectations of the students themselves. In the beginning, it was hypothesized that there was an understood expectation that all students must master the expected standards which are measured in the state assessments. This was to dictate the rigor in the instructional practices in all classrooms including continuation high schools.
This research has exposed a lack of efficacy in the students attending CA continuation high schools’ ability to master state standards in the same manner as students attending comprehensive high schools.

Another unexpected finding was the differences in the higher ranked methods from the first round to the second. In the first round of questions experts favored assessments that generally measured the student’s ability to prove they were ready to graduate. Assessments such as the CAHSEE or assessments measuring graduation rates were at the top of the list of assessments. In the second round of surveys experts rated assessments which were more formative in nature; however the Save Rate was rated the second highest in the second and third round of surveys, which surprisingly is not an assessment at all.

The Save Rate is a data collecting process supported by the Education Options committee of the ACSA, to indicate the number of students who have successfully completed the alternative schools attended. This again would demonstrate that the experts were more interested in the student finishing school than actually proving mastery of state expected standards.

Another unexpected finding was during the first round of surveys in which the panelists were asked demographic open ended questions related to indicators that should be assessed. The unexpected finding was the discrepancy between the teachers and administrators surveyed. While the intent of each research question was to identify assessment methods to assess student academic achievement and success based on the student’s ability to master expected standards as the indicator, the teacher panelists surveyed, as a whole, were more concerned with indicators related to basic academic
skills, and the administrators surveyed were more concerned with indicators which measured the student’s ability to gain basic life skills and graduation competition.

**Conclusions**

As it relates to the assessment methods themselves, the experts seem to feel that they should be redeveloped by them with the support and assistance of state leadership. The standards currently developed were not established with continuation schools in mind and should show consideration of that for future development.

As it relates to the expected academic achievement and instructional practices, the experts seem to lean towards the basic reading and math programs such as Read 180, or the SRI programs. Students who attend CA continuation high schools are too low in skills to be held accountable to the current state standards in the time from enrollment to graduation.

The measurement itself mostly proposed by the experts were either more frequently administered exams to support transiency, exams such as community college diagnostic exams, or summative exams such as the CAHSEE.

The intentions in the beginning of this study were motivated by a belief that all students should be held accountable to the same learning objectives. To not provide this would be to deprive the student of equality of a quality education providing preparation to compete with globally for post education or employment. After conducting this study it has demonstrated a gap in consensus to what this quality in education would look like.

Experts felt that to expect a student who is already behind in academic skills to enroll in a continuation high school and to become as proficient in the state establish
standards to be unrealistic. They felt the emphasis should be placed on basic life skills, and graduation preparation.

The purpose of this mixed methods Delphi study was to identify appropriate assessment methods for CA continuation high schools, to rate the respective effectiveness of the identified methods, and to identify appropriate assessment tools that effectively measure academic achievement for each assessment method. The intended results of this study will fill a gap in the existing body of knowledge of CA accountability structures and measurements for the academic achievement of students attending continuation high schools.

In the second survey experts listed: Pre and posttest multiple times throughout the year, save rate, presentations, projects, or labs, state assessment which emphasize improvement, smaller more frequently administered assessments, and it will need to be developed by a team of experts, as the highest rated assessment methods. However in the third survey: It will need to be developed by a team of experts had the most respondents and feedback.

Based on the findings of this study, developing an effective state assessment method will take the collaboration of a team of experts from the classrooms, school sites, and state leadership. The experts will have to take a closer look at what indicators with which to measure academic achievement, build a more productive relationship with state leadership. There is a strong lack of confidence in state leadership (legislators, CDE, and CBE), however among the experts there is a wide range of ideas related to indicators, or what the assessments should look like.
It is apparent that there will be need for more conversations in this area with a deeper focus. One focus would be the expectations themselves. What should be expected academically from a student who has successfully completed a continuation high school? How, as a state or nation, should a continuation high school be held accountable to the instruction and student graduation preparation? As a state when we say “all” with regards to mastery of standards or academic achievement, what are we stating about students attending continuation high schools?

The overall conclusion from the findings of this study is that the experts themselves believe that the development of an assessment process designed specifically for CA continuation education by continuation education experts is necessary and long overdue. The use of assessment methods designed for general education has not been a fit for the different dynamics of continuation schools leaving the present state of assessment for continuation as invalid. A valid, concrete, and professionally designed assessment system is the least that should be expected for continuation schools and students.

**Recommendations for Action**

This study gathered data from expert teacher leaders and administrators with at least three years of continuation high school experience. Findings showed that experts do not have confidence that present assessment methods are appropriate for continuation education in CA. Findings further showed that experts believe that there should be a team of experts created to design and determine the assessments for continuation education. Based upon this, the recommendations for action are:

- There must be a team of experts gathered from the California Continuation
Education Association and ACSA Education Options Council to design and develop an assessment process specifically for California Continuation Education.

- The experts must contain teachers and administrators since the data from this study showed that these two groups have differing views of the assessment issue.

- This team must identify and build consensus on appropriate indicators for measurement so a valid, cohesive assessment process can be designed.

- In developing an effective assessment process, experts should look at and build on past assessments where appropriate and develop new assessments where appropriate. The data stated that experts supported other assessments with modifications so a blend of these components would yield a comprehensive assessment design.

- Whatever assessment system is designed must be field tested and modified as appropriate to assure reliability and validity prior to general adoption and implementation.

- The experts must work productively with and develop advocates within both the CA Legislature and CDE to assure that the assessment process developed is approved for implementation and made into policy for continuation education.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Findings from this study suggest the following recommendations for further research:
• Conduct a study which will build on this one, comparing teacher perspective with administrative.

• Conduct a study examining instruction rigor with continuation high school teachers.

• Conduct a study comparing the difference between the academic achievement comprehensive school students with continuation high school students.

• Conduct a study to determine the academic expectations for achievement for continuation high school students.

• Conduct a study to identify how an independent reporting and tracking system could work.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This study began with a statement that education is the responsibility of the educator, and the person being educated, with the goal of graduation as the end result (Pickett, 2007). Educators from the state to the classrooms are promising the same education for all students. However, students are leaving comprehensive high schools and registering in continuation high schools, gaining credits at an accelerated level. Some will graduate with and understanding that they have earned a diploma under the same standards and expectations as their comprehensive school colleagues yet the assessment methods currently used in continuation education do not assure that this is true.

Some will argue that a diploma, even if it is based on reduced standards, will give a student at risk of not graduating from high school an opportunity. Others would argue that not holding the student to the same expectations as comprehensive students is
cheating the student of a quality education. The challenge is an assessment method that would adequately and with validity measure this student’s level of achievement.

Currently there is no assessment method for CA continuation schools that would provide this effective measurement.

This study has started the discussion with experts from continuation high schools however, there will need to be more for this to be an effective movement. This discussion will have to continue and eventually reach the powers that be. It has also exposed some discrepancies even between the experts that will need to be further researched.
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## APPENDIX A

### Literature Matrix

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APPENDIX B

Delphi Survey Round 1

Research on Effective State Assessment Methods for Continuation High Schools

Invitation, Consent Form, and Survey #1
Brandman University IRB approved.

A Delphi Study of an Effective State Assessment Method for Continuation High School

Lead Researcher
Edison Kelly, Doctoral Candidate
Brandman University
Department of Education
707-639-7789, kelt3202@mail.brandman.edu

Faculty Sponsor
Dr. Phillip Pendley
Brandman University
Department of Education
951-712-2065, pendley@brandman.edu

Dear esteemed colleague,

You are invited to participate in a research study that will examine the potential of an effective state assessment method measuring the student achievement of students attending California Continuation High Schools. Specifically, you will be asked your expert opinion on the design of an appropriate state assessment method for continuation high schools.

You will receive three rounds of electronic surveys. The first survey will be sent on October 1st and will take approximately 10 minutes and can be completed at your convenience by October 8, 2015. The second survey will be sent on October 15th and will take approximately 15 minutes and can be completed at your convenience by October 22, 2015. The final survey will be sent on October 29th and will take approximately 15 minutes at can be completed at your convenience by November 5, 2015.

This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The survey will be completed anonymously and the researchers will not know your identity.

There are no direct benefits from participation in the study. However, analysis of the data generated by this study is intended to advance the knowledge and understanding on California state assessment methods of continuation high school students.

Participation in this study is voluntary. There is no cost to you for participating, and you will not be
paid for your participation. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty. You may choose to exit the study at any time.

All research data collected will be stored securely and confidentially on a secure server that is password protected. No identifiable information will be collected about you. Because you will complete the survey anonymously, your name or other identifying information will not be used in reports or publications. Only the research team may have access to study records to protect participants’ safety and welfare.

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the researchers listed at the top of this form. If you are unable to reach the researchers and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Brandman’s Office of Institutional Research Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, BUIRB@brandman.edu.

1. Do you agree to participate in this study?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Are you currently a Principal, Assistant Principal, or Teacher
   - Principal
   - Assistant Principal
   - Teacher

3. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

4. Please enter the number of years in your current position.

5. What is your age?
6. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic American
- White / Caucasian
- Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

7. Please indicate your years of experience in the California continuation high school.

- less than 3 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 5 to ten years
- ten to twenty years
- more than twenty years

8. Please indicate the size of your school district.

- Single continuation high school district.
- District with two continuation high schools.
- District with more than two continuation high schools.
- Other (please specify)
9. Please indicate the California region of your school district based on the six Regional Consortia.

- North/Far North
- San Francisco Bay Area
- Central Valley/Mother Lode
- Los Angeles/Orange County
- Desert
- San Diego/Imperial

10. Please indicate your college's 2014-15 enrollment by FTEs.

- Less than 5
- 5 to ten
- More than ten

11. What are appropriate state assessment methods that should be used in California Continuation High Schools to accurately assess student academic achievement and success?

For the purposes of this study, State assessment methods for California continuation high schools are assessments to measure and report student achievement for students that attend California continuation high schools, however still holding them responsible for the same standards as students attending comprehensive high schools. You may list as many as you feel necessary.

12. What are some ways you measure student academic performance at your school?
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<td>14. What are your thoughts regarding student state assessment accountability and continuation high schools?</td>
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15. What are some indicators that you feel should be assessed in a continuation high school?
Effective State Assessment Methods for California Continuation High Schools

In the first survey experts were asked to identify effective state assessments for continuation high schools. Below is a list of assessments methods identified by experts from the first survey.

In this second survey, you are asked now to rate state assessment methods identified by you and your colleagues in the first survey. Please rate each method on the (Likert) scale with 1 being least effective and 6 being highly effective.

Remember we are looking to develop an assessment that will accurately measure achievement levels for students attending continuation high schools despite unique issues.

This survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey by October 14, 2015.

There are 23 suggested state assessments identified by experts from the first survey. Even if you did not take teh first survey you can still take this one. Please kindly email me at kell3202@mail.brandman.edu when you have completed this survey.

Thank you,

Edison Kelly
kell3202@mail.brandman.edu

1. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

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2. CAASPP with modifications

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3. Smarter Balanced Testing (SBAC) with modifications

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4. Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) with modifications

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5. Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)

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6. Bring back the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) with modifications

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7. There is no known assessment method currently. It will need to be developed by a team of experts

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8. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments

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APPENDIX D

Delphi Survey Round 3

Effective State Assessment Methods for California Continuation High Schools

In survey #2 of this research, all participants rated the most perceived effective state assessment methods for California continuation high schools. The top seven rated strategies are listed and we are asking you to provide feedback on the biggest facilitators and the biggest barriers to implementation.

The first 7 questions are repeat questions from Survey #1 for data collection purposes. The last questions starting with 8, are open-ended questions requesting that you provide your opinion on the facilitators, barriers and recommendations of the highest rated state assessment methods from Survey #2. For the purpose of this survey, a facilitator is a resource or person that facilitates successful implementation. Thank you for your expertise and opinion.

1. Developing a new assessment method with a team or committee of experts was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

2. "Save Rate" method was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

3. Pre/Post test given multiple times throughout the year was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

4. Presentations, Projects and Labs were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?

5. State assessments which emphasize improvement was rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?
6. Smaller, more frequently administered tests were rated as one of the highest assessment methods. What do you see as facilitators and barriers? How would you recommend implementing this as an assessment method for California continuation high schools?
APPENDIX E

IRB Approval Form

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB Application Action – Approval

Date: 8/14/2015

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Edison Kelly

Faculty or Student ID Number: D00276424

Title of Research Project:
A Delphi Study of an Effective State Assessment Method for Continuation High Schools

Project Type: ☑ New  ☐ Continuation  ☐ Resubmission

Category that applies to your research:
☑ Doctoral Dissertation EdD
☐ DNP Clinical Project
☐ Masters' Thesis
☐ Course Project
☐ Faculty Professional/Academic Research
☐ Other:

Funded: ☑ No  ☐ Yes

(Funding Agency; Type of Funding; Grant Number)

Project Duration (cannot exceed 1 year): 3 months, September through November

Principal Investigator's Address: 795 Gandhurst Drive Vallejo, CA, 94591

Email Address: kel3202@brandman.edu  Telephone Number: (707) 639-7769

Faculty Advisor/Sponsor/Chair Name: Dr. Philip Pendley

Email Address: pendley@brandman.edu  Telephone Number: (925) 712-2066

Category of Review:
☑ Expedited Review  ☐ Standard Review


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☑ I have completed the NIH Certification and included a copy with this proposal
☐ NIH Certificate currently on file in the office of the IRB Chair or Department Office

Signature of Principal Investigator: Edison Kelly - School Management and Support  Date: 8/26/2015

Signature of Faculty Advisor/ Sponsor/Dissertation Chair: Dr. Phil Pendley  Date: 8/14/2015
BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL
COMPLETED BY BUIRB

IRB ACTION/APPROVAL

☐ Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.
☐ Approved/Certified as Exempt form IRB Review.
☐ Approved as submitted.
☒ Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)
☐ Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)
☐ Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: ☐ No Risk ☑ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

Thank you for your application. Within you mention recruitment via a circulated list at both the ACSA and CCEA meetings. Please provide a sample of the verblage that will accompany the list(s) upon your re-submission. *The actual form is preferred.* Thank you.

Dr. Jalin B. Johnson

Telephone: 909.481.1804 Email: jbrooks@brandman.edu

BUIRB Chair: Doug DeVore Date: 9/25/2015

REVISED IRB Application ☑ Approved ☐ Returned

Name: Douglas P. DeVore

Telephone: 623-293-2421 Email: ddevore@brandman.edu Date: 9-30-15

BUIRB Chair: Douglas DeVore