

Good afternoon - I wanted to provide testimony and feedback on SB19 as a gifted coordinator and former middle school and high school math teacher, specifically including students in 8th grade Math and Algebra 1. I acknowledge the effort of SB19 to provide advanced learning opportunities in math, however I have very specific concerns about automatic placement into advanced math opportunities, especially Algebra 1, for students based on achievement accomplished or advanced on an OST. OSTs are designed to measure content that has been taught during the school year, and are not assessing a student's readiness for above-grade level math content or achievement.

Automatically enrolling 7th grade students who have scored accomplished or advanced into Algebra 1 means many students will miss extremely important foundational concepts, especially those in the geometry domain, in the current Math 8 curriculum, when being placed into Algebra. This will put teachers in a difficult position, who may have to lower the expectations and standard of the current Algebra 1 course to ensure these students are not left behind because they do not truly have readiness for that jump. This also disrupts many district's established acceleration pathways, including strategically planned and coordinated compacted courses and curriculums to ensure student success, which also serve as gifted service for many districts, especially smaller districts outside of major metropolitan areas.

Furthermore, this will result in potentially lowering the quality of gifted service for gifted students, and effectively undo many of the efforts of the established gifted rule which require courses to ensure they have adequate depth, complexity, and rigor for gifted students who are truly ready for above-grade level work. The OST is not an approved assessment for identifying giftedness, does not adequately measure aptitude and readiness, and will errantly place not-yet-ready students into inappropriate above-level courses without district discretion to adequately analyze student data and needs.

Additionally, students in lower grades who are placed in above-level coursework in math they are not yet ready for will lead to critical gaps in foundational math knowledge which will ultimately affect future performance, and place an even greater burden on our already-overworked teachers to address even wider gaps in readiness within the classroom. This will be extremely detrimental for math achievement for all students in the class, not just those who have been placed in an above-level opportunity.

I acknowledge the need for advanced math opportunities and would argue for district discretion to set data-based criteria, potentially including consideration of prior OST performance for appropriate math course placement, along with other local assessments and student data points.

Thank you for your time -