EXPLANATORY EFFECTS OF TEXAS HOUSE BILL 5 ON COLLEGE ALGEBRA

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Abstract:
In recent years, the population of academically underprepared mathematics students attending college is significantly increasing. These students arrive to college unaware that they lack the proper learning strategies that are necessary for academic success. Many institutions use entrance exam scores to place these students in developmental education courses and students still struggle at this level.

In June 2013, Texas State legislature with the support of Governor Rick Perry and the Texas School Board of Education (SBOE) passed House Bill 5 (HB5), which reduces the graduation requirements for high school students beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The new legislation only requires current high school students to pass Algebra 1, Geometry, and one additional mathematics course of the student’s choosing from a list of SBOE approved (less rigorous) alternatives to Algebra 2. Since Algebra 2 is no longer a requirement for obtaining a high school diploma, the State Legislature and SBOE created a new mathematics placement exam, Texas Success Initiative (TSI). The TSI assessment presently reflects the mathematics curriculum revisions of HB5 as well as replace previous placement exams such as Asset, THEA, Accuplacer and Compass into one standardized state placement exam.

This study’s goal investigates the aptitude of the new TSI placement exam and its cut-off scores which place more students into credit bearing College Algebra course instead of a non-credit bearing preparatory course of developmental mathematics.

Ms. Webre is a doctoral student at Texas State and her research interests involve investigating the Learning Strategies such as Help Seeking Behavior of college algebra students.