



Testimony at the California Senate Education Committee Hearing in Favor of SB 1067 for Early Math Screening

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Good morning Madam Chair and Committee members, and thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Charles Wilkes. I am an assistant professor of math and education in the School of Education at UC Davis. I'm here to share why this bill matters from a resource perspective. As it has been mentioned, children are not born believing they are or are not math people. They come into the world curious about patterns, quantities, and relationships. They are natural sense makers and this bill builds on those existing strengths.

Research in early mathematics learning is clear, early math development is a strong predictor of later academic success. Unfortunately in California, K-12 mathematics achievement has been persistently low, affecting high school graduation rates and college readiness. That makes the early years critical because it is when foundational understandings are formed, both in content learning and in identity construction. These foundations include ideas such as number sense, one-to-one correspondence, comparing quantities, and special reasoning. While they may seem simple, because math learning is both cumulative and interconnected, students who don't master foundational math skills in K-2 are impacted later when learning algebra and beyond.

An example of this pattern is reflected in California's own data. As recently as 2025, 46 percent of all third grades were proficient in math, yet compared with just 33 percent of 11th graders. This is where screening plays an important role. A math screener is a brief, developmentally appropriate check that helps teachers understand how students are developing these foundational skills. It is neither punitive nor diagnostic. It simply provides timely information so educators can respond early before small gaps become larger barriers.

Research shows that students who are identified early, typically in grades K-2, and given targeted timely evidence-based interventions can make significant and sustained gains in mathematics achievement. Identifying using screeners requires screeners that recognize students' cultural, linguistic and lived experience as strengths. This is especially important given the long standing disparities in mathematics outcomes for marginalized students, which are not reflections of ability but of opportunity. Students enter school capable and curious, the question is whether our system recognizes that potential early enough and provides support to nurture it. SB-1067 is not a complete solution, but it is a meaningful step toward earlier and more responsive support. When we invest early, we invest in students' confidence, curiosity, and opportunity. Thank you.

Watch the testimony [here](#).