

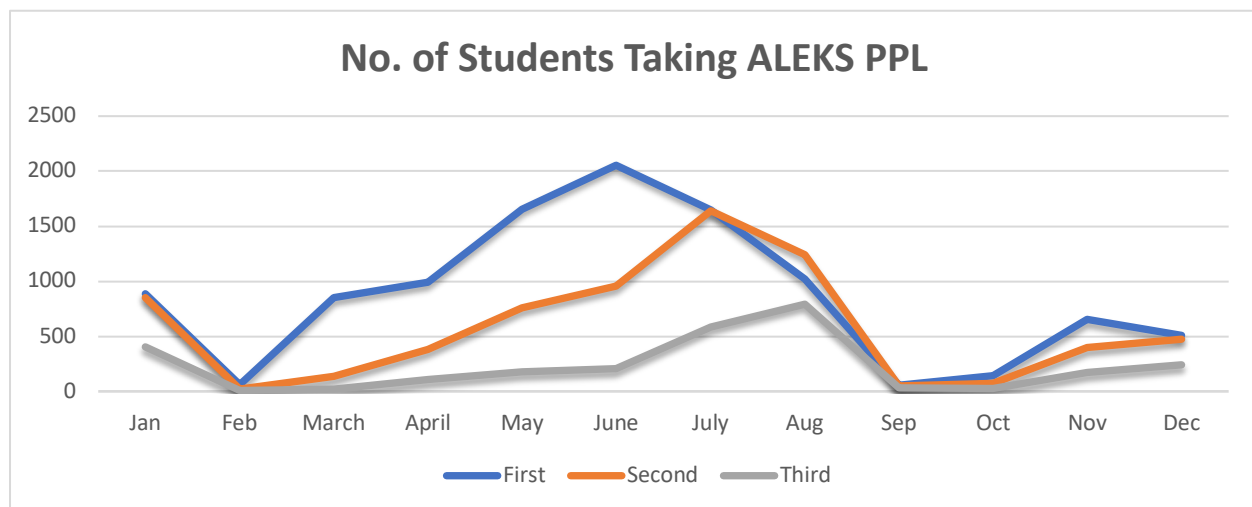
## Sacramento State Partners with School Districts to Improve Math Readiness and Math Placement February 13, 2020

Taking full advantage of the ALEKS PPL system requires sufficient time for students to take the assessments and explore the learning modules to refresh their skills. Multiple attempts help develop the students' knowledge space and build an individualized study plan. The versatility and adaptability of the ALEKS PPL system is appealing to a variety of universities in both the CSU and UC but also across the nation.

At Sacramento State, the first assessment is not proctored and not used for placement. Students may take this at their own leisure, but they are encouraged to treat it as if it were a proctored, two-hour test. All subsequent attempts are proctored with the maximum proctored score is used for placement. A minimum of three hours in the practice and learning modules and 48-hour "cool down" period are required between attempts. The Math Department hosts regular proctored testing sessions at no cost to students. Those who are unable to come to campus may use ProctorU.

Our data shows that ALEKS PPL is an effective instrument for effective placement into a variety of mathematics and statistics courses for those students who have not already demonstrated mastery of foundational mathematics topics. For example, in 2015, MATH 29 (Precalculus) had a DFW rate of 31%. In 2018, the DFW rate dropped to 19% and effectively closed the achievement gap. ALEKS PPL was a valuable tool to help the department identify students who would benefit from supplemental instruction based on their score. Using a student's knowledge space profile and score, an instructor can encourage students who have demonstrated sufficient content knowledge to enroll in the next course.

Reviewing data across multiple years, students' mean proctored scores tend to increase with the number of tests. The largest gains typically occurs between the second and third attempt; i.e. the first and second proctored test. Messaging to students to begin using ALEKS PPL begins as soon as they submit their intent to enroll. However, the majority of students wait until June to activate their ALEKS PPL accounts. Subsequent attempts are less popular and typically occur a month later. A concern is that students are not utilizing the full capabilities of the ALEKS PPL system or, worse, discouraged from continuing to work with the system.



Encouraging incoming students to take ALEKS PPL earlier and more often, and to spend more time in the learning modules, should increase scores and reduce enrollment in pathway courses. Toward that end, this year we are working through our Center for College Readiness (already deeply involve in fourth year QR) to partner with regional school districts. Our goal is message students about the importance of ALEKS PPL in the high schools and to host proctored testing sessions in them. This is part of a comprehensive plan to improve student transition from high school to college through partnerships with school districts. Inviting school districts as active partners in the math placement process will help (1) facilitate communication to students and their family's expectations at the university level, (2) encourage more collaboration between instructors and administrators, and (3) assist university faculty design transitional pathways for students between high school and university.