
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 1741
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Urgency: No
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: California College Promise Innovation Grant Program

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program, to be administered by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges (CCC), to distribute grants to support the colleges in establishing or expanding regional programs to address college preparedness, attendance, and graduation, as specified, in partnership with school districts and public postsecondary universities in California.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the Early Commitment to College Program (ECCP), with voluntary participation by pupils and school districts, for the purposes increasing college attendance and success rates among low-income students. The program requires participating school districts to provide specified information on college attendance and to participate in the "Save Me a Spot in College" pledge. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to administer the voluntary program and report on participation rates in 2017. The program is sunset on January 1, 2019. (Education Code § 54710, et seq.)

Existing law also establishes the College Promise Partnership Act until June 30, 2017, which authorizes the Long Beach Community College District and Long Beach Unified School District to enter into a partnership, as specified, to provide participating pupils with an aligned sequence of rigorous high school and college coursework, as specified. The purpose of the program is required to be the provision of a seamless bridge to college for students not already college bound and a reduction of the time for advanced students to complete programs. Existing law also provides for the crediting of additional units of full-time equivalent students attributable to the attendance of partnership students at the community college, as specified. An evaluation of the program is due to the Legislature, by December 30, 2016. (EC § 48810-48814)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program, under the administration of the CCC Chancellor's Office, and authorizes the distribution of grants, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the governing boards of community college districts for this purpose. It:

- a) Establishes the goals of the program as supporting California Community College (CCC) districts in establishing or expanding regional Promise programs in partnership with school districts and public postsecondary universities in California.
- b) Outlines the specific goals to be accomplished by these programs to include:
 - i) Increasing the number and percentage of high school students within the region who:
 - (1) Are prepared for and attend college directly from high school.
 - (2) Are placed in college level math and English at the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU).
 - (3) Successfully transfer from a CCC to a UC or CSU.
 - (4) Graduate with a bachelor's degree.
 - ii) Reducing and eliminating achievement gaps for groups underrepresented in postsecondary education, as specified.
 - iii) Leveraging of existing state and local funding to better align efforts to improve student success.
- 2) Establishes the criteria for receiving a grant under the new program. It:
 - a) Requires that the application demonstrate that the CCC will partner with one or more school districts and one or more CSU or UC campuses in a program that includes all of the following practices/principles:
 - i) Partnership with one or more school districts to establish an Early Commitment to College Program consistent with that authorized under specified Education Code provisions.
 - ii) Partnership with one or more school districts to support and improve high school student preparation for college and reduce postsecondary remediation through specified practices.
 - iii) Utilization of evidence-based placement and student assessment indicators at the CCC district, as specified.
 - iv) Providing access to courses through its registration practices for enrolled students, as well as outreach to these students regarding the Associate Degree for Transfer and the Transfer Entitlement Cal Grant Program.

- b) Requires the Chancellor's office to be responsible for developing application criteria, administrative guidelines, and other requirements for administering the program and outlines specific application and prioritization criteria. It:
 - i) Requires the application criteria to encourage applicants to (and assigns first priority to these applications):
 - (1) Identify public and private sources of funding for purposes of sustainability; and/or,
 - (2) Leverage local and state funding to align efforts to improve student success; and/or,
 - ii) Assigns second priority to applicants that develop partnerships with school districts predominately within the California Community College (CCC) residential boundaries, or serve a greater proportion of students, or develop at least one partnership with a California State University (CSU) campus.
 - c) Requires the Chancellor's office to post all applications that receive funding on its Web site.
- 3) Declares the Legislature's encouragement of:
- a) Various entities, as specified, to provide support services as needed in coordination with the CCCs.
 - b) The Chancellor's Office to coordinate implementation of the program with other funded college readiness and pathways programs.
 - c) The governing board of a recipient community college district to coordinate with a partnering school district or public postsecondary university to coordinate the programs and activities proposed in the district's application, as specified.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, this bill is inspired by the success of Long Beach College Promise and other similar programs. AB 1741 will incentivize community college districts to enter into similar partnerships with their local school districts and community organizations. It will also permit already existing partnerships to apply for grant funding to expand their programs. According to the author, funding provided in the budget and the awards program created by AB 1741 will enable these successful programs to be replicated across the state and encourage students to pursue higher education.
- 2) ***Related budget activity.*** The Budget Act of 2016 (SB 826, Leno,) provides \$15 million for the K-12 partnerships program and also stipulates that these funds are

to be allocated and spent pursuant to pending legislation. According to the author, AB 1741 provides the statutory authority and programmatic structure for this funding allocation.

- 3) **Early Commitment to College Program (ECCP).** This bill requires a grant applicant to include partnership with school to establish a program consistent with the intent of the ECCP. SB 890 (Scott, Chapter 472, Statutes of 2008) established the ECCP to ensure early notification and early commitment of college opportunities for pupils in middle school and high school and their families. The program was intended to motivate pupils to stay in school, graduate from high school, take college preparatory coursework, and, if they chose to do so, seek postsecondary opportunities. Although the ECCP was launched in 2009 by the California Department of Education (CDE) participation rates among school districts has been low, possibly due to a lack of financial resources to support the program.
- 4) **College Promise programs.** According to the author, Promise programs are innovative partnerships that connect local K-12, community college and 4-year university segments to provide clear pathways for students to follow to achieve their degree. The districts involved in the program also work together to ensure that the curriculum is aligned and that a student will graduate high school having completed all of the requirements to enter college. Successful programs such as Long Beach College Promise also engage city entities, local non-profits and businesses to establish fully-rounded partnerships to invest in student success.
- 5) **Long Beach Promise Program.** The Long Beach Promise Program was established as a collaborative partnership between the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), the Long Beach City College and the California State University at Long Beach (CSULB) with the general goals of increasing college preparation, college access, and ultimately college success. The program reports that since 2008 LBUSD students have seen a 34 percent gain in admission to CSULB, LBBC transfer students are admitted to CSULB at a rate 18 percent higher than applicants from other community colleges. CSULB reports that its graduation rates for Latinos, African Americans and Asians have risen 20 percent, 22 percent and 23 percent respectively. In 2011, SB 650 (Lowenthal, Chapter 633, Statutes of 2011) statutorily authorized the partnership and granted greater flexibility in the program's implementation than normally allowed for dual enrollment programs. These provisions are sunset on June 30, 2017 and an independent evaluation of the program is required by December 30, 2016.
- 6) **Evaluation and sunset component?** This bill establishes a grant program which will provide \$15 million to community colleges to establish or expand Promise programs. Generally such a program would require an evaluative component to determine the effective use of the funds as well as any changes that might be necessary should the Legislature consider extension of the program. However, according to the author, these are one-time startup funds and no future funding is anticipated for the program as applicants are expected to identify other public and private sources of funding to sustain them. As such, an evaluative report may be unnecessary.

However, given the one-time nature of the funding and this program **staff recommends** that these provisions be sunset on January 1, 2021.

SUPPORT

Campaign for College Opportunity
Western Association for College Admission Counseling

OPPOSITION

None received.

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