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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

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<b>Bill No:</b>	AB 1233	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	July 10, 2019
<b>Author:</b>	Smith		
<b>Version:</b>	June 28, 2019		
<b>Urgency:</b>	No	<b>Fiscal:</b>	Yes
<b>Consultant:</b>	Brandon Darnell		

**Subject:** Advanced placement examinations: fees.

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes a grant program, administered by the California Department of Education (CDE), for purposes of awarding grants to cover the costs of advanced placement (AP) examination fees for eligible low-income high school pupils or foster youth high school pupils.

## BACKGROUND

- 1) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to annually update the information on AP available on the CDE's website to include current information on the various means available to school districts to offer or access AP courses, including online courses. Requires the SPI to annually communicate with high schools that offer AP courses in fewer than five subjects, and inform them of the various options for making AP and other rigorous courses available to pupils who may benefit from them. (Education Code § 52240 (b))
- 2) Authorizes a school district to help pay for all or part of the costs of one or more AP examinations that are charged to economically disadvantaged pupils. (EC § 52241)

## ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a grant program, administered by the CDE, for purposes of awarding grants to cover the costs of AP examination fees for eligible low-income high school pupils or foster youth high school pupils. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes a grant program for purposes of awarding grants to cover the costs of AP examination fees for eligible low-income high school pupils or foster youth high school pupils.
- 2) Requires CDE to administer the grant program.
- 3) Authorizes school districts, county offices of education, or charter schools to the CDE for grant funding based on the number of low-income pupils and foster youth in the school district district, county office of education, or charter school enrolled in AP courses who will take the next offered AP examinations.

- 4) Requires a school district, county office of education, or charter school that applies for the grant to designate staff to whom pupils may submit applications for grants and to institute a plan to notify pupils of the availability of financial assistance.
- 5) Requires grant funds to be expended to pay the fees required of eligible low-income high school pupils or foster youth high school pupils to take an AP examination.
- 6) Authorizes an eligible low-income high school pupil or foster youth high school pupil who is enrolled in an AP course to apply to the designated staff for a grant.
- 7) Prohibits a grant from being used to supplant a fee waiver available to a low-income high school pupil or foster youth high school pupil who takes an AP examination.
- 8) Provides the following definitions for its purposes:
  - a) “Foster youth” has the same meaning as it does for purposes of the local control funding formula (LCFF).
  - b) “Low-income high school pupil” includes, but is not limited to, a pupil in high school who is eligible for a state or federal free or reduced-price meal program.
- 9) Provides that the bill provision’s shall be implemented using one-time moneys appropriated for those purposes in the annual Budget Act or other statute commencing in the 2019–20 fiscal year to the 2025–023–24 fiscal year, inclusive.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Prior to 2017, the federal government provided Title IV funds to states which allowed low-income students to take the AP exam at a reduced price. Unfortunately, the federal government has since ceased allocating Title IV funds for this purpose. California also previously had a state-funded Advanced Placement Test Fee Reimbursement program from 1992 to 2013.

In response to this loss, the State of California provided a General Fund appropriation in 2017 to allow school districts to continue to offer a reduced-price AP exam to low-income students. Currently, there is no dedicated funding source to offset the cost of AP tests for low income students. If allowed to expire this year, there will be no funding to continue this program into 2020 onward.”

- 2) ***Advanced Placement test program.*** According to the CDE, the AP test program has been administered by the College Board, a non-profit organization based in New York, since 1955. More than 30 AP courses and examinations spanning multiple subject areas are offered to students at the secondary school level. AP examinations are administered each year in May and represent the culmination of college-level work in a given discipline. Completed AP

examinations are scored on a numeric scale from 1 to 5. Students earning qualifying scores on AP examinations may obtain course credit and/or placement from colleges and universities. However, policies regarding the acceptance of AP exams or the scoring level required for course credit and/or placement vary from one college or university to the next. Individual colleges and universities, not the College Board or the AP test program, grant course credit and placement.

The fee for each AP exam is \$94. According to the College Board, students with significant financial need may be eligible for a \$32 College Board fee reduction per AP exam. According to the author's office, in 2020 an estimated 318,000 AP exams will be taken by low-income students in California.

- 3) **College Readiness Block Grant (CRBG).** The CRBG was established by Senate Bill 828 in June 2016 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2016, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review). The CRBG allocated \$200 million for local educational agencies (LEAs), including county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools (both direct and locally funded) that reported unduplicated pupils in grades nine through twelve during the 2015–16 fiscal year. Funds could be expended anytime during the 2016–17, 2017–18, and 2018–19 fiscal years. The CRBG was intended to provide additional funding for LEAs to provide California's high school pupils additional supports to increase the number who enroll at the institutions of higher education and complete an undergraduate program degree within four years, including providing subsidies to unduplicated pupils, as defined by the LCFF, to pay fees for taking AP exams.
- 4) **Not funded in the Budget Act.** This bill's provisions are contingent upon an appropriation. Neither the Budget Act of 2019 (AB 74, Ting) nor the education omnibus trailer bill (AB 75, Committee on Budget) contain an appropriation for these purposes.
- 5) **Previous legislation.** SB 828 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2016 established the CRBG. The CRBG, among other provisions, allocates funds which may provide subsidies to unduplicated pupils, as defined by the LCFF, to pay fees for taking AP exams.

## SUPPORT

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond  
Avid Center  
Code.org  
Corona-Norco Unified School District  
Fresno Unified School District  
Oakland Unified School District  
Sacramento City Unified School District

## OPPOSITION

None received