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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 1805 **Hearing Date:** June 6, 2018  
**Author:** Irwin  
**Version:** May 29, 2018  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Olgalilia Ramirez

**Subject:** Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: matriculation: assessment and placement

## SUMMARY

This bill requires a California Community College (CCC) to inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework, academic credit English as a second language coursework and of the multiple measures placement policies developed by the community college.

## BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the mission and function of the CCC as the offering of academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level and the CCC are authorized to grant the associate in arts and the associate in science degree. The community colleges are also required to offer remedial instruction, English as a Second Language instruction, and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4)
- 2) Requires the CCC Board of Governors (BOG) to provide leadership and direction in the continuing development of the CCC as an integral and effective element in the structure of public higher education in the state. The work of the BOG shall at all times be directed to maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the CCC. (EC § 70901)
- 3) Requires a community college district to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a one-year timeframe, and use, in the placement of students into English and mathematics courses in order to achieve this goal one or more of the following measures:
  - a) High school coursework.
  - b) High school grades.
  - c) High school grade point average.

- 4) Additionally, requires a community college to use evidence-based multiple measures for placing students into English-as-a-second-language (ESL) coursework. For those students placed into credit ESL coursework, their placement should maximize the probability that they will complete degree and transfer requirements in English within three years. (EC § 78213).

## ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires a community college to inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and credit bearing coursework in ESL and of the multiple measures placement policies developed by the community college as prescribed by provisions under current law relative to use of multiple measures for purposes.
- 2) Requires that the information described in 1) above be communicated in a language that is easily understandable, and be prominently featured in:
  - a) The community college catalog.
  - b) Orientation materials.
  - c) Information relating to student assessment on the community college's website.
  - d) Any written communication by a college counselor to a student about the student's course placement options.
- 3) Requires a community college to annually report both the following to the California Community College Chancellor's Office:
  - a) Its placement policies, including how it uses self-reported high school information or guided placement.
  - b) Its placement results, as specified. If a student is placed in a stand-alone English or mathematics course that is below transfer-level coursework, this bill requires justification be provided based on placement research, as described by provisions under current law relative to use of multiple measures for placement purposes.
- 4) Requires a community college to publicly post its placement results, including the number of students assessed and the transfer percentage of students placed into transfer-level coursework or transfer-level coursework with concurrent support, or transfer-level or academic credit ESL coursework, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- 5) Requires that a community college satisfy this bill's requirements by the implementation date established by regulation pursuant to provisions outlined in current law relative to use of multiple measures for placement purposes.

- 6) Establishes if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, the state shall reimburse the applicable entities.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** AB 705 (Irwin, Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) required community colleges to use a “multiple measures” approach to placing students in college English and mathematics coursework.

According to the author, “placement policies at California community colleges can be inconsistent at best or confounding at worst. Some colleges make their policies public, but several do not. If they do, many times they include long lists of placement rules that are course dependent and confusing for entering students whom may not have a clear academic goal yet. For incoming students, many of whom are coming straight from high school, these rules can be as dense and indecipherable as credit card disclosures and prevent them from having the information needed to make informed decisions about their education. Indeed many campuses have different policies within the same community college district, only adding to the confusion. Colleges also do not post their placement results, including the number of students who were assessed and the percentage of students placed into transfer-level courses.”

This bill seeks to provide clarity to placement policies for community college students and accountability in the application of those policies by colleges.

- 2) ***Remedial education.*** Remedial education is intended to help students who are assessed as “unprepared” to succeed in college-level work. The term remedial education is typically used interchangeably with development education, foundational skills and known as basic skills in community colleges. Basic skills courses provide those foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and English-as-a-second-language, as well as learning skills and study skills, which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work. The traditional approach to remedial education is based on placement test scores. Colleges place a student who underperforms on placement tests into a sequence of developmental/college-prep courses prior to that student enrolling in college-level English and math courses. Concerns have been raised that this approach results in college-ready students being misplaced into remedial courses and extends time in school. According to the Campaign for College Opportunity, a growing body of research is finding that students are not nearly as “unprepared” for college-level work as believed and that the reliance solely on placement tests is a weak predictor of student success. A better way to assess college readiness is to use multiple measures, where student placement is determined by high school grades and other measures — not just a single test score.
- 3) Recent reforms. In an effort to transform the delivery of basic skills instruction and help improve student outcomes, SB 81(Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2015) established the Community College Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation program. As a condition of receipt

of funding, community college districts are required to adopt or expand the use of evidence-based models for basic skills assessment, placement, instruction, and student support that may include multiple measures of student performance, including grades in high school courses, especially overall grade point average, results from the common assessment system, and input from counselors. SB 81 also established the Basic Skills Partnership Pilot Program to promote collaboration in basic skills instruction between high schools, community colleges, and California State University campuses.

Most recently, AB 705 (Irwin, Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) went one step further to codify and strengthen requirements that ensure the use of multiple measures by colleges as well as to improve the likelihood that students complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year period or for certain English Language Learners within a three-year period.

- 4) **Multiple measures.** The application of multiple measures is based on the premise that the more information available to inform the placement process, the better. The information used to holistically assess the student should contribute to the quality of the placement, and not serve merely to satisfy the mandate for placing students using more than a single test score. Community colleges are to use multiple measures to inform placement.

Research by the Public Policy Institute of California in 2016 suggests that community colleges could be more consistent in the use of multiple measures. Some colleges use multiple measures in a systematic way, while others only use multiple measures if students request it or challenge their placement. With multiple measures not being implemented evenly across the 72 districts, inequities may continue to grow, if students with cultural and social capital are more likely to take advantage of multiple measures. This bill seeks to create an additional layer of accountability that promotes uniformity across the system.

- 5) **Implementation date?** This specifies that a community college satisfy this bill's requirements by the implementation *date* established by regulation. Staff was unable to identify a *date* as referenced in the bill. It is understood that the author seeks to ensure that the implementation of this bill mirrors that of AB 705 (Irwin, Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017). Should the bill move forward, the author may wish to consider amending the bill to clarify that intent.

## SUPPORT

California Teachers Association  
 CATESOL  
 Education Trust-West  
 The Campaign for College Opportunity

## OPPOSITION

None received