
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No:	AB 239	Hearing Date:	June 5, 2019
Author:	Salas		
Version:	January 18, 2019		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Community colleges: registered nursing programs.

SUMMARY

This bill extends, by five years from January 1, 2020, to January 2025, the sunset on the authorization granted a community college to admit students to a registered nursing program that determines that the number of applicants exceeds its capacity in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Sets forth the missions and functions of the public institutions of higher education in the state, which includes the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) (Education Code (EC) § 66000, et seq.).
- 2) Authorizes CCC districts to use any diagnostic assessment tools that are commonly used in registered nursing programs and approved by the CCC Chancellor and, if, after using an approved diagnostic tool, the CCC registered nursing program determines that the number of applicants to the program exceeds its capacity, the program is authorized to use additional multi-criteria screening measures. Current law, additionally prohibits a CCC district from excluding an applicant to a registered nursing program on the basis that the applicant is not a resident of that district or has not completed prerequisite courses in that district; and, from implementing policies, procedures, and systems, including, but not limited to, priority registration systems, that have the effect of excluding an applicant or student who is not a resident of that district from a registered nursing program of that district (EC § 78261.3).
- 3) Further authorizes, until January 1, 2020, a community college to admit students to a registered nursing program that determines that the number of applicants to the program exceeds its capacity, in accordance with any of the following procedures:
 - a) Administration of a multi-criteria screening process, as authorized in EC § 78261.3, that includes, but is not limited to; 1) academic degrees or diplomas held by the applicant; 2) grade point average in relevant coursework; 3) any relevant work or volunteer experience, and; 4) life experiences or circumstances, such as disabilities, income status, veteran

status, proficiency in languages other than English, and additional criteria such as personal interviews, letters of recommendation, or personal statements.

- b) A random selection process.
 - c) A blended combination of random selection and multi-criteria screening process. (EC § 78261.5)
- 4) Requires California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to submit a report on or before March 1, 2015, and annually thereafter to the Legislature and the Governor that examines and includes, but is not necessarily limited to, both of the following:
- a) The participation, retention, and completion rates in California Community College (CCC) registered nursing programs of students admitted through a multi-criteria screening process, disaggregated by the age, gender, ethnicity, and the language spoken at the home of those students.
 - b) Information on the annual impact, if any, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act had on the matriculation services for students admitted through the multi-criteria screening process. (EC § 78261.5 (d))

ANALYSIS

This bill extends, by five years from January 1, 2020 to January 2025, the sunset on the authorization granted a community college to admit students to a registered nursing program that determines that the number of applicants exceeds its capacity in accordance with a random selection process or a blended combination of random selection and a multi-criteria screening process when the number of applicants exceeds program capacity, as specified.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "AB 239 will extend the sunset on current law to allow CCCs nursing programs to continue utilizing multi-criteria screen tools (MCST) for admissions, which will address the impact on admissions by assessing a candidate's qualifications and decrease attrition rates by ensuring that entrants into the program are adequately prepared to undertake the course requirements."

"The CCC graduates over 4,000 nurses each year. Seventy percent of the nurses in California received their education from community colleges. The CCCs developed the MCST to address the impact on nursing admissions. MCST allows the nursing programs to evaluate an applicant's academic performance, work or volunteer experience, foreign language skills, life experiences and special circumstances, while maintaining diversity and assessing candidate qualifications."

- 2) **Related report.** AB 548 (Salas, Chapter 203, Statutes of 2014), similar to this bill, extended the sunset until January 1, 2020 for nursing program admission process. AB 548 additionally, required the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to annually submit a report to the Legislature and the Governor that examines, the participation, retention and completion rates in California community college registered nursing programs of students admitted through a multi-criteria screening process and information on the annual impact to the Student Success Act had on the matriculation services for students admitted through the multi-criteria screening process. The report notes that since this extension, the CCCCCO has collected data that demonstrates a reduction in attrition for programs that use the multi-criteria screening tool and more nursing programs are using the multi-criteria screening tool currently than in 2014. There are 71 nursing programs in CCCs, 41 use the multi-criteria screening tool. Additionally, the 2018 report finds that colleges who use multi-criteria screening graduate more students, on average, than colleges who do not use it and using the multi-criteria is associated with decreasing the percentage point gap in the retention rates for all subgroups in age and ethnicity/race. The results showed no disproportionate impact by gender.

This bill would continue the practice of reviewing multiple aspects of an applicant's background and merit in relation to enrollment in a nursing program and not solely relying on strict course or diagnostic requirements, coupled with a possible lottery of slots when demand exceeds program capacity.

- 3) **Nursing shortage?** Various studies and reports indicate that the demand for nurses is strong and/or project that the demand for nurses will be greater than supply. The California Employment Development Department projected in January 2017 that between 2014 and 2024, California will have 105,000 openings for registered nurses.

The Bureau of Registered Nursing's Employment Projections 2012-2022, released in December 2013, notes that registered nursing is among the top occupations for job growth and will require an increase of 19 percent by 2022. Between workforce growth and the need for replacements due to retirements and attrition, the Bureau estimates 1.05 million nurses will be needed by 2022.

As noted in a 2017 LAO analysis on the California State University's Doctor of Nursing Practice program, "...the large number of nursing graduates in the state (which has held reasonably stable at about 11,000 per year) likely is sufficient to ensure an adequate nursing workforce in the state for decades to come. Some hospital officials still report difficulty, however, with recruiting experienced registered nurses for certain specialized positions and attracting nurses to work in certain regions of the state (such as the Inland Empire and rural areas)."

Regardless of industry changes, the use of the admission tool that is being extended by the provisions in this bill is applicable only in circumstances when there are more applicants that qualify for admission than enrollment slots.

- 4) **Prior legislation.** AB 809 (Quirk-Silva, 2018) would have required that the priority registration for enrollment for members and former members of the

Armed Forces of the United States and for members and former members of the State Military Reserve be applied to nursing programs. AB 809 was amended in the Senate to address cyber security.

AB 548 (Salas, Chapter 203, Statutes of 2014) extended the sunset on the California community college (CCC) districts' Associate Degree Nursing (AND) programs admissions process until January 1, 2020; and, requires the CCC Chancellor to submit a report annually to the Governor and the Legislature that examines and includes specified information on nursing students admitted through the multicriteria screening process.

AB 1559 (Berryhill, Chapter 712, statutes of 2007) established procedures and criteria that a CCC district would be required to use should it opt to use multicriteria screening measures to evaluate applicants for its registered nursing programs.

SB 1309 (Scott, Chapter 837, Statutes of 2006) enacted a wide range of responses to the nursing shortage, including authorizing grants to CCC districts to expand enrollment, provide diagnostic assessments, developing and offering pre-entry coursework to prospective nursing students, and requiring colleges with attrition rates above 15 percent to use nationally validated assessment tools that determine the likelihood of success in order to qualify for funds.

AB 2177 (Jackson, 2004) would have required CCC ADN programs to implement merit-based admissions and incorporated the four validated factors in the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office study. AB 2177 died on the Assembly floor.

SUPPORT

California Community College Association for Occupational Education
California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office (Sponsor)
City of Arvin
City of McFarland
City of Wasco
Foothill-De Anza Community College District
Kern Community College District
One individual

OPPOSITION

None received

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