
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

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Bill No: AB 504 **Hearing Date:** June 14, 2017
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Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
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Subject: Community colleges: Student Success and Support Program funding

SUMMARY

This bill modifies the current criteria for the development of student equity plans of which community college governing boards are required to maintain for each California Community College (CCC) in order to receive Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding under existing law by requiring the CCC Chancellor to establish a standard methodology for measurement of student equity.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the SSSP in order to provide a variety of programs intended to ensure the success of CCC students, including, but not limited to: a) student assessment before course registration; b) counseling and other education planning services; c) advising; and, d) development of an education plan leading to a course of study. Specifies funding for the SSSP be targeted to fully implement orientation, assessment, counseling and advising, and other education planning services needed to assist a student in making an informed decision about his or her educational goal and course of study and in the development of an education plan. (Education Code (EC) § 78212).
- 2) Requires that all CCC districts, with the assistance of the CCC Chancellor, establish and maintain institutional research to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSSP, as specified, and of any other programs or services designed to facilitate students' completion of their educational goals and course of study.
- 3) Requires the metrics for such research to include, but be not limited to the following: a) prior educational experience, including transcripts when appropriate, as determined by the chancellor; b) educational goals and courses of study; c) criteria for exemption from orientation, assessment, or required counseling or advisement, if applicable; d) need for financial assistance; e) disaggregated data by ethnicity, gender, disability, age, and socioeconomic status, to the extent this information is available; f) academic performance, such as the completion of specified unit thresholds, success in basic skills courses, grade point average, course completion outcomes, transfer readiness, and degree and certificate completion; and, g) any additional information that the chancellor finds appropriate (EC § 78214).

- 4) As a condition for receiving Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding, and in order to ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances, the governing board of each California Community College (CCC) district is required to maintain a student equity plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following for each CCC:
 - a) Campus-based research as to the extent of student equity by gender and specified underrepresented groups.
 - b) Goals for access to, and completion of, basic skills, career technical education and workforce training, and transfer courses for the overall student population and for each population group of high-need or disadvantaged students, and a determination of what activities are most likely to effectively meet those goals.
 - c) Where significant underrepresentation is found to exist, measures for addressing the disparities in those areas, implementation activities designed to attain the specified goals, including, but not limited to, the adoption of evidence-based models of remediation; and, d) a schedule and process for evaluation. The plan shall be adopted by the governing board of the CCC district and submitted to the CCC Chancellor, as specified (EC § 78820).
- 5) Requires the CCC Chancellor to allocate funds provided for purposes of successfully implementing the activities and goals specified in the student equity plans, consistent with all of the following:
 - a) Submission of a student equity plan that is consistent, as specified in EC Section 78220.
 - b) CCC districts serving greater populations of students who are high-need or disadvantaged receive greater resources to provide services to students, consistent with the goals and activities specified in their student equity plans.
 - c) Criteria established by the Chancellor for calculating the number of high-need and disadvantaged students in a CCC district.
 - d) The list established by the Chancellor of eligible and ineligible expenditures and activities to ensure that funding is used to support the implementation of student equity plan goals and the coordination of services for the targeted student populations. (EC § 78221).
- 6) Requires a report by the Chancellor provided to the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, on the expenditure of student equity funds. (EC § 78221).

ANALYSIS

This bill modifies the current criteria for the development of student equity plans of which community college governing boards are required to maintain for each California Community College (CCC) in order to receive Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding under existing law by requiring the CCC Chancellor to establish a standard methodology for measurement of student equity. Specifically, it:

- 1) Requires the Chancellor to establish a standard methodology for measurement of student equity and disproportionate impact for disaggregated student subgroups.
- 2) Provides that the Chancellor establish the methodology for use in the student equity plans of CCC districts.
- 3) Requires campus-based research that is used to determine the extent of student equity within the targeted categories additional use the methodology provided by the Chancellor.
- 4) Provides that the determination of whether significant underrepresentation is found to exist in terms of the specified goals and student categories be based on the methodology established by the Chancellor.
- 5) Modifies the current requirement that the student equity plan include certain goals for access to and completion of basic skills, career technical education and workforce training and transfer course to *instead* require plans to include goals for access and retention, degree and certificate completion, English as a Second Language and basic skills completion, and transfer.
- 6) Requires the CCC Chancellor, when allocating funds used to support the implementation of student equity plan goals and the coordination of services for the targeted student populations, to be based on evidence-based practices.
- 7) Makes other conforming and clarifying changes.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Progress to address education equity and student completion rates has been uneven. A recent report to the Legislature revealed that not all colleges were strategically spending their SSSP and student equity funds. Further, completion rates of mandatory Student Success and Support services by CCC students remained low. The report also showed that individual colleges used different definitions and methods to measure equity and underrepresentation, leading to conflicting answers on how best to address such issues. Additionally, colleges had misidentified inequities, such as finding that affluent students were disadvantaged at a college because they were underrepresented."

This measure seeks to establish a standard methodology to be used systemwide for measuring student equity and achievement gaps on each California Community College (CCC) for purposes of preparing student equity plans.

- 2) ***Student Success and Student Equity at CCCs.*** Since 2012, the State has increased ongoing funding for community college student success and support by nearly \$600 million. These funds have been designated to support the Student Services Support Program (SSSP) established by SB 1456 (Lowenthal) to provide targeted services such as orientation, assessment, and counseling and advising to assist students with the development of education plans. In addition these funds support the creation of student equity plans to improve access and outcomes for disadvantaged groups, as well as a number of Chancellor's Office Initiatives to provide related support to districts. Colleges may use student equity funds to provide a broad array of services as long as these expenditures target student groups with achievement gaps identified in a college student equity plan submitted to the CCC Chancellor's Office.
- 3) ***Related report.*** SB 1456 (Lowenthal, Chapter 624, Statutes of 2012), in addition to establishing the Student Success Act of 2012, required the Legislative Analyst (LAO) to submit a report to the Legislature evaluating progress on implementation of the Act and impacts on student completion. The report focused on implementation of the SSSP and Student Equity Program. The LAO examined the early effects of these programs on student success rates and student equity. Among other things, the report found flaws and inconsistencies with how colleges determine whether an equity gap exists for a particular group and how colleges use funds as some colleges spend funds more strategically than others.

This report was released on September 2016 and made several recommendations designed to improve the implementation and evaluation of SSSP and student equity moving forward. The recommendations related to this bill include the following:

- a) ***Standardized Equity Gap Analysis.*** LAO recommends that the Legislature direct the Chancellor's Office to identify a consistent way of measuring disparities for each of the specified student outcomes and provide additional training for campus personnel analyzing disparities.
- b) ***Promote Evidence-Based Practices in SSSP and Student Equity.*** LAO recommends that the Legislature direct the Chancellor's Office to identify a list of practices shown to be effective in improving student success and reducing equity gaps in community college settings. This would allow the state to direct the use of SSSP and student equity funds toward effective practices over time.

Consistent with these recommendations this bill seeks to ensure that funding allocated for purposes of supporting the implementation of student plan goals and the coordination of services for the targeted student populations are used effectively through use of evidence-based practices. This bill also proposes to standardize the methodology used for measurement of student equity and disparities within each goal and student groups.

- 4) ***Related legislation.***

AB 1018 (Reyes, 2017) requires the governing board of each California Community Colleges (CCC) district to add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in their student equity plans. AB 1018 is in the Senate Rules Committee pending referral.

AB 1468 (Chiu, 2017) Authorizes the use of funding from the CCC Student Equity Program, up to \$25,000 per campus of apportionment funding, or both, to be used for emergency student financial assistance. AB 1468 is pending hearing in this Committee.

SUPPORT

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
California Federation of Teachers
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges

OPPOSITION

None received

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