

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1018 (Reyes) – As Amended March 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Community colleges: student equity plans: homeless students.

SUMMARY: Requires the governing board of each California Community Colleges (CCC) district (CCD) to add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in their student equity plans.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes in federal law the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 to ensure educational rights and protections for youth experiencing homelessness (42 United States Code (U.S.C.) 11431, et seq.).
- 2) Defines in federal law "homeless children and youth" to mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, as specified, including children and youth who are:
 - a) Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
 - b) Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c) Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - d) Abandoned in hospitals;
 - e) Awaiting foster care placement;
 - f) Inhabiting a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, as specified;
 - g) Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and,
 - h) Migratory, as defined, and who otherwise qualify as homeless per this definition (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)).
- 3) Creates the Student Success and Support Program (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 SSSP shall 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).

- 4) Requires that all CCD, 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. Specifies the metrics for said research shall 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 Section 78214).
- 5) Requires the governing board of each CCD, as a condition for receiving 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, to maintain a student equity plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following for each community college in the CCD: a) campus-based research as to the extent of student equity by gender and specified underrepresented groups (including, but limited to, current or former foster youth, veterans, and students with disabilities); 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. Requires the plan be adopted by the governing board of the CCD and submitted to the CCC Chancellor, as specified (EC 78220).
- 6) 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) ensure CCDs submit a student equity plan that is consistent, as specified in EC Section 78220; b) ensure that CCDs serving greater populations of students who are high-need or disadvantaged receive greater resources to provide services to students, consistent to the goals and activities specified in their student equity plans; c) establish criteria for calculating the number of high-need and disadvantaged students in a CCD; d) establish a list 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; and, e) report 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 Section 78221).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Background.* According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC), college homelessness is a serious issue that is often overlooked; there exists an assumption that if someone is homeless, he/she is so focused on basic needs like food and shelter that school is not a concern. However, NAEHCY contends that for

homeless youth, education is the answer to providing a means to be able to enter the work force, earn a living, and no longer be homeless.

To note, there is no concrete estimate for the number of homeless college students nationwide, but based on recent financial aid data, it is estimated that there are at least 57,000. NAEHCY argues that the number is likely understated, since some students may be staying in a car, relatives' or fellow classmates' couches, or motels, and do not realize they are technically homeless, or do not want to admit to it. Additionally, California has the highest rate of homeless youth in the nation and twice the rate of homeless students as the national average (four percent in CA vs. two percent nationally).

Additionally, according to a March 2017 report by Wisconsin HOPE Lab, entitled, "Hungry and Homeless in College", while several studies of students' basic needs have taken place in California, the focus has been on California's four-year institutions. The report contends that there has not yet been a systemwide examination of housing or food insecurity at the CCCs. However, it was also found that many of the 113 CCCs have participated in prior studies of food and housing insecurity in higher education; a recent study of just over 3,600 students attending seven CCCs found about one-third of students were housing insecure or homeless. Lastly, the report also found that based on nationwide survey data, an estimated average of 13 percent of community college students may be homeless with higher rates reported in California.

Purpose of the measure. Current law specifies that as a condition of receiving SSSP funding, the governing boards of each CCD maintain a student equity plan for groups, including current and former foster youth, students with disabilities, and veterans. However, homeless students are not included.

The author states, "AB 1018 is a critical first step in ensuring that we provide the necessary attention to some of the state's most vulnerable students."

This measure requires CCDs add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in their student equity plans.

Student equity plans. The 2016-17 Budget Act allocated \$155 million in ongoing funds to CCDs to implement student equity plans. The 2016-17 allocations to districts were calculated using the existing student equity funding formula, which includes factors for annual full-time equivalent student (FTES), high need students, educational attainment of residential zip code, participation rate, poverty rate, unemployment rate, and unduplicated foster youth headcount.

To be noted, student equity funds must be used to address the student equity populations and indicators as defined in statute (EC Sections 78220 and 78221) and be based on the disproportionate impact study, goals, and activities as outlined in the CCDs student equity plans that are submitted to the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Additionally, the colleges have two fiscal years to expend these funds. The expenditure cycle for the 2016-17 funds will thus end on June 30, 2018; the CCDs will have to provide mid-cycle and end of cycle expenditure reports to the CCCCCO in September 2017 and September 2018, respectively.

Homeless students at the CCC. Currently, homeless students self-report on their financial aid forms if they believe themselves to be homeless; however, challenges arise in obtaining reasonably accurate numbers because many students may choose not to disclose their status. Committee staff understands that the CCC Apply Online 2017-18 Fee Waiver application will

have a question that asks, "Has the Financial Aid Office verified that you have been without a residence in the last 24 months (homeless)?" According to the CCCCO, it will start requiring colleges to report to the CCCCO the number of homeless students with fee waivers beginning in the 2017-18 academic year.

To note, assumptions exist that nearly all homeless students will be eligible for a fee waiver and thus yield more accurate data on self-identified homeless youth.

Committee comments. This measure, AB 637 (Medina), which unanimously passed out of this Committee on 18 April, and AB 1468 (Chiu), which will be heard today by this Committee, all seek to amend the same code section; and conflict with each other.

Moving forward, Committee staff recommends that the authors' work together to address potential chaptering out issues.

Related and prior legislation. SB 307 (Nguyen), which is set to be heard in the Senate Education Committee later this week, would, in part, request the University of California (UC) Regents to convene a task force, consisting of three UC representatives selected by the Regents, three representatives of the California State University (CSU) selected by the CSU Trustees, and three representatives of the CCC selected by the CCC Board of Governors, to conduct a study to determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current postsecondary students in this state, and requires the study to be submitted to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2018.

AB 801 (Bloom), Chapter 432, Statutes of 2016, in part, created the Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act.

AB 1995 (Williams), Chapter 407, Statutes of 2016, in part, required CCC campuses to grant enrolled homeless students access and usage of campus shower facilities.

AB 1228 (Gipson), Chapter 571, Statutes of 2015, extended priority for housing at the UC, CSU, and the CCC, to homeless youth, and requested campuses to develop plans to ensure that homeless and foster youth have housing during school breaks.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Student Senate for California Community Colleges

Opposition

None on file.

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