

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1145 (Medina) – As Introduced February 27, 2015

[Note: This bill is doubled referred to the Assembly Education Committee and will be heard as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: Pupils: Early Commitment to College program

SUMMARY: Requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), on or before November 1, 2016, to submit specified data from the California Department of Education (CDE) on the Early Commitment to College Program (ECCP) to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO); and, requires the LAO to submit a report on said data to the Legislature, on or before November 1, 2017. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the SPI, on or before November 1, 2016, to submit to the LAO, CDE data relating to ECCP.
- 2) Requires the LAO, on or before November 1, 2017, to submit to the Legislature a report relating to the ECCP, that shall include, but not necessarily be limited to all of the following:
 - a) The number of school districts and pupils participating in ECCP;
 - b) The number of participating pupils who fulfilled the requirements of the ECCP, as specified in existing law;
 - c) Any relevant outcome data reported by school districts to the SPI, as specified in existing law; and,
 - d) The level of technical expertise and guidance provided by the SPI to school districts participating in the ECCP.
- 3) Requires that the LAO, in preparing the ECCP report, to provide a recommendation on whether the ECCP should be continued.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the ECCP, with voluntary participation by pupils and school districts, for the purposes of accomplishing all of the following goals:
 - a) Increase high school completion rates, direct college-going rates, and college preparation of pupils attending schools with the greatest poverty and among low-income pupils in general;
 - b) Motivate pupils to prepare for college by taking college preparatory coursework, which may include career technical coursework and the course requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University;

- c) Help families understand that college is attainable and affordable, that financial aid is available, and that with the right preparation their children can go to college if they choose to do so;
 - d) Provide a clear path and direct assistance for pupils through middle schools, high schools, community colleges, universities, and state and federal financial aid programs, thereby improving opportunity and efficiency;
 - e) Strengthen the state's historic promise of college access made in the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education and express this commitment directly to middle and high school pupils and their families; and,
 - f) Prepare the highly skilled workforce necessary to keep California's economy competitive, maintain the income and quality of life for California residents, increase tax revenues, and provide for improved civic and democratic participation (Education Code Sections 54710 and 54711).
- 2) Specifies that school districts who choose to participate in the ECCP, shall provide schoolwide college information and college preparation events inclusive of pupils who sign the "Save Me a Spot in College" pledge; defines "College Opportunity Zone" (COZ) to mean the 30 percent of public schools that maintain any of grades 6 to 9, inclusive, with the highest proportion of "low-income pupils" (defined as a pupil who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals); specifies schools not designated as a COZ, are eligible to participate, so long as they give pupils (enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive), who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and/or their parents or legal guardians, the opportunity to sign the pledge; and, specifies a pupil scheduled to graduate from high school after 2017 shall not be allowed to enroll in the program (EC Section 54711).
- 3) Requires the SPI to perform, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following responsibilities: a) identify schools as COZ; b) develop the pledge, as specified; and, c) develop a letter addressed to pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parents and/or legal guardians, and signed by the SPI and superintendent of the school district that describes the major steps to prepare for college and the postsecondary and financial aid opportunities available to students in California; and, d) on or before November 2017, submit a report to the Legislature on the status of the ECCP (EC Sections 54712 and 54715).
- 4) Sunsets the ECCP on January 1, 2019, unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before January 1, 2019, deletes or extends that date (EC 54716).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Background on ECCP.* Created via SB 890 (Scott), Chapter 472, Statutes of 2008, ECCP was based on two values widely shared by Californians: 1) educational opportunity; and, 2) joint responsibility. According to the Campaign for College Opportunity, the ECCP was a way for California to renew the 1960 Master Plan (that any California student with interest in attending college, could pursue a college education in California), and for the first time, make college directly accessible to students and their families beginning in middle school.

The ECCP was launched in 2009 by the CDE; but due to limited to zero resources given to the CDE to provide the necessary support to the SPI in running the ECCP, Committee staff believes that the ECCP may not have reached its full potential.

Need for the measure. According to the author's office, the ECCP promotes social equity by connecting students who otherwise might not attend college with the necessary tools and resources on how to attend college. The author contends the ECCP benefits the public good, as an educated work force results in long-term cost savings by increased tax revenue from more people going to, and finishing, college.

The author states, "The Early Commitment to College program, if implemented correctly, benefits all residents of California. The goal [of AB 1145] is to inform the creation of a stronger program that connects low-income students to higher education."

To note, Committee staff understands that the SPI may have experienced challenges in meeting the requirements as set forth in SB 890 and being able to produce a report on the ECCP, however, the Legislature still needs a report in order to ascertain if the intent and goals of the ECCP were achieved.

Appropriate entity to complete the report? There is currently no coordinating entity for higher education in California. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) shut down in Fall 2011, and since that time, the state has continuously tasked the LAO, in addition to the numerous reports they provide to the Legislature, with performing many of the tasks that CPEC previously performed. It is presently unclear if the LAO would have the capacity to complete the report required pursuant to this bill.

Moving forward, the author may wish to consider whether another state research entity, such as the California Research Bureau, has additional capacity to complete this report.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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