

Date of Hearing: April 3, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1805 (Irwin) – As Amended February 28, 2018

SUBJECT: Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: matriculation: assessment and placement.

SUMMARY: Requires each community college to inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and of the multiple measures placement policies as adopted by the college, pursuant to Education Code (EC) Section 78213. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires that the information described in the "summary" above, be communicated in language that is easily understandable, and be prominently featured in the community college catalog, orientation materials, information relating to student assessment on the community college's Internet Web site, and any communication with a student about the student's course placement.
- 2) Requires a community college to annually report both of the following to the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor's Office (CCCCO):
 - a) The community college's placement policies, including how it uses self-reported high school information or guided placement; and,
 - b) The community college's placement results.
- 3) Requires a community college, when reporting its data in (2) (a) and (b) above, to include the number of students assessed and the percentage of students placed into transfer-level coursework or transfer-level coursework with concurrent support, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- 4) Requires a community college, when reporting its data in (2) (a) and (b) above, if a student is placed in a stand-alone course that is below transfer-level coursework, to provide a justification based on placement research, as described in EC Section 78213.
- 5) Stipulates that a community college shall publicly post its placement results, including the number of students assessed and the percentage of students placed into transfer-level coursework or transfer-level coursework with concurrent support, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- 6) Specifies that a community college shall satisfy the requirements of this measure by the one-year timeframe, as specified in EC Section 78213, for purposes of being in compliance with the requirements of EC Section 78213.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CCC, a postsecondary education system consisting of community college districts and the Board of Governors (BOG) of the CCC (EC Section 70900).

- 2) Requires the CCC 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 Section 70901).
- 3) Prohibits a community college district or college from using any assessment instrument for specified purposes, without the authorization of the BOG. Requires the BOG to review all assessment instruments to ensure that they meet all of the following requirements: a) are sensitive to cultural and language differences between students, and are adapted as necessary to accommodate students with disabilities; b) used as an advisory tool to assist students in the selection of appropriate courses; and, c) not used to exclude students from admission to community colleges. Requires a community college district or college to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a one-year time frame, and requires multiple measures be applied in the placement of all students, as specified. Defines "assessment" as the process of gathering information about a student regarding the student's study skills, English language proficiency, computational skills, aptitudes, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, academic performance, and need for special services. Specifies that assessment methods may include, but not necessarily be limited to, interviews, standardized tests, attitude surveys, vocational or career aptitude and interest inventories, high school or postsecondary transcripts, specialized certificates or licenses, educational histories, and other measures of performance (EC Section 78213).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Purpose of this measure.* According to the author, "As thousands of students throughout the year start to apply to college and begin their path toward higher education, it is crucial that colleges provide clear information about how students will be placed into courses so they can make informed decisions about their educational and career paths". The author contends that, "By presenting placement rules in a clear and understandable way, students will be better informed about decisions that will affect their trajectory through higher education and their careers".

This measure requires community colleges to inform students of their placement rights under EC Section 78123 (as amended by AB 705) related to the multiple measures policies used by each community college campus to determine placement into math and English courses. This measure tasks colleges to communicate their policies in a way that is easily understandable and prominently featured in course catalogs, orientation materials, and on the colleges' Web sites.

Additionally, this measure requires colleges to include their placement policies in current reports to the CCCCO. Under this measure, colleges will have to publicly post their placement results, including the number of students assessed and the percentage of students placed into transfer-level or transfer-level with concurrent support courses, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

To note, in order to provide colleges flexibility, this measure's implementation will coincide with the timeframe for implementing AB 705, as determined by the CCCCO's AB 705 Implementation Team.

Background. Two November 2016 reports by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) entitled, "Determining College Readiness in California's Community Colleges – A Survey of Assessment and Placement Policies" and "Preparing Students for Success in California's Community Colleges" found, in part, that one in every five community college students in the country is in California.

The vast majority (80 percent) of students entering a California community college enroll in at least one basic skills/remediation course in math, English, or both during their college journey. Students placed into developmental math take an average of 2.5 terms to complete the sequence, while developmental English students take an average of 1.9 terms. To note, these courses cannot be applied toward a degree.

Additionally, PPIC found that underrepresented student groups are overrepresented in developmental courses; 87 percent of both Latino and Black students enroll in developmental education, compared to 70 percent of Asian American and 74 percent of White students. Also, 86 percent of low-income students enroll in developmental coursework.

The PPIC also found that community colleges vary in how they identify college-ready students. Colleges use different assessment tests, and in cases whereby colleges may use the same test, in many cases they apply different rules for the minimum scores that qualify as college-ready. According to the PPIC, over half of the colleges reported using the Accuplacer test to assess college readiness in math. Cut scores ranged from 25 to 96 out of a possible 120. A student with a score of 58 on the test would be deemed college-ready at only half of the participating colleges.

PPIC found that the wide variation may be particularly challenging for the 40 percent of students who eventually enroll in more than one community college campus. To note, students of color, were found to be more likely to attend colleges that set higher math cut scores, leaving them to have more restrictive access to transfer-level math courses.

Multiple measures. The PPIC suggested that colleges should be more consistent in the use of multiple measures, and use measures in addition to assessment tests to inform placement. Research shows that measures such as high school achievement data do a comparable or better job at predicting college success than just utilizing an assessment exam.

Some colleges used multiple measures in a systematic way, while others only used multiple measures if students requested it or challenged their placement.

The author of this measure sought to address some of the findings raised by the PPIC reports with AB 705, which was enacted. Assembly Bill 705, in part, requires community college districts to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete coursework in math and English within a one-year timeframe by utilizing multiple measures to achieve this goal.

Committee comments and amendments. As currently drafted, this measure specifies that each community college must to inform students of their rights to access transfer-level coursework and of the multiple measures placement policies as adopted by the college, pursuant to Education Code (EC) Section 78213. The bill stipulates that said information be communicated in language that is easily understandable, and be prominently featured in the community college catalog, orientation materials, information relating to student assessment on the community college's Internet Web site, and any communication with a student about the student's course placement.

The above cites various methods that a college would need to provide this information to each student, but it is presently unclear as to what is meant by "and any communication with a student about the student's course placement" and whom is doing the communicating. Committee Staff understands that the author's intent is for the communication to be written and by a counselor.

With that in mind, *Committee Staff recommends, and the author has agreed to, the following amendment:*

78213.5. (2) The information described in paragraph (1) shall be communicated in language that is easily understandable, and shall be prominently featured in the community college catalog, orientation materials, information relating to student assessment on the community college's Internet Web site, and any written communication by a college counselor ~~with~~ to a student about the student's course placement options.

Previous legislation. AB 705 (Irwin) Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017, as referenced in the "Multiple measures" section of this analysis.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Teachers Association

Opposition

None on file.

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