

Date of Hearing: April 18, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 705 (Irwin) – As Amended April 4, 2017

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

SUMMARY: Requires a community college district or college to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete college-level coursework in math and English within a one-year timeframe, utilizing high school coursework, self-reported grade point average (GPA), and grades or guided self-placement to assist in math and English placement in order to achieve this goal. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Finds and declares, among others, that it is the intent of the Legislature that all school districts share their pupils' transcript data with community colleges for purposes of community college student placement.
- 2) Requires a community college district or college, in order to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete college-level coursework in math and English within a one-year timeframe, to utilize high school coursework, self-reported GPA, and grades or guided self-placement to guide math and English placement to achieve this goal.
- 3) Stipulates that a community college district or college shall not require students to enroll in remedial coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless research shows that those students are highly unlikely to succeed in college-level coursework.
- 4) Authorizes a community college district or college to require students to enroll in additional corequisite courses during the same semester that they take the college-level English or math course, but only if it is determined that the support will be essential to the student's success in the college-level English or math course and that the support constitutes no more than one-half of the units required for the college-level course.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCC), a postsecondary education system consisting of community college districts and the Board of Governors (BOG) of the CCC (Education Code (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. 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: *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. And 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 suggests that colleges should be more consistent in the use of multiple measures. Community colleges are to 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 use multiple measures in a systematic way, while others only use multiple measures if students request it or challenge their placement. With multiple measures not being implemented evenly across the 72 districts, inequities may continue to grow, if students with cultural and social capital are more likely to take advantage of multiple measures.

Need for this measure. According to the author, a few deficiencies in law currently exist. First, although multiple measures are supposed to be used to assess students, many colleges are not implementing them with the intended purpose to increase student success. The author contends, "Colleges are given flexibility in how they choose to use multiple measures, and while I believe flexibility is usually beneficial for individual colleges to create programs that cater to their specific circumstances, not enough has been done to ensure students are benefitting." In fact, much research shows that while students may be prepared for college-level classes, they are still placed in many remedial classes even after the implementation of certain multiple measures.

The author argues that, "High school GPA have been proven to be the best indicator of whether a student will fare well in college."

This bill requires colleges to use high school transcript data, including GPA, when determining a student's readiness for college-level English and math.

Common Assessment Initiative (CAI). The CAI was established to support more efficient and effective assessment of incoming students at the CCC. The goals of the CAI include developing a common assessment instrument for each curricular area of math, English, and English as a second language and assisting colleges in providing more students with in-depth and effective assessment and placement tools.

Committee staff understands that originally, the CAI was scheduled for a Fall 2016 rollout of the common assessment, known as CCCAssess. However, CAI is now working towards a Fall 2017 pilot of the Common Assessments in Math, English and English as a Second Language.

To note, as this measure is currently drafted, Committee staff understands that it would not affect the implementation of the CAI.

Policy considerations. As presently drafted, the measure specifies that a community college district or college shall not require students to enroll in remedial coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless research shows that those students are highly unlikely to succeed in a college-level course. It is unclear as to what research a district or college would need to use.

Committee staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, the following amendment:

Section 78213 (2) Notwithstanding Section 78218 or any other law, a community college district or college shall not require students to enroll in remedial coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless placement research that includes high school GPA and course-taking shows that those students are highly unlikely to succeed in college-level coursework. A community college district or college may require students to enroll in additional corequisite courses during the same semester that they take the college-level English or mathematics course, but only if it is determined that the support will be essential to the student's success in the college-level English or mathematics course and that the support constitutes no more than one-half of the units required for the college-level course.

Additionally, Committee staff understands that the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) continues to work with the Common Assessment Initiative and that some districts have significantly reduced the number of students entering into basic skills, due, in part, to utilizing multiple measures. However, this is not consistent across the 72 districts and 113 colleges that comprise

the CCC. Committee staff also understands that some concern exists as to students being able to "self-report"; however, Committee staff also understands that self-reporting may be the only way that significantly at-risk populations, like homeless students and former foster students may be able to increase their likelihood of not being placed into basic skills courses.

Moving forward, the author may wish to examine the feasibility of tasking the CCCCCO to create a standard definition of multiple measures, and create a timetable by which all districts shall utilize multiple measures when placing students in courses. Additionally, the author may wish to continue to work with the CCCCCO and other stakeholders in determining if self-reporting should be included in the multiple measures process.

Prior legislation. AB 743 (Block), Chapter 615, Statutes of 2011, which required BOG to establish a common assessment system to be used for the purposes of CCC placement and advisement.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alliance College-Ready Public Schools
 Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
 A Place Called Home
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles
 California Acceleration Project
 California Latino Leadership Network
 Campaign for College Opportunity
 Center for Urban Education
 Central Valley Higher Education Consortium
 College for All Coalition
 Education Trust-West
 Imperial Valley College
 Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Region III
 The Institute for College Access & Success
 United Way of Greater Los Angeles
 Women's Foundation of California
 Youth Policy Institute
 3 Individuals

Opposition

California Teachers Association

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