

Date of Hearing: April 16, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 2953 (Alvarez) – As Amended March 11, 2024

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: University of California and California State University: first-generation students: outreach and admission.

SUMMARY: Requires the California State University (CSU), and requests the University of California (UC) to, develop and implement a 4-year accountability plan for outreach to, and admission of, first-generation students to each segment, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CSU, and requests the UC to, develop and implement a 4-year accountability plan for outreach to, and admission of, first-generation students to the segment.
- 2) Requires the CSU, and requests the UC to, target outreach under the plan described in (1) above to geographic areas of California that are disproportionately underrepresented in admission to the segment, and have low rates of completion of the A–G admission requirements.
- 3) Specifies that the plan, as enumerated in (1) above, may build off of a current initiative, plan, or program of the segment for outreach to first-generation students.
- 4) Requires the CSU, and requests the UC to, on or before January 1, 2026, and each January 1 thereafter, to submit an annual report to the Assembly Committee on Education, the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, and the Senate Committee on Education on the implementation and ongoing administration of the accountability plan.
- 5) Provides that a report described in (4) above may include legislative recommendations to prioritize first-generation students for outreach and admission to the segment.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC and the CSU (Education Code (EC) Section 66010, et seq.).
- 2) Establishes the CSU system, made of 23 campuses, and bestows upon the CSU Trustees, through the Board of Trustees, the power, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU system (EC Section 66606 and 89030, et seq.).
- 3) Establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents of the UC; and, grants the Regents full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure security of its funds, compliance with the terms of its endowments, statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property and the purchase of materials, goods and services (Article IX, Section (9)(a) of the California Constitution).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Need for the measure.* According to the author, “this bill seeks to alleviate hurdles to higher education access for first generation students in CA. It works with existing data reports in asking for targeted outreach to geographic regions of CA with low A-G high school graduate completion.”

The author contends that, “research clearly identifies that students of color are overwhelmingly first gen[eration], and many of them are not eligible to apply to our CA public universities. We are seeking to address one aspect of the higher ed[ucation] access problem by prompting the segments to build off existing practices or organizing new outreach by using data informed targeted outreach to CA regions being left behind in A-G eligibility.”

Admission requirements. Students must take certain high school courses in order to be eligible to be accepted into the UC or CSU. These courses are referred as the “A-G” subject requirements. However, these A-G course requirements surpass what is required in order to satisfy State’s minimum requirements in order to graduate from a public high school. For the A-G courses to count: (1) Students must pass with a grade “C” or better; and, (2) The course has to be on a student’s high school’s “A - G” list. Below, reflects the current A-G subject requirements:

Area: “A”

Subject: History/Social Science

Years Required: Two years of history/social science.

- One year of U.S. History OR one semester each of U.S. History and civics or American Government.
- One year of:
 - CSU: History/social science from the “A” or “G” subject area.
 - UC: World or European history, cultures, or geography from the “A” subject area.

Area: “B”

Subject: English

Years Required: Four years of college-prep English with frequent writing.

Area: “C”

Subject: Mathematics

Years Required: Three years* of college-prep mathematics. Courses include topics covered in elementary algebra, advanced algebra, and two-and three-dimensional geometry.

**Four years strongly recommended.*

Area: “D”

Subject: Laboratory Science

Years Required: Two years* of college-prep science, including:

- CSU: One biological science and one physical science.
- UC: Courses in two of these three subjects: biology, chemistry, and physics.
 - Earth or space science can count for one year.
 - Computer science, engineering, and applied science can count for a third year of science and beyond.

**Three years strongly recommended.*

Area: “E”

Subject: Language other than English (LOTE)

Years Required: Two years of the same language other than English.

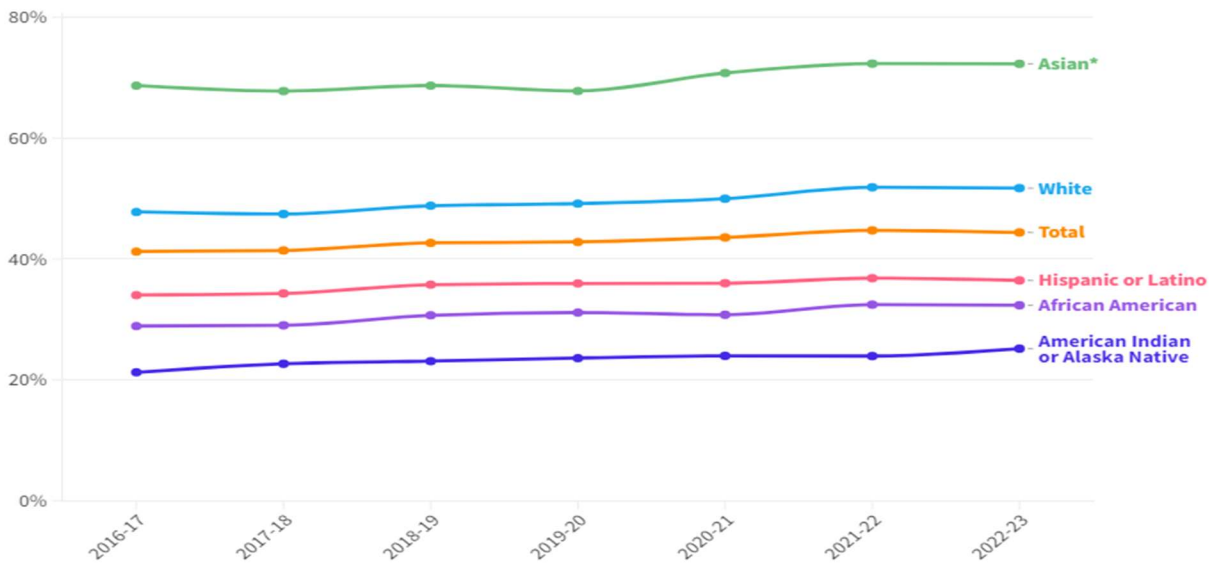
Area: “F”

Subject: Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)

However, according to data, compiled by *EdSource*, while the vast majority of students in California, 86% of seniors in 2023 to be exact, graduate from high school, most, 56% in 2023, did not complete their A-G subject requirements. *EdSource*'s analysis found that Black and Latinx students were the least likely to complete A-G subject requirements. In 2023, 68% of Black students, and 64% of Latinx students did not meet A-G subject requirements, compared with 26% of Asian American students and 48% of White students. Further, the highest non-completion group in 2023 were foster students at 88%, followed by students with disabilities (not disaggregated by disabilities) at 85%, and English learners at 82%. Lastly, the *EdSource* analysis found that, of the 1,766 high schools in California, approximately half graduated, more than 56%, of students lacking the required college preparatory courses. Fewer than 2 out of 10 students met A-G rates in 2023 in many northern counties, such as Lake, Del Norte, Plumas, Lassen, Nevada, Tehama, and Trinity. Just 3 out of 10 students in some of the counties that comprise the Central Valley – counties of Kern, Merced, Tulare, and Kings - met the requirements. That compares to the Bay Area in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Marin counties where more than 5 out of 10 students met A-G requirements.

The graphs below, from *EdSource*'s analysis, reflect the narrative above.

Percentage of students meeting A-G requirements by ethnic/racial groups

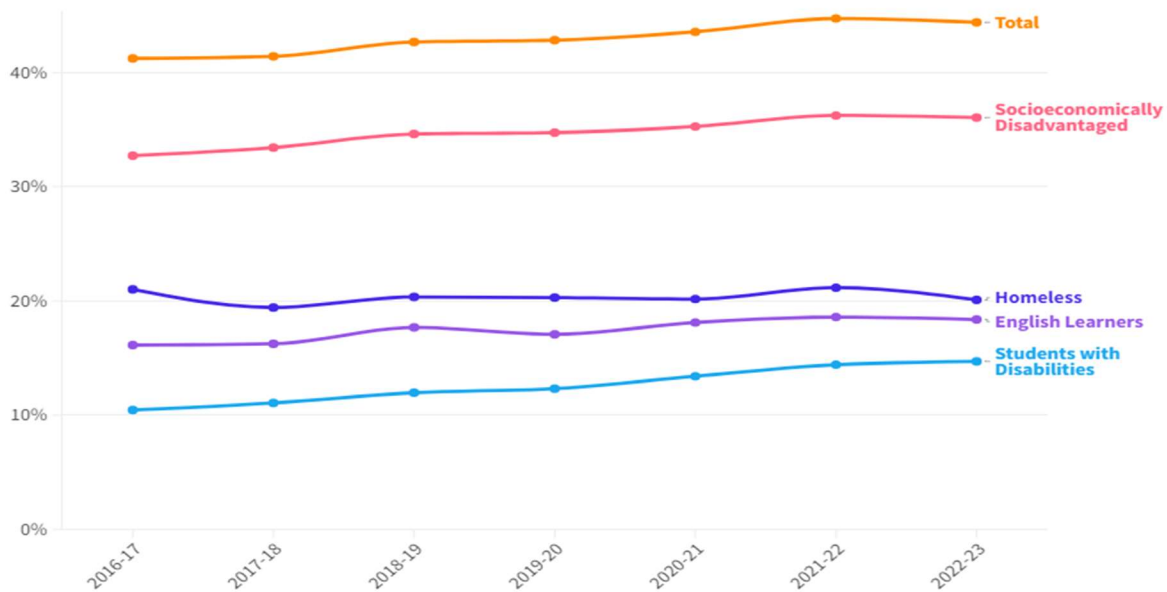


Source: California Department of Education; EdSource Analysis • EdSource

*Included Filipino student group

Graphic by Yuxuan Xie, EdSource

Percentage of students meeting A-G requirements by subgroups



Source: California Department of Education; EdSource Analysis
Graphic by Yuxuan Xie, EdSource

Committee comments. This measure, requires the CSU, and requests the UC to, develop and implement a 4-year accountability plan for outreach to, and admission of, first-generation students to the segment, as specified. However, the measure is silent as to the definition of “first-generation” student. Committee Staff understands that this term does not have a consensus in the field.

Moving forward, the author may wish to work with the CSU, UC, and other appropriate stakeholders in order to define “first generation” student for purposes of this measure.

This measure also requires the CSU, and requests the UC to, on or before January 1, 2026, and each January 1 thereafter, to submit an annual report to the Assembly Committee on Education, the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, and the Senate Committee on Education on the implementation and ongoing administration of this measure. It is unclear why this report would need to be issued every year and in perpetuity.

Moving forward, the author may wish to work with the CSU and UC in order to determine a feasible duration for the reports to be issued and have a sunset.

Arguments in support. According to the California Charter Schools Association AB 2953 would require the California State University (CSU) and request the University of California (UC) administrations to develop a 4-year plan for outreach and admission of first-generation students, targeting underrepresented regions and focusing on areas with low A-G completion rates. The bill aims to foster a fairer admissions process, ensuring transparency through regular reporting to the legislature. Recognizing the barriers faced by first-generation students, particularly in underrepresented communities, AB 2953 endeavors to promote equitable access to higher education and create a more inclusive learning environment. By addressing these challenges, the bill empowers all students to pursue their academic aspirations.”

Related measures. ACR 147 (Alvarez), which is pending a hearing in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, designates November 8, 2024, as “California’s First-Generation College Celebration Day” and urges higher education institutions in California to recognize and celebrate the day to further support first-generation college students.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Charter Schools Association
MANA de San Diego

Opposition

None on file.

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