

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Mike Fong, Chair
AB 2178 (Quirk-Silva) – As Introduced February 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Community colleges: county probation departments: instructional service agreements

SUMMARY: Authorize a home community college district (CCD), as defined, or an eligible institution associated with the home CCD, to enter into an instructional services agreement with a county probation department to provide academic or career technical education courses at a juvenile justice facility operated by the county probation department. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Permits, notwithstanding any other law, a home community college district, or an eligible institution associated with the home community college district, to enter into an instructional services agreement (ISA) with a county probation department.
- 2) Permits, notwithstanding any other law, a non-home community college district, or an eligible institution associated with the non-home community college district, to enter into an instructional services agreement with a county probation department if the home community college district and all eligible institutions associated with the home community college district are unable, unwilling, or fail to provide requested academic or career technical education courses at a juvenile justice facility within 90 days of a written request from the administrator of the juvenile justice facility.
- 3) Upon occurrence of the conditions described in 2) above, the home community college district and an eligible institution associated with the home community college district must not prohibit, block, or otherwise interfere with the ability of the non-home community college district, or an eligible institution associated with the non-home community college district, to provide instruction at the juvenile justice facility.
- 4) Specifies that these provisions must not be interpreted to:
 - a) Prevent the home community college district, or an eligible institution associated with the home community college district, from continuing to offer its own courses;
 - b) Grant exclusive instructional rights to a non-home community college district or an eligible institution associated with the non-home community college district; and,
 - c) Eliminate requirements to comply with applicable instructional services agreement, apportionment, academic, or reporting requirements.
- 5) Specifies that these provisions only be interpreted to expand access to postsecondary education for justice-involved youth when existing delivery mechanisms fail to meet documented needs. This article shall not be construed to restructure community college governance, modify community college district service areas, or alter statewide apportionment policy.

- 6) Specifies that these provisions will be known, and may be cited, as the Juvenile Justice Education Access and Equity Act.
- 7) Makes the following definitions apply:
 - a) “Eligible institution” means an accredited community college authorized to enter into instructional services agreements under state law;
 - b) “Home community college district” means the community college district assigned to serve the geographic area in which the juvenile justice facility is located;
 - c) “Instructional services agreement” means an agreement to provide academic or career technical education courses to a juvenile justice facility;
 - d) “Juvenile justice facility” means a juvenile hall, youth correctional center, or camp operated by a county probation department; and,
 - e) “Non-home community college district” means a community college district not assigned to serve the geographic area in which the juvenile justice facility is located.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCC) under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CCC is comprised of CCDs. (Education Code (EDC) Section 70900).
- 2) Existing law authorizes the governing board of a CCD to enter into a College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) partnership with the governing board of a school district, a county office of education, or the governing body of a charter school for the purpose of offering or expanding dual enrollment opportunities for pupils who may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education, as provided. (EDC Section 76004)
- 3) Existing law authorizes the office of the Chancellor of the CCC to establish the Rising Scholars Network to enter into agreements with community colleges to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for justice-involved students, as defined. (EDC Section 78070, et al.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: According to the author, “California has become a national leader in providing second chances through higher education. Still a critical gap remains for our most vulnerable students who are in juvenile justice facilities. Currently juvenile facilities rely exclusively on their home community college districts to provide academic and career services. The needs of justice-involved youth vary widely across the state, and a single home community college district does not always have the capacity or the specialized programs requested by a juvenile facility. Limiting the services that could be available to wards denying them the best chance at successful reentry and higher education. AB 2178 fixes this gap by giving home community college districts 90 days within a written request to provide the county probation facility academic and vocational courses. In the case that a home community college district can not meet this request

within 90 days a facility administrator is allowed to enter an instructional services agreement with a non-home district that is willing to serve those students.”

CCC education offered to inmates. SB 1391 (Hancock), Chapter 695, Statutes of 2014, expanded access to face-to-face community college courses for incarcerated students through collaboration between the CCCs and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Under the initial policy and funding framework of SB 1391, four pilot colleges were selected to offer instruction inside prisons. Subsequently, other colleges were able to leverage resources to provide courses inside state prisons in their local areas. In total, 19 colleges piloted credit-bearing, face-to-face, degree-building education programs at 34 of the 35 CDCR state prisons. Over 5,000 students are enrolled each semester in these courses. The 2018 Budget Act provided new resources (\$5 million one-time) to the CCC to support the creation and expansion of reentry programs for formerly incarcerated persons.

Program growth across higher education. A January 2020 report published jointly by Correction to College and Stanford Law School Criminal Justice Center, *Striving for Success: The Academic Achievements of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Students in California Community Colleges*, documented the growth and efficacy of California’s programs for incarcerated students. It notes that higher education participation among justice-involved student in California has grown exponentially over the past five years, from one private program to 19 community colleges offering face-to-face degree granting courses in nearly all of the state’s 35 prisons, serving almost 6,000 students.

Success programs and student clubs for justice involved students on campus have also expanded from fewer than 10 to more than 50, serving over 1,000 students in 2019 at University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) campuses and CCCs throughout the state. Additionally, UC Irvine recently launched UC’s first bachelor’s degree program in prison. The program is a partnership with Southwestern Community College and serves as a model for UC-community college collaboration. Within the CSU system, at least two campuses, Cal State Los Angeles and Sacramento State, offer face-to-face baccalaureate programs in the state prisons (Lancaster, Mule Creek and Folsom), with other CSU programs in development including at a women’s prison in Chino. This bill only impacts community colleges.

AB 417 (McCarty), Chapter 558, Statutes of 2021, authorized the CCC Chancellor’s Office to establish a grant program within community colleges called the Rising Scholar Network to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for formerly and currently incarcerated students.

The CCCCO reports in *2025 Rising Scholars Network Biennial* that their Rising Scholar Network the enrollment growth across student populations signals sustained student demand for higher education pathways. Formerly incarcerated students enrolled in CCC grew 64%, from 6,401 to 10,481, and currently incarcerated students grew 16.7%, from 18,302 to 21,354.

Students are converting enrollment into credentials at increasing rates. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of formerly incarcerated students earning degrees and certificates grew 75.7%, from 1,142 to 2,007, and the number of currently incarcerated students earning degrees and certificates grew 47.7%, from 1,529 to 2,258. Colleges funded through the network grew from 45 in 2020 to 102 today, while justice facilities served increased from 38 to 144, positioning California as the national leader in higher education access for justice impacted populations. Students in the

Rising Scholars Network choose from multiple educational pathways. Students pursuing Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) complete their ADT and transfer to CSU and UC campuses alongside partner institutions including Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Students pursuing career technical education credentials complete programs in high-demand fields that lead directly to employment.

The state invests \$35 million annually in the Rising Scholars Network. \$21 million is allocated to 45 colleges serving youth across 60 juvenile justice facilities. \$14 million is allocated to 95 colleges serving currently incarcerated adults in 31 state prisons, 9 federal prisons, and 44 county jails. 88 college campuses operate dedicated Rising Scholars programs where formerly incarcerated students access wrap-around student support services that strengthen their pathway to completion. An additional \$3 million provides textbooks and digital course content for incarcerated students enrolled in community college programs.

Arguments in support. The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) wrote in support, noting that probation "...recognizes the important role that education plays in rehabilitative programming for youth and young adults in the juvenile justice system. The delivery of educational services within county juvenile justice systems is a critical partnership between higher education entities and probation departments. County juvenile facilities typically rely on the home community college district for requested educational services. However, there are instances when the home community college district cannot meet the educational needs of youth in juvenile justice facilities because of limited course offerings, or long waitlists. These barriers can impede opportunities for education and workforce training during a youth's time in detention or require additional approaches for courts to consider in order to facilitate a youth's educational goals.

CPOC continues, noting that "under this proposal, if a home community college district is unable, unwilling, or fails to provide requested academic or career technical education courses within 90 days of a written request from a juvenile justice facility administrator, a non-home community college district or an eligible partner institution would be authorized to enter into an instructional services agreement with the facility. This framework maintains existing partnerships, while allowing greater collaboration between community college districts and probation departments to address the collegiate educational needs of youth and young adults in secure juvenile settings."

Prior legislation. AB 417 (McCarty), Chapter 558, Statutes of 2021, authorized the CCCCO to establish a grant program within community colleges called the Rising Scholar Network to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for formerly and currently incarcerated students.

SB 416 (Hueso) Chapter 766, Statutes of 2021, required CDCR, subject to an appropriation by the Legislature, to offer college programs provided by the various California college systems or other regionally accredited, nonprofit colleges or universities in the state to state prison inmates with a GED certificate or a high school diploma, establishes a set of criteria to be used to prioritize those college programs, and defines the responsibilities of those college education providers.

AB 2341 (McCarty, 2020) was nearly identical to AB 417 (McCarty, detailed above), and was held in the Senate Education Committee.

SB 1391 (Hancock), Chapter 695, Statutes of 2014, allowed California CCCs to receive full funding for credit-course instruction offered in correctional institutions and sought to expand the offering of such courses.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Chief Probation Officers' of California (CPOC)
Los Angeles County Deputy Probation Officers AFSCME Local 685
Teamsters Local 986

Opposition

None on file.

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