Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Mike Fong, Chair
AB 2528 (Solache) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Community colleges: governing board member compensation

SUMMARY: Increases the maximum monthly compensation a community college district may provide members of the district's local governing board. Specifically, **this bill**:

1) Permits a community college district, that is not located in a city and a county and has a full – time student population of more than 60,000, to provide an annually compensation of up to $4,500 for each of the members of the district's local governing board. To receive the monthly compensation in full, the board member must attend every meeting of the board. A board member may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the board member.

2) Permits a community college district with a full – time student population between 60,000 and 25,000, to provide a monthly compensation of up to $3,000 for each of the members of the district's local governing board. To receive the monthly compensation in full, the board member must attend every meeting of the board. A board member may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the board member.

3) Permits a community college district with a full – time student population between 25,000 and 10,000 to provide a monthly compensation of up to $2,000 for each of the members of the district's local governing board. To receive the monthly compensation in full, the board member must attend every meeting of the board. A board member may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the board member.

4) Permits a community college district with a full – time student population between 10,000 and 1,000 to provide a monthly compensation of up to $1,200 for each of the members of the district's local governing board. To receive the monthly compensation in full, the board member must attend every meeting of the board. A board member may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the board member.

5) Permits a community college district with a full – time student population of less than 1,000, but more than 150 to provide a monthly compensation of up to $400 for each of the members of the district's local governing board. To receive the monthly compensation in full, the board member must attend every meeting of the board. A board member may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the board member.

6) Stipulates in determining the "full-time student" population, the community college district will use the student population from the prior academic year to determine the maximum compensation.

7) Makes clarifying and technical changes to existing laws governing the compensations of local governing boards for community college districts.

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 California. The CCC shall be comprised of community college districts (Education Code (EDC) Section 70900).

2) Establishes that CCC districts are under the control of a board of trustees, known as the governing board, who has the authority to establish, maintain, operate, and govern one or more community colleges, within its district as specified. Permits districts to establish policies for and the approval of courses of instruction and educational programs (EDC Section 70902).

3) Requires the governing board of each community district to include in their membership one or more nonvoting students. Each student member has the right to attend and participate in meetings of the governing board, except for executive sessions, and must attend a CCC within the governing board's district. Students selected to serve on the governing board are chosen and subject to recall by the CCC district's student population. If a student member seat becomes vacant, the governing board may authorize the officers of the student body association at each college in the district to appoint a student to serve the remainder of the term according to procedures established by the governing board. Each nonvoting student member will be allowed to cast an advisory vote and will be provided the same mileage allowance as other sitting board members of the governing board. Each governing board may determine and adopt conforming regulations each year as to whether any student member of the board may make or second motions, attend closed sessions as specified, serve a term of one year, and receive compensation up to the amount received by other members of the board. (EDC Section 72023.5).

4) Enforces the following rules upon the compensation for members of a community college district local governing boards:

   a) Authorizes community colleges to provide up to a maximum monthly compensation for the membership of its local governing board based on the full-time population of the previous college year. To receive the maximum compensation the board member must attend all meetings of the board. Determines the maximum monthly compensation to be as follows:

      i) For districts, that do not reside in a city and county, and have a full-time equivalent student population of more than 60,000, the maximum monthly compensation is $1,500;

      ii) For districts with a student population of with a full-time equivalent student population between 60,000 and 25,000, the maximum monthly compensation is $750;

      iii) For districts with a student population of with a full-time equivalent student population between 25,000 and 10,000, the maximum monthly compensation is $400;

      iv) For districts with a student population of with a full-time equivalent student population between 10,000 and 1,000, the maximum monthly compensation is $240; and,

v) For districts with a student population of with a full-time equivalent student population less than 1,000, but more than 150, the maximum monthly compensation is $600;

b) Allows a local governing board member who attends some but not all of the local governing board meetings to receive a pro-rated monthly compensation based on the number of meetings the member attended and allows the local governing board to allow for leave of absences that will not impact the compensation of a board member for specific circumstance such as: district-related work, illness, jury duty, or hardship. The compensation provided will be charged against the funds of the community college district; and,

c) Permits a community college district to on an annual basis increase the compensation for the members of a local governing board. The increase may not exceed 5% based on the present monthly rate provided to the members of the board, and the increase may be rejected by the voters of the district through a referendum (EDC Section 72024).

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill is keyed nonfiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: *Author's intent.* As explained by the author, "serving as a trustee is a demanding role that requires a great deal of time, research, training, public engagement, and commitment. AB 2528 will enable community college districts the ability to update trustee compensation thresholds to help retain experienced board members and encourage more community members to consider running for vacant positions on local boards."

The author further contends the need for the increase in the compensation as, "the current compensation not been adjusted in over 40 years. In many districts, outdated compensation levels make it harder for individuals who are supporting themselves and their families to consider serving. AB 2528 will help boards with the required financial capacity to modestly and responsibly increase their compensation to keep pace with inflation, while preserving public process. Importantly, helping to ensure students and their families are represented in key decisions affecting community college districts and that opportunities to serve remain accessible to those of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. When governing boards better reflect the lived experiences and diversity of the communities they serve, they are more likely to adopt policies that address barriers to educational access and success. Strengthening representation at the governance level ultimately supports more inclusive decision-making and policies that advance equity across the higher education system."

Governance structure of the California Community Colleges. The CCC system includes 116 community colleges and is the largest system of higher education in the United States serving 2.2 million students in the 2024-2025 academic year.[1] The CCC was established as part of the state's tripartite structure to provide postsecondary education for the people of California. In the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education (Master Plan), the vision for the CCC was established as an open access institution, accepting 100% of applicants and providing vocational, associate degrees, and general education for the purpose of transferring to a four-year university.[2] The

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[1] Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart – Students – Head Count-Annual Search – Term 2024-2025
[2] Education Code Section 66010.4

governing structure of the CCC was also established within the Master Plan and was mirrored after the governing structure for the K-12 system. The CCC is governed by both a statewide Board of Governors and a locally elected governing board (governing board) who govern geographical areas known as a districts. CCC districts are comprised of at least one community college but can have more than one community college within the geographical boundary of the district. The Board of Governors consists of 18 voting members including members of the public, tenured faculty, classified staff, and two student representatives. With the exception of the Lieutenant Governor, each member of the Board of Governors is appointed by the Governor. The Board of Governors sets policy and provides guidance to the 73 districts and the 116 colleges within the system.[3]

The Board of Governors appoints the Chancellor of the CCC who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Governors and oversees the system's executive office. The role of the Chancellor's Office of the CCC is to provide technical and fiscal assistance to the districts in fulfilling the mission of providing postsecondary education to the people of California.

With the exception of Calbright, whose governing board is also the Board of Governors, the other 115 colleges are governed by locally elected governing boards. Each governing board has either five or seven voting members, known as trustees, who are elected in a state-run election either by 1) a smaller region within the district defined as a trustee area; or 2) the populous of the community college within the border of the district. In addition to the trustees, each governing board is required in accordance with state law to have at least one nonvoting student member who is elected by the student population of the district. The role of the local governing board is to establish, maintain, operate, and govern each community college within its district boundary. The number of colleges represented in a single district varies throughout the state; some districts represent a single district whereas the largest, Los Angeles Community College District, represents nine colleges.

Compensation for local governing boards. Each community college district is authorized by the Education Code to provide monthly compensation for their trustees. The decision to ascribe monthly compensation lies with the governing board; however, the maximum amount a governing board can initially decide to pay itself is limited by the Education Code. As described in existing law, the maximum monthly amount is determined by the number of full-time equivalent students enrolled in the community college district. The diagram below demonstrates how many community colleges fall within the varying categories of compensation for the governing boards:

Full Time Equivalent Student Population	**Community Colleges District with this Student Population**	**Maximum Monthly/Annual Compensation**	**New Maximum Monthly/Compensation pursuant to AB 2528**
Exceeds 60,000 (not located in a county and city)	0	$1,500 monthly and $18,000 annually	$4,500 monthly and $54,000 annually

[3] https://www.cccco.edu/about-us/key-facts

60,000 – 25,000	14	$750 monthly and $9,000 annually	$3,000 monthly and $36,000 annually
25,000 – 10,000	31	$240 monthly and $2,880 annually	$2,000 monthly and $24,000 annually
10,000 - 1,000	28	$240 monthly and $2,880 annually	$1,200 monthly and $14,400 annually
Less than 1,000 but more than 150[4]	0	$120 monthly and $1,440 annually	$600 monthly and $7,200 annually

The Education Code in addition to the compensation listed above allows a community college district to annually increase the total amount by 5% if the governing board permits. Therefore, the maximum amount could be higher if the governing board votes in the affirmative and the voting population of the community college district does not seek to reverse the decision. The compensation as listed in the Education Code does not include the per diem each trustee is provided for travel to and from the board meetings nor does it include the health care benefits some community college districts provide their trustees.

The above chart demonstrates the codified limit in compensation a community college district is permitted to provide a trustee; however, since local governing boards have been permitted to increase compensation by 5% since 1990, the chart does not depict the actual amount each trustee is currently compensated. Each year community college district reports the compensation of elected officials to the California State Controller. In data pulled for the 2024 fiscal year, the total wages provided to trustees was $1.9 million with an additional $3.8 million in retirement and health care contributions.[5] The range of actual annual compensation was vast, with some earning no wages and only health care contributions and others earning up to $37,922. According to data from the California State Controller, 11 community colleges are providing wages above the limits as described in the Education Code.[6]

Since local governing boards are permitted to increase the maximum compensation by 5% annually, the Committee may wish to question why the proposed increase in compensation is necessary.

Arguments in support. As explained by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), "AB 2528 modernizes existing law to better reflect the responsibilities of board service while preserving the principle of local control. The bill authorizes community college governing boards to increase trustee compensation for members who fulfill their duties and attend required meetings. Compensation limits would be adjusted based on district size, increasing the current

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[4] Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart – Students – Full – time Equivalent Student- Annual Search – Term 2024-2025.
[5] https://gcc.sco.ca.gov/Reports/HigherEducations/CommunityCollegeDistricts.aspx?year=2024&rpt=5
[6] https://gcc.sco.ca.gov/Reports/GetReport.aspx?reportName=ExpElectedOfficials&fileType=excelopenxml&parameterList=Year:2024;EntityTypeID:6;

cap from $120 to up to $1,500. Importantly, the bill does not mandate increases; it provides local boards with flexibility to determine appropriate compensation within established limits.
As further explained by LACCD, "The seven elected trustees of LACCD oversee nine colleges and two educational service centers, dedicating significant time each month to district governance. Their responsibilities include budget and facilities oversight, policy development, community engagement, and complex legal and personnel decisions. Statewide, community college trustees oversee institutions that serve more than 2 million students. As governance responsibilities have grown in complexity, so too have the demands placed on these locally elected officials. Updating compensation provisions helps ensure that board service remains accessible to individuals from diverse professional and socioeconomic backgrounds and supports strong, representative leadership. At a time when California is focused on expanding college access, strengthening workforce development, and improving student outcomes, effective local governance is essential. AB 2528 provides a thoughtful and balanced update that supports these goals while maintaining local discretion."

Committee comments. The statutory compensation limit for CCC trustees has not been increased since 1990. The author's office contends that the need for increases the compensation for trustees is due to the lack of qualifying candidates seeking to participate in the local governance of the community colleges. As stated by the author:

> "Low compensation effectively limits who can realistically serve. Individuals with flexible schedules, independent wealth, or employer support may be able to participate, while working professionals, caregivers, small business owners, and younger community leaders may find it financially impractical. As a result, governing boards risk becoming less representative of the communities they serve. Providing fair and reasonable compensation is therefore not simply a matter of remuneration—it is a matter of strengthening democratic participation and governance. Competitive stipends can reduce financial barriers to service, encourage a broader and more diverse candidate pool, and promote contested elections that engage voters and improve accountability. When more qualified candidates participate, boards benefit from a wider range of professional expertise, life experiences, and community perspectives. Ultimately, strengthening compensation structures for CCC governing board members helps ensure that the leadership of California's community colleges reflects the diversity."

The governing board of community college districts approve policies and procedures for how the district is to operate in compliance with state and federal laws. However, in recent years this Committee has become aware of the breakdown in the governance structure leading to inadequate implementations of key laws governing student success and equitable access at community colleges. Increasing the compensation for the trustees would permit the governing boards to conduct business in a more timely and operative fashion, increasing the ability for proper governance and compliance with state and federal laws.

By increasing the compensation for the elected trustees, the Committee would also be providing a pathway for student trustees to receive an increase in their compensation. Existing law ties the amount a student trustee may receive in compensation to the amount permitted for the trustees as outlined above. However, not every student receives compensation as the receipt is conditional upon the approval of the local governing board. The Student Senate of the Community Colleges has tried for several years to increase the compensation for student trustees as they believe the hours required for proper governance equates to a part-time job for many of their students.[7]

In the future, the Committee may wish to consider whether the Education Code should be updated to provide a minimum stipend amount for community college student trustees.

Costs continue to arise in all aspects of life in California. As a state funded institution, community colleges are reliant upon the State to provide adequate funding for operations. In a time, where fiscal resource are scarce and there are demands for community colleges to provide more resources for student services, faculty compensation, health care benefits, and student housing, a question must posed as to whether this is an appropriate time for this measure. However, this Legislature did authorize the increase for K-12 governing board members.[8] Furthermore, this measure is permissive and would still require the local governing board to vote to increase their salaries. All of this would be subject to public meetings and debate by the local governing boards. To this end, this measure seeks to provide a semblance of parity between the community college districts and their K-12 counterparts.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Cerritos College
Long Beach Community College District
Los Angeles Community College District

Opposition

None on file.

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[7] https://www.ssccc.org/what-we-do/resolutions/s240322-fair-student-trustee-pay
[8] AB 1390 (Solache), Chapter 639, Statutes of 2025.