

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1073 (Berman) – As Introduced February 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Community colleges: students enrolled in early childhood education or child development courses: fee waivers

SUMMARY: Establishes the Early Childhood Education Workforce Waiver, a California Community College (CCC) tuition fee waiver available to students enrolled in early childhood education courses if the enrolled student meets specified qualifications including declaring a major related to early childhood education. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the Board of Governors to establish the Early Childhood Education Workforce Waiver, which waives the per unit per semester or quarter fees for students who are enrolled in specified early childhood courses at the CCC and do the following:
 - a) Complete and submit either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act application; and,
 - b) Declares any of the following majors: Child Development, Child Development and Adolescent Development, Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Studies, Child Studies, Child and Family Studies, Child and Family Education, Early Care, Education and Family Studies, Early Care and Education, Early Childhood Development, or Child Development and Education.
- 2) Clarifies the courses which are eligible for the fee waiver established in (1) are the following:
 - a) Child Growth and Development;
 - b) Child, Family and Community;
 - c) Introduction to Curriculum;
 - d) Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children;
 - e) Observation and Assessment;
 - f) Health, Safety, and Nutrition;
 - g) Teaching in a Diverse Society; or,
 - h) Practicum.
- 3) Makes clarifying and technical changes to existing law.
- 4) States legislative findings and declarations relating to early childhood education and early childhood education workforce including:

- a) Investing in early childhood education is an investment in the long-term health and vitality of California;
- b) Supporting early childhood education workforce is essential to providing high-quality early childhood education; and,
- c) Providing accessible, affordable professional development opportunities for the early childhood education workforce is a must for California.

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 shall be comprised of community college districts (Education Code (EDC) Section 70900).
- 2) Authorizes the governing board of each community college district to charge each student \$46 per unit per semester. Exempts the following from paying the prescribed fee:
 - a) Students enrolled in specific public benefit non-credit programs; and,
 - b) Students enrolled in or receiving benefits from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program, or a general assistance program;
 - c) Students who demonstrate eligibility according to income standards established by regulations of the CCC Board of Governors;
 - d) Students who demonstrates financial need according to the methodology set forth in federal law or by regulations for determining the exempted family contribution of students seeking financial aid;
 - e) Homeless or formerly homeless youth, as defined;
 - f) Students who were the dependent or surviving spouse of any member of the California National Guard who died or was permanently disabled while in the line of duty or while in active service of the state;
 - g) Students who were the dependent or surviving spouse of a California firefighter or law enforcement officer killed in the performance of their duties or who died as a result of performing duties related to law enforcement or fire suppression;
 - h) Students who were the dependent of a California resident who killed or who died as a result of injuries sustained in the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks;
 - i) Any child of any veteran of the United States military who has a service- connected disability, was killed in service, or has died of a service-connected disability; and,
 - j) The child of a recipient or the recipient of a Congressional Medal of Honor (EDC Section 76300, 68120, and 66025.3).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Background.* A behemoth of research has been conducted in recent years regarding the positive impacts early childhood education (ECE) has on children across all social spectrums. According to research conducted by Nobel Laureate Professor James Heckman, investing in early childhood education for at-risk children is an effective strategy for mitigating the adverse impacts of poverty and is correlated with economic growth. In a 2019 survey conducted by the United State Census Bureau, there are 2.3 million children under the age of five residing in California and nearly half of the families in California with children under the age of five qualify and utilize social service programs such as CalFresh and CalWORKS, according to a December 2020 report by the Public Policy Institute of California. Providing quality ECE to 2.3 million children is no small feat and to accomplish this task, California relies on an array of federal, state and local agencies to administer, license, regulate and fund various early childhood education programs. While there are a plethora of programs, the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services serve as the two primary state agencies who oversee, regulate, and provide licensure and funding to Child Care Centers, Family Homes Centers, State Preschools, and Federal Head Start programs throughout the state. CDSS utilizes California Code of Regulations, Title 22 for licensing and monitoring and the California Department of Education uses California Code of Regulations, Title 5 to govern centers who contract with the department to provide ECE services. These regulations set the terms for licensing and specifically dictate how a program is run from the type of approved facilities to staff and teacher qualifications.

Early Childhood Education Workforce. The early childhood education workforce is comprised of a supervisors, teachers, and teacher aides who work collaboratively to provide quality educational experiences to children. In the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission report on early childhood education, published in April 2019, it was recommended that in order to provide quality ECE, the ECE workforce must have the skills and support to nurture and educate the diverse population of California. The current minimal educational standards for the early childhood education workforce is dependent upon the regulations by which the program is licensed to offer ECE.

Title of Teacher	Title 5 – as defined by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing	Title 22- Licensure requirements by CDSS
Teachers' Aides and Assistances	Teacher Aide: Same as Title 22; Teachers Assistance: 6 ECE units	Must be 18 years of age and a high school graduate unless they are participating in an occupational program offered at a high school.
Teachers	Associate Teacher: 12 ECE units; Teacher: 24 ECE units + 16 General Education units; Master Teacher: 24 ECE units + 16 GE units + 6 ECE units in a specialization + 2 adult	12 ECE credits and six months of work experience. The ECE credits must cover Child Growth and Development; Child, Family, and Community; Program and Curriculum. The teacher must have five hours of health and safety training.

	supervision units;	
Supervisors	<p>Site Supervisors: Associate Degree (AA) or 60 units with 24 ECE units +5 administration units + 2 site supervision units</p> <p>Program Director – Bachelor’s Degree with 24 ECE units +5 administration units + 2 site supervision units</p>	<p>Director: high school graduation and 15 ECE units as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 units in: Child Growth and Development; Child, Family, and Community; Program and Curriculum; and • 3 units in administration or staff relations. <p>In addition –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 years of teaching experience; OR • 2 years of experience if the director has an AA degree with a major in child development; OR • A site supervisor or program director permit issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Throughout the State, anecdotal data from providers and parents who struggle to obtain childcare suggests there is a workforce shortage for qualified ECE teachers and staff. While the State lacks a database to clearly depict the workforce shortage, the *2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index* conducted by The University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, *2020 California State Profile*, suggests there are 116,800 ECE teachers currently employed; or roughly one teacher for every 19 children.

Need for the bill. According to the author, in order to increase access to and the quality of ECE, California must address the workforce shortage which has only gotten worse as a result of the pandemic. AB 1073 would establish the Early Childhood Education Workforce Waiver to provide a fee waiver for eight ECE courses for community college students with declared majors in early childhood education and child development. This waiver would remove financial barriers and provide an incentive for Californians to enter the early childhood education workforce with the goal of increasing access to high-quality early childhood education for California’s children. The pandemic has only exacerbated the existing shortage and amplified the need for immediate support and investment in the ECE workforce, which is essential to California’s economic recovery”.

Arguments in support. The Foothill-De Anza Community College expressed the need for AB 1703 as “Waiving fees for core courses in early childhood education in the state’s community

colleges would remove a financial barrier that discourages students from entering an important field that already has a severe shortage of qualified professionals. Waiving fees not only would encourage new students to enter a field that is essential to helping California children thrive, it also would encourage those who already are working in the field to pursue professional development opportunities”.

Committee Comments. On December 1, 2020, Governor Newsom released the *Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for all Kids*. In his press statement, the Governor highlighted the plan as “a strong research-based roadmap for building a comprehensive and equitable early learning and care system over the next decade”. The Master Plan contains four overarching goals each with strategies for improving ECE throughout the state. One of the strategies includes improving workforce pathways by improving higher education opportunities to members of the workforce who choose to pursue a pathways in ECE and establishing financial supports for workforce development including stipends for coursework. By providing tuition waivers for California Community College students who elect to enroll in ECE courses, AB 1073 fulfills two of the strategies listed in the *Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: California for all Kids*.

According to the *2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index* California is one of the four states who do not offer scholarship programs to those pursuing ECE. While California may not have a scholarship program designated specifically to the ECE workforce, the State has made significant progress on reducing tuition costs for CCC students. AB 19 (Santiago), Chapter 735, Statutes of 2017 and SB 77 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 53, Statutes of 2019, established the California College Promise, which provides tuition waivers to first-time students, who enroll in at least 12 semester units for two academic years. In 2019-2020 the program provided tuition-free community college to 528,238 college students.

Additionally the CCC offers the California College Promise Grant (CCPG), formally the Board of Governor’s Tuition Waiver, which provides waivers to low-income students. According to the *2019 Community College Promise Grant and Special Programs Manual* produced by the CCC Chancellor’s office, students must demonstrate a financial need or be enrolled in specified social services programs to qualify for the CCPG. Furthermore, to remain qualified students must meet academic and progress standards by maintaining a 2.0 GPA and completing at least 50% of their semester coursework. This program provided tuition-free community college to 28,999 students. The *2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index*, found the median income for a childcare worker was roughly \$26,000 a year in 2019 and therefore current ECE workers do not meet the CCPG income requirements. AB 1073 would open a career pathway free of financial burden only for ECE workers who wish to work in Title 22 centers; however it would only assist Title 5 ECE workers in obtaining some of the educational qualifications required to become a teacher in a preschool setting.

Previous Legislation.

- 1) AB 2346 (Berman), held in Assembly Higher Education Committee due to the COVID – 19 pandemic, would have established the Early Childhood Education Workforce Waiver, a California Community College (CCC) fee waiver, available to students enrolled in early childhood education courses if the enrolled student meets specified qualifications including declaring a major related to early childhood education.

- 2) SB 77 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 53, Statutes of 2019, authorizes community colleges to use California College Promise funding to waive tuition fees for two academic years for first-time students, and would require the utilization of evidence-based assessments and placement practices at the community college to be in compliance with the requirements for assessment instruments applicable under the Student Equity and Achievement program.
- 3) AB 2 (Santiago), Chapter 509, Statutes of 2019, enables community colleges the flexibility to provide fee waivers, under the California College Promise Program, to specified students without requiring full-time enrollment. Requires the Chancellor's Office to submit a report to the Legislature on or before July 1, 2024, evaluating the use of funding for the California College Promise to waive student fees.
- 4) AB 19 (Santiago), Chapter 734, Statutes of 2017, establishes, under the administration of the Chancellor of the CCC, the California College Promise Program which provides a tuition waiver for first-time, California residents who maintain a course load of 12 units or more, regardless of economic status. Provides the tuition waiver for one academic year for all qualifying students who attend participating CCC, as specified.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

4 Individuals

Build Up for San Mateo County's Children

California Alternative Payment Program Association

Children Now

Community Equity Collaborative

Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills

Early Care and Education Consortium

Everychild California

First 5 San Mateo County

Foothill-De Anza Community College District

Footsteps Child Care, Inc.

Good2know Partners

Institute for Human and Social Development, Inc.

Lift Each Other Up, LLC

Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County

Mind Garden, INC.

Peninsula Family Service

Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, District 4

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

The Institute for Families and Nannies

Opposition

None on file.

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