

Date of Hearing: April 11, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Mike Fong, Chair  
AB 1342 (Megan Dahle) – As Introduced February 16, 2023

**SUBJECT:** California College Promise: fee waiver eligibility

**SUMMARY:** Requires a community college to consider a high school student as a first-time student for the California College Promise program, even if the student has previously participated in dual enrollment programs. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires a community college to enroll a high school student as a first-time community college student even if the student participated in defined dual enrollment programs while in high school.
  - a) Permits a high school student, even if they received college credit for courses while enrolled in a dual enrollment program, to receive two years of fee waivers for community college courses if the student is: enrolled full-time, completes and submits either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or a California Dream Act application.
- 2) Defines dual enrollment programs as advanced scholastic or vocational courses taken at the community college by the student. The courses are either approved by the governing board of the K-12 district, as authorized in Education Code Section 48800 and 52620, for the student to take; or are part of the College and Career Access Pathways Partnerships agreement between the K-12 and community college districts, as authorized in Education Code Section 76004.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the California College Promise, under the administration of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (CCC), to provide funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature to each community college that:
  - a) Partners with one or more local education agencies to establish an Early Commitment to College Program to provide K-12 students and families ample opportunities to learn about college and the necessary step in applying to college; and,
  - b) Partners with one or more local education agencies to support and improve high school students' preparation for college and reduce postsecondary remediation through best practices; and,
  - c) Utilizes evidence-based assessment and placement practices at the community college that include multiple measures of student performance and uses evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for underprepared students; and,
  - d) Participates in the CCC Guided Pathways Grant Program; and,
  - e) Maximizes students access to need-based financial aid by leveraging the Board of Governors fee waiver ensuring that students complete the Free Application for Student

Aid (FASFA), Cal Grant application or the Dream Act application and participate in a federal loan program.

- f) Maximize resources to address students basic needs, through the provision of basic needs services and resources. Permits this subdivision to be met by the college providing a formal program to partner with the county human services agency; which may occur as a partnership between the basic needs center and the county human services agency (Education Code (EDC) Section 76396 and 76396.2).
- 2) Authorizes a community college, who meets all the criteria of (2), to offer a fee waiver for two academic years to first-time or returning community college students who are California residents and enrolled at the college full-time (12 or more units) unless otherwise specified. Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to submit a report to the Legislature by July 1, 2024, evaluating the use of funding for the California College Promise to waive student fees (EDC Section 76396.3).
- 3) Permits a highly – gifted student to undertake courses at a community college if the Governing Board of a school district, upon recommendation of the principal of the student’s high school and with parental consent, determines a student would benefit from advanced or vocational work. The student may attend the CCC during any session or term as a special part-time or full-time student and take one or more courses of instruction offered at the CCC. Provides methods for parents to petition for students to attend community college courses and methods for appeals in case of a denial. Includes criteria for allocating attendance and funding for high school students who attend courses at the community college. Stipulates summer courses may be offered if a student has meet specified conditions and if the principal has not recommended summer session attendance to more than 5% of the student’s grade population in the previous year and the K-12 district adheres to reporting requirements. All physical education courses must adhere to the 5% threshold and the following courses are exempt from the 5% threshold:
  - a) Courses that are part of a College and Career Access pathway and the course is either a general education course for transfer or is a college-level occupational course;
  - b) Courses which are lower division, college-level courses that are either a college-level course that are part of the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum or apply towards the general education requirements of the California State University (CSU) ; or,
  - c) Courses that are college-level occupational courses, as defined.

Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to report to the Department of Finance by Marc 1 of each year the number of students who participated in college courses during the summer and received a passing grade (EDC Section 48800).

- 4) Authorizes the governing board of a school district, which oversees an adult education program, and the governing board of a community college district with a noncredit program to permit students, who are pursuing a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate, to attend community college and take college courses, as special part-time students. Stipulates if the community college may receive state funding for the courses

offered to the students if the school district is not reimbursed for the same instructional activity (EDC Section 52620).

- 5) Authorizes a community college district to enter into a CCAP partnership agreement, with a governing board of a K-12 district, the governing board of a charter school, or a county office of education for the purpose of offering community college courses to K-12 students. The purpose of the partnership is to offer or expand dual enrollment opportunities for pupil who may not be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education. Permits special part-time students participating in the CCAP partnership to receive priority enrollment, enroll in up to 15 course, and receive fee waivers for specified fees. The goal of the partnership is to offer courses which develop seamless pathways from high school to community college for career technical education or the preparation for transfer, improve high school graduation rates, and/or help pupils achieve college and career readiness. Requires the CCCCO, on or before January 1, 2021, to prepare a summary report that includes an evaluation of the CCAP partnerships, an assessment of the growth of special admits system wide and by campus, and recommendations for improving the CCAP partnerships, as specified (Education Code (EDC) Section 76004).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose of the bill.* According to the author, “The California College Promise was established under the premise of providing two academic years of free community college for community college students. The program has since been expanded to include returning students who left college without obtaining a degree or certificate. If we are expanding the California College Promise to include returning students, we should also expand the program to include two tuition-free years at the CCC for high school students who participated in dual enrollment. We should not be penalizing students who sought academic enrichment opportunities and enrolled in dual enrollment programs while in high school. AB 1342 seeks to preserve both dual enrollment participation and the California College Promise program by ensuring high school students with dual enrollment credit are still afforded two free years of community college courses.”

*Dual enrollment in California.* As defined by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) in a 2021 report, dual enrollment is an opportunity for high school students to take college courses and earn college credit. The benefits of dual enrollment opportunities expand beyond additional points on a student’s grade point average; a behemoth amount of research has concluded dual enrollment is an essential way to expand educational opportunities for students, improve economic mobility, and increase degree and vocational certificate attainment.

Dual enrollment participation has expanded in California from 11.3 percent of all high school seniors participating in the 2015-2016 academic year, to 19.2 percent of all high school seniors participating in the 2018-2019 academic year, as recorded in research conducted by the University of California, Davis Wheelhouse: the center for community college leadership and research (UC Davis Wheelhouse) in 2020. Currently, in California, there are four main programs that offer dual enrollment opportunities for high school students: Middle College High School Programs (MCHS), Early College High School Programs (ECHS), College and Career Access Pathways Partnerships (CCAP), and the traditional dual enrollment pathway.

MCHS are offered either on a high school campus near a CCC or on a CCC campus and provide a student the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and an associate degree. Another option

is the ECHS which requires a high school to partner with a CCC, CSU, or University of California (UC) to offer college credit courses to high school students. ECHS are located on a high school campus and a participating student earns both a high school diploma and up to two years of college units in four years. There are currently 26 programs in California. According to the PPIC's 2021 report on dual enrollment, participation in ECHSPs and MCHSPs account for 19% of all dual enrollment participation in the state.

According to the California Department of Education, a CCAP partnership is an agreement between the governing boards of a K-12 school district and a CCC district for the purpose of providing college courses to students who may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education. CCAPs are unique from other dual enrollment programs in that the community college courses can be offered on a high school campus, while participating students are not charged fees, and students can be provided priority enrollment in up to 15 units per semester. According to the PPIC report on dual enrollment, CCAP partnerships account for 11% of dual enrollment participation in the State. A traditional dual enrollment program is offered by the high school to high-achieving students who are authorized by the local K-12 district school board, on a case-by-case basis, to attend a CCC and take up to 11 units per term. Students who participate in traditional dual enrollment programs are often academically high-achieving students, who can afford the out-of-pocket tuition costs, and have transportation to and from the community college campus. According to the 2021 PPIC's report on dual enrollment, the majority of high school students who enroll in dual enrollment courses participate in traditional dual enrollment programs.

In October 2021, the UC Davis Wheelhouse published a report on dual enrollment which found that high school students represented 14% of enrollment in all CCC courses. The same study concluded on average students who participate in dual enrollment programs earn 7.6 units by the time they graduate high school, the equivalent of roughly 2.5 courses.

*California College Promise program.* In 2017, the Legislature created the California College Promise program, which was inspired by tuition-free college programs in other states. The mission of the program was to support the CCC in increasing college readiness, improving student outcomes, and reducing achievement gaps. The State originally provided \$46 million to the program in 2018-2019 and this was used to provide waivers to first-time, full-time students regardless of financial need during their first year of college. To be eligible, students must enroll in 12 or more units per semester, submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA), and have no previous postsecondary coursework.

To receive the funding allocated to the program, participating CCC must:

- Partner with school districts on college outreach efforts.
- Partner with school districts to support practices that improve college readiness and reduce the need for remediation.
- Use evidence-based practices for the assessment and placement of incoming students.
- Implement Guided Pathways to help students enter and stay on a defined academic path.
- Ensure students complete the FASFA or the California Dream Act Application.

- Participate in federal student loan programs.

In its first year, 2018-2019, the California College Promise Program was implemented at 109 of the 115 CCC statewide, and provided 12,078 students fee waivers. Capitalizing on the success of the program, the Legislature expanded the program to include a second year of free tuition to encourage students to matriculate in their degree attainment. After the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage re-enrollment in college, the Legislature expanded the program to include returning community college students. Returning community college student is defined as a student who has taken a break of one or more semesters. On September 12, 2022, the CCC Chancellor's Office issued a memorandum on updates to the Student Financial Aid Programs for 2022-2023. The memorandum included a definition of returning community college students as those who have not previously earned a postsecondary degree or certificate. Furthermore, the memorandum expanded the use of the Promise program dollars to address affordability issues at CCC campuses; ensuring the money is not limited to tuition waivers but can now also be used to provide direct aid to students in the form of grants. As reported by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart, in the 2021-2022 academic year, 879,324 students qualified for the California College Promise Grant equating to over \$3 billion in aid.

With the understanding that the California College Promise program was originally not available to students with previous postsecondary coursework, one could assume dual enrollment students who received college credit in courses at the community college would not be eligible for the waiver. One may also deduce since the California College Promise Program was expanded to include returning students, dual enrollment students would now be ensured the benefits of the program since they would be considered "returning students." However, the definition as defined in the Education Code is a student who has taken a break for one or more semesters. Therefore, if a dual enrollment student attended a community college course in their senior year of high school, they would not be seen as qualifying since they did not take a semester off.

Furthermore, the Chancellor's Office has suggested dual enrollment students should be seen as first-time students per the California Code of Regulations, 5 CCR 555300, definition of a first-time student. However, this definition is confined to the section of the regulations pertaining to student rights and responsibilities. Therefore, it is possible for a community college to determine that an enrolling student, who participated in a high school dual enrollment program, is neither a new nor returning student and may be deemed ineligible for the California College Promise program.

*Aligned with Governor's goals for higher education.* In February 2021, the Governor's Council for Postsecondary Education published a report on how postsecondary education institutions could emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger and better positioned to serve all students with equity. One of the recommendations from the report was by 2030 that all public high schools have access to college preparatory coursework and expand early college credit opportunities while streamlining transitions between high school and postsecondary education institutions. AB 1342 (Dahle) seeks to accomplish this goal by ensuring no student who participates in a dual enrollment program is exempt from participating in the California College Promise program, or has their two years of free tuition reduced due to their participation in dual enrollment programs. *In order to guarantee all high school students who participate in dual enrollment programs are eligible for the California Promise Grant program, the author may*

*wish to expand the definitions of dual enrollment to include MCHS and ECHS as defined in Education Code Section 11302.*

*Arguments in support.* As expressed by a Ceres City Council Member of District 2, “AB 1342 will help correct some of the many issues we are having with AB 19 and correct some of the language and barriers that are still being created in our community and for our youth. Education is one way of ending the cycle of poverty and AB 19 helped reduce the need for student loans. The 2020 Census showed less than 20% of Ceres District 2 had a college degree, approximately 830 people and 86 had a graduate degree. I fully support AB 1342 and encourage eliminating the many barriers created by institutions that prevent our students from completing their community college education due to financial constraints.”

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

City of Ceres Council District 2

**Opposition**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960