

Date of Hearing: April 12, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1741 (Rodriguez) – As Amended March 15, 2016

SUBJECT: California College Promise Innovation Grant Program

SUMMARY: Establishes the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program (Promise Grant) to provide funds to California Community College (CCC) districts for the purpose of establishing regional California College Promise (Promise) programs. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Promise Grant program, administered by the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Requires the CCCCCO to distribute multiyear grants, upon appropriation from the Legislature, to CCC Districts (CCD).
- 2) Establishes the goals of the Promise Grant program as supporting CCD in establishing Promise programs in partnership with K-12 school districts, California State University (CSU) campuses, and University of California (UC) campuses, to accomplish:
 - a) Increase the number and percentage of high school students within the region who are prepared for and attend college directly from high school;
 - b) Increase the percentage of high school graduates within the region who are placed in college level math and English at a CCC, CSU, or UC campus;
 - c) Increase the percentage of students from the region who earn degrees or career technical education certificates;
 - d) Increase the percentage of students who successfully transfer from a CCC to CSU, UC, or an independent institution of higher education;
 - e) Increase the percentage of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree; and,
 - f) Reduce and eliminate achievement gaps.
- 3) Provides that, in order to receive a Promise Grant, the governing board of a CCD must demonstrate in its application that the CCC will partner with one or more school districts and one or more CSU or UC campus to establish a Promise program to do all of the following:
 - a) Partner with one or more school districts to establish an Early Commitment to College Program (ECCP) to provide students and families assistance that includes, but is not limited to, learning about college opportunities, visiting campuses, taking and completing college preparatory courses, and applying for college and financial aid;
 - b) Partner with one or more school districts to support and improve high school student preparation for college through practices that may include, but are not limited to, small learning communities, concurrent enrollment, and other evidence-based practices;

- c) Utilize placement and student assessment indicators that include multiple measures of student performance, including grades in high school courses, overall grade point averages, results from common assessments, and input from counselors;
 - d) Provide each student, who participates in an ECCP pledge, the first semester at the community college tuition free;
 - e) Provide students with access to full-time course schedules that include math, reading, and English courses;
 - f) Provide outreach to students regarding the Associate Degrees for Transfer and the California Community College Transfer Entitlement Cal Grant program; and,
 - g) Partner with regional CSU campuses to ensure guaranteed admission and seamless transfer for students who have successfully completed transfer requirements.
- 4) Encourages school districts, UC, CSU, the Student Aid Commission, independent colleges and universities, local and regional government agencies, and nonprofit, business, or other community organizations to provide support services as needed in coordination with CCD Promise programs.
- 5) Requires the CCCCCO to annually submit to the Legislature a report on the status of the program, including, but not limited to, the number of CCD participants and relevant outcome data reported by CCD to the chancellor.
- 6) Provides \$25,000,000 (Prop. 98) from the General Fund to the CCCCCO for allocation to CCD upon the submission and approval of district applications detailing the strategy for establishing a Promise program.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the ECCP, with voluntary participation by pupils and school districts, for the purposes increasing college attendance and success rates among low-income students. Requires participating school districts to provide specified information on college attendance and to participate in the "Save Me a Spot in College" pledge. Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer the voluntary program and report on participation rates. Sunsets the ECCP on January 1, 2019. (Education Code Section 54710 et. seq.).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill contains an appropriation of \$25 million to fund the Promise Grant program.

COMMENTS: *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, AB 1741 models on the success of the Long Beach College Promise and creates the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program, to be administered by the CCCCCO, with an initial appropriation of \$25 million. The Chancellor will distribute multi-year grants to incentivize community college districts to establish Regional College Partnership Programs that integrate the local K-12 sector, California State University and University of California with the goals of increasing the number of students who graduate high school prepared to attend college; increase the number of local high school graduates placed directly in college level math and English; increase the percentage of students who earn degrees or career technical education certificates; increase the percentage of students

who successfully transfer from a CCC to a 4-year institution; increase the percentage of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree; and reduce and eliminate achievement gaps.

Background on ECCP. SB 890 (Scott), Chapter 472, Statutes of 2008, established the ECCP with the goal of renewing the 1960 Master Plan (that any California student with interest in attending college, could pursue a college education in California), and for the first time, making college directly accessible to students and their families beginning in middle school. The ECCP was launched in 2009 by the California Department of Education (CDE); lack of financial resources provided to support the program may have resulted in low participation rates among school districts.

Existing College Promise Programs. A number of CCC and CCD have implemented regional "promise" programs. These programs vary in size, scope, and student qualifications, and include:

Adelante Promise. Provides guaranteed admission to UC Irvine and CSU Fullerton for all graduates of the Santa Ana Unified School District as long as they enroll at Santa Ana College within one year of graduating and successfully meet all academic and application requirements for transfer.

Cuesta Promise. Cuesta College will pay for tuition and fees for all graduates of a San Luis Obispo County high school district for the first year of their programs. Students must attend Cuesta College the fall semester immediately following completion of high school to qualify.

Long Beach College Promise. All incoming Long Beach Unified School District students receive a tuition-free first year at Long Beach City College. Those who complete college preparatory and transfer requirements set by the Promise are guaranteed admission to CSU Long Beach. The joint outreach effort by all three institutions begins in 4th grade to encourage post-secondary education, while offering students a multitude of options to achieve success.

Richmond Promise. In August 2014, city leaders announced a \$35 million 10 year program that guarantees every Richmond public school student who graduates from high school will receive \$1,500 to attend college. Contra Costa College is a partner in this program.

San Francisco Promise. The Robert and Joyce Corrigan SF Promise Endowed Scholarship makes higher education an attainable goal for every eligible student in the San Francisco Unified School District. San Francisco Promise is a partnership among San Francisco State University, San Francisco Unified School District, and the Mayor's Office of the City of San Francisco. The San Francisco Promise Scholarship is available to 20 graduates from SFUSD high schools. If selected, the recipient will receive \$1,000 per year, renewable for 4 years as long as a GPA of 2.5 is maintained and the applicant completes at least 24 units (approximately 8 classes) each year.

San Marcos Promise/PACE Promise. Guarantees CSU San Marcos admission to San Marcos Unified School District graduates who are continuously enrolled in the district from 9th-12th grade and meet entrance requirements. Students must get a C or higher in each class and complete college prep coursework. PACE Promise provides scholarships of \$1,000 for up to 4 years, as well as college prep resources beginning in 7th grade.

Ventura College Promise. Covers tuition and fees at Ventura College for all Ventura County high school graduates, regardless of family income, so long as they commit to setting an educational goal, apply for college within 12 months of high school graduation, complete the FAFSA, and stay continuously enrolled in college for two consecutive semesters.

Issues to Consider. The author and committee may wish to consider the following issues and suggested amendments.

- 1) *Requiring a free semester at CCC for ECCP students.* This bill would require eligible Promise Programs to provide students who participate in an ECCP pledge the first semester at CCC tuition free. The costs to attend a CCC extend well beyond the \$46/unit fee, and include books, transportation, food, and living expenses. By focusing solely on fee waivers, does this bill inadvertently discourage CCC to improve student access to other sources of financial aid that cover access costs? *The author may wish to consider amending this provision to require that, in order to receive a Promise Grant, an institution provide needy students with financial aid support and assistance, which may include fee waivers and other financial aid support.*
- 2) *Local CSU Admission Guarantees.* This bill requires eligible Promise Programs to partner with regional CSU campuses to ensure guaranteed transfer admission. While this is an important provision in some successful local programs, it may not be possible for CCD in a CSU service area where the CSU has declared campus or program impaction. *The author may wish to consider establishing an exception to this requirement, as necessary.*

Related legislation. This bill is a part of a package of bills introduced by Assembly Members to establish a CCC Promise Program to ensure affordability and success for CCC students. Other bills in the package include: AB 1583 (Santiago), pending in this Committee, which would expand the CCC Board of Governors Fee Waiver Program to include specified categories of students, and establish a need-based aid program to cover access costs for CCC students; and, AB 1721 (Medina), pending in this Committee, which would expand the Cal Grant Program to increase aid to CCC students.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Primary Care Association

Opposition

None on File

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