

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2388 (Berman) – As Amended May 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: basic needs of students

SUMMARY: Requires each campus of the California Community Colleges, by July 1, 2021, to create the position of a Basic Needs Coordinator and to establish a Basic Needs Center to serve as the single location for resources related to housing, food, and mental health services.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines for the purpose of the section:
 - a) Basic needs services and resources to include housing, food, and mental health services and resources; and,
- 2) Requires each California Community College (CCC) campus by July 1, 2021, to accomplish the following:
 - a) Establish a new position to serve as the Basic Needs Coordinator whose focus is to provide basic needs services and resources to students and to serve as the single point of contact for students experiencing basic needs insecurities related to housing food, and mental health. The basic needs coordinator will:
 - i) Act as a broker in identifying, supporting, and linking students to on – and – off campus housing, food, and mental health services and resources; and,
 - ii) Oversee and coordinate with other staff tasked with addressing students’ basic needs; and,
 - iii) Inform students of all on- and off- campus basic needs services and how to access them; and,
 - iv) Develop partnerships to provide basic needs services and resources to students on campus.
 - b) Establish a Basic Needs Center (BNC) to serve as the central location on campus, where basic needs resources, services, and staff are available to students. If a campus is unable to move all basic needs services or resources to the BNC, the campus will provide students with the location and contact information, including phone number and email, for all basic needs services not located within the BNC. The Basic Needs Coordinator’s office will be located within the BNC;
 - c) Develop a document that is available to students in the BNC with a list of all on – and off – campus basic needs services and resources. The document will include the following:
 - i) A description of the service or resource; and,
 - ii) The location of the service or resource; and,

- iii) The point of contact for the service or resource, including a name, phone number, and email address.
 - d) Develop and utilize a single application for students to receive on - campus basic needs services and resources if the service or resources require an application;
 - e) Develop a plan to identify and provide outreach to students, including nontraditional students, who have basic need insecurities, as defined. The outreach will include information about the Basic Needs Coordinator and the BNC; and,
 - f) Provide a student basic needs tab that is clearly visible and easily accessible from a drop-down menu on the home page of the campus's website and includes information about the Basic Needs Coordinator, the BNC, and the contact list developed by the campus established in section (c). Furthermore, the contact list developed by the campus established in section (c) will be displayed on the internet website – based student account associated with a student's attendance at the institution.
- 3) Requires each CCC campus to add to the existing basic needs reporting requirements provided to the Chancellor of the CCC, the following data disaggregated by the service or resources, where applicable:
- a) A description and number of basic needs services and resources by category;
 - b) The number of students served by the basic needs services and resources;
 - c) The socioeconomic and demographics backgrounds of students who are served; and,
 - d) Whether students who received the services and resources remained enrolled or graduated from a campus maintained by the district.
- 4) Requires the Chancellor's office of the CCC to conduct a student basic needs survey to access the needs of students as it relates to basic needs, as defined. The survey will be conducted bi-annually commencing with the release of the data from the first survey on or before November 15, 2021.
- 5) Permits any future funding allocated for the Student Equity and Achievement Program to be used to fund the Basic Needs Coordinator position and the BNC. The CCC may seek and accept on behalf of the state any gift, as defined, whenever the gift, as defined, will aid in the funding of the Basic Needs Coordinator or/and the creation and/or operation of the BNC. The acceptance of the gift may not violate Government Code Section 11005 nor any other law requiring the approval of gifts.
- 6) Establishes, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill contains cost mandated by the state, the state shall reimburse the applicable entities.
- 7) States legislative findings and declarations relating to:
- a) The disproportionality of basic needs insecurity among some groups of students including: students of color, first-generation college students, financial aid recipients, former foster youth, and student parents;

- b) The direct impact basic needs insecurities have on a student's academic success;
- c) Best practices and tools for higher education institutions to utilize when building effective institutional supports for college students facing basic needs insecurities;
- d) Acknowledges the steps taken by the CCC to meet the basic needs of students through food pantries, housing-related efforts, and other services; and,
- e) Acknowledges that 53 community colleges who have moved towards a more coordinated and integrated approach in offering basic needs support to students.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires any state agency, unless otherwise specified by the Legislature or considered exempt, to seek approval of every gift, as defined, from either the Director of Finance or the Director of General Services. The Director of Finance will approve any gifts or dedications to the state of personal property or every gift to the state of real property. The Director of General Services will approve every contract related to the acquisition of real property. Any contract found in violation of the above is void. Provides definitions of when state agencies are exempt (Government Code Section 11005).
- 2) 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)
- 3) 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. (EDC Section 70902)
- 4) Establishes the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) at the CCC by which funds are allocated to CCC districts to advance the system wide goal of eliminating existing achievement gaps and boosting the academic achievement of all students.
 - a) Districts who receive funding from the SEAP must do the following:
 - i) Maintain a student equity plan as defined to ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students;
 - ii) Provide student matriculation services, as defined, which follows the guidelines established by CCC Chancellor's Office;
 - iii) Adopt and implement policies consistent with the requirements pertaining to the use of assessment instruments as established by the Board of Governors and the Legislature in Education Code Section 78213;
 - iv) Requires the district to provide a report to the CCC Chancellor's Office by January 1 of each year detailing how the allocated funding was utilized and an assessment of the district's progress in meeting the following goals:

- (1) Implementing activities and practices pursuant to the California Community College Guided Pathways Grant Program;
 - (2) Ensuring students complete their educational goals and a defined course of study; and,
 - (3) Provide quality curriculum, instruction, and support services to students who enter college deficient in English and mathematics to ensure these students complete a course of study in a timely manner.
- b) Establishes the regulations by which the CCC Chancellor's Office is to distribute funds allocated by annual Budget Act for the SEAP to CCC districts. Requires the CCC Chancellor's Office to submit a report to the Legislature and the Department of Finance by April 1 of each year with a summary of the district reports referenced above (iv); and,
 - c) Requires all CCC districts that receive funds for the SEAP to meet the requirements established by Education Code Section 78214 and Section 87482.3. (EDC Section 78222)
- 5) Requires each CCC campus that maintains student-housing facilities to provide priority housing to homeless youth, as defined and foster youth. Requires if the CCC campus maintains student housing facilities that are open on a year round basis or during school breaks, the priority housing be provided to foster youth and homeless youth at no extra cost to the student. Additionally each campus of the CCC to develop a plan to ensure that foster youth and homeless youth, as defined, have access to housing resources year-round. (EDC 76010)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Need for the bill.* The California CCC system is the largest higher education system in the nation and is comprised of 115 colleges that serve more than 2.1 million students. Despite recent efforts by the California Legislature to curb the cost of attendance by providing two years of free tuition at the CCC, students continue to struggle with food and housing insecurities. Many CCC have taken steps to meet the basic needs of students through food pantries, priority housing for foster and homeless students, access to CalFresh, and mental health services; however finding these resources often includes navigating a web of information that can be confusing for students. According to the author, "AB 2388 builds upon the existing actions of community colleges by creating a Basic Needs Center and a Basic Needs Coordinator for each campus to provide a single point of contact for students to easily access and be connected to basic needs services and resources, especially in this challenging and unprecedented time".

Student access to food and housing. In March 2019, the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, in collaboration with the CCC Chancellor's Office and the Institute for College Access and Success, released a report titled the *California Community Colleges # RealCollege Survey*. The report represented the first effort by the CCC to conduct a system-wide student survey to gauge the housing and food insecurities of community college students. The survey included 40,000 participants from 57 community colleges representing the demographics of California and was meant to capture the essences of college life on a CCC campus. The survey found that in a thirty-day period 50% of survey participants experienced food insecurity and 60% of survey participants experienced housing insecurity in the previous year. Of those who

experienced housing and food insecurity, disparities in the data existed with LGBTQ and African American students experiencing higher rates of housing and food insecurity when compared to their peers. Furthermore, the study provided a clear correlation between housing and food insecurities and academic success and matriculation to degree completion. Addressing basic needs such as food and housing for college students will improve their overall academic success, as it will permit students to focus on their studies improving college completion rates, and overall degree and credit attainment.

Existing Resources on Campus. For some time, the CCC have recognized that food and housing insecurity are detrimental to student success and in response have made efforts towards minimizing insecurities on campuses. To date, 53 of the 114 brick and mortar CCC have existing basic needs centers that assist students in seeking community and state resources to alleviate their food and housing insecurities. In the 2018 Budget Act, the Legislature provided \$10 million to the CCC to address student hunger by incentivizing campuses to become “hunger free campuses”. To become a hunger free campus, a CCC would designation an employee to help students apply for Cal Fresh and support the creation of an on-campus food pantry. In 2019, to further the investments in combating housing and food insecurities, the Legislature provided the CCC with \$9 million to provide safety net resources to secure housing for students, \$7 million to help improve access to mental health services, and an addition \$3.9 million to address basic needs on campuses. Currently, 11 CCC have dormitories on campus and utilize this space to provide priority housing to existing or formerly foster and/or homeless youth. Additionally in compliance with state law, CCC have opened their shower facilities to homeless students to use during the school year. Finally, as of last year all CCC campuses are required to make available to students on their campus website provided student account a link to information on Cal Fresh programs, and community resources for housing and mental health services.

Student Equity and Achievement Program. In the 2018-2019 Budget Trailer Bill, AB 1809, the Legislature, upon the suggestion of CCC’s Chancellor Office’s, established the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) by combining the Student Success and Support Program, the Student Success for Basic Skills program, and the Student Equity Program. In order to receive funding allocated to this new program, campuses would be required to maintain student equity plans, provide students matriculation services, adopt placement policies based on multiple measures, and provide all eligible students with an education plan.

The creation of the SEAP was an effort by the Chancellor’s Office to make it easier for campuses to serve students and fund programs that would address student equity and close academic achievement gaps. According to the Chancellor’s Office, “the new model broadens the expenditure guidelines to include any and all activities related to student equity and achievement and it places local districts in charge of allocating the funds”. Any program that supports equal education opportunities and promotes student success regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances would qualify for funding under the SEAP. With the data provided by the *California Community Colleges # RealCollege Survey*, establishing a Basic Needs Coordinator and a Basic Needs Center on campus would fall under the purvey of the SEAP as addressing basic needs insecurities such as food and housing addresses the gaps in students achievement and fosters academic excellence by alleviating the concerns of marginalized student populations.

Arguments in Support. According to the Student Senate for California Community Colleges, the sponsors of the bill, “what has plagued access to basic needs is the decentralized nature of

resources on community colleges. Most times, a student is forced to liaise between several departments on campus to access the full breadth of resources available to them. Amidst a global pandemic, that has only exacerbated these tensions; the need for quick and easy access to resources is more pressing than ever. While many colleges have resources that are uniquely suited to benefit their student populations, far too many resources are tucked away or hidden. This makes them inaccessible to students who most direly need them”. This is why AB 2388 is important to consolidate and centralize basic needs resources on CCC campuses.

Prior Legislation. The committee recognizes in previous years a myriad of bills have been introduced and chaptered to address student basic needs, the following is a concise snapshot of recent chaptered legislation.

- 1) AB 1278 (Gabriel), Chapter 517, Statutes of 2019, requires each CCC and CSU campus and requests each UC campus to provide on an internet website-based account for an enrolled student notification of and a link to internet sites of CalFresh and local mental health and housing resources as specified.
- 2) AB 74 (Ting), Chapter 23, Statutes of 2019, provides \$9 million in ongoing Proposition 98 general fund increase to CCC to address housing insecurities. Allocates a one-time increase of \$3.9 million to the CCC for student basic needs programs, and allocates a one-time increase of \$7 million in Proposition 63 funds for a grant program for colleges to address mental health services.
- 3) AB 1809 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 33, Statutes of 2018, established the Student Equity and Achievement program (SEAP) and required CCC campuses who receive funding from the SEAP to provide equity plans, student matriculation services, implement placement policies, and provide all students with education plans. Allocated to the CCC system \$10 million to address student hunger as specified.
- 4) AB 1840 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 426, Statutes of 2018, clarified that the Student Equity and Achievement program (SEAP) is intended to improve student success and eliminate achievement gaps, requires colleges to provide annual reports on the uses of the SEAP funds, and requires the CCC Chancellor’s Office to provide an annual report on the program to the Legislature.
- 5) SB 85 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 23, Statutes of 2017, required the Trustees of California State University, authorizes the governing board of participating California Community College district, and encourages the Regents of the University of California to designate, a “hunger free campus” if they meet specified criteria, as defined, for the purpose of procuring additional legislative funds.
- 6) AB 1228 (Gipson), Chapter 571, Statute of 2015, requires the UC, the CSU, and the CCC to provide priority housing to homeless youth and foster youth and requests campuses to develop plans to ensure that homeless and foster youth have housing during breaks.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alliance for A Better Community

Alliance for Children's Rights
California Community College Independents
California Yimby
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Young Invincibles

Opposition

None on File.

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