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AB-1091 Student financial aid: Cal Grant Program. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Bill No. 1091

CHAPTER 637

An act to amend Section 69432.9 of, and to add Section 69432.92 to, the Education Code, relating to student financial aid.

[Approved by Governor October 08, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State October 08, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1091, Eduardo Garcia. Student financial aid: Cal Grant Program.

The Cal Grant Program establishes the Cal Grant A and B Entitlement awards, the California Community College Transfer Entitlement awards, the Competitive Cal Grant A and B awards, the Cal Grant C award, and the Cal Grant T award under the administration of the Student Aid Commission, and establishes eligibility requirements for awards under these programs for participating students attending qualifying institutions. As part of these eligibility requirements, existing law requires the commission to require that a grade point average be submitted to it electronically for all grade 12 pupils at public schools, including charter schools, each academic year, except as specified.

This bill would require this electronic submission to be on a standardized form. The bill would also authorize the commission to require that verification of high school graduation or its equivalent be electronically submitted for all former grade 12 pupils who graduated from public schools, including charter schools, in the prior academic year, except for pupils who have opted out, as specified. By requiring the electronic submission of grade point average information to be on a standardized form, and authorizing the commission to additionally require verification of graduation information of prior grade 12 pupils, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 69432.9 of the Education Code is amended to read:

69432.9. (a) A Cal Grant applicant shall submit a complete official financial aid application pursuant to Section 69433 and applicable regulations adopted by the commission. Each pupil enrolled in grade 12 in a California public school, including a charter school, other than pupils who opt out as provided in subdivision (d), shall be deemed to be a Cal Grant applicant.

(b) Financial need shall be determined to establish an applicant's initial eligibility for a Cal Grant award and a renewing recipient's continued eligibility using the federal financial need methodology pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 69506 and applicable regulations adopted by the commission, and as established by Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. Secs. 1070 et seq.).

(1) "Expected family contribution," with respect to an applicant or renewing recipient, shall be determined using the federal methodology pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 69506 (as established by Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. Secs. 1070 et seq.)) and applicable rules and regulations adopted by the commission.

(2) "Financial need" means the difference between the student's cost of attendance as determined by the commission and the expected family contribution. The calculation of financial need shall be consistent with Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. Secs. 1070 et seq.).

(3) (A) The minimum financial need required for receipt of an initial and renewal Cal Grant A or C award shall be no less than the maximum annual award value for the applicable institution, plus an additional one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) of financial need.

(B) The minimum financial need required for receipt of an initial and renewal Cal Grant B award shall be no less than seven hundred dollars (\$700).

(c) (1) The commission shall require that a grade point average be submitted to it for all Cal Grant A and B applicants, except for those permitted to provide test scores in lieu of a grade point average.

(2) The commission shall require that a grade point average be submitted to it electronically on a standardized form for all grade 12 pupils at public schools, including charter schools, each academic year, except for pupils who have opted out as provided in subdivision (d). Social security numbers shall not be included in the information submitted to the commission. However, if the commission determines that a social security number is required to complete the application for financial aid, the school, school district, or charter school may obtain permission from the parent or guardian of the pupil, or the pupil, if he or she is 18 years of age, to submit the pupil's social security number to the commission.

(3) The commission shall require that each report of a grade point average include a certification, executed under penalty of perjury, by a school official, that the grade point average reported is accurately reported. The certification shall include a statement that it is subject to review by the commission or its designee.

(4) The commission shall adopt regulations that establish a grace period for receipt of the grade point average and any appropriate corrections, and that set forth the circumstances under which a student may submit a specified test score designated by the commission, by regulation, in lieu of submitting a qualifying grade point average.

(5) It is the intent of the Legislature that high schools and institutions of higher education certify the grade point averages of their students in time to meet the application deadlines imposed by this chapter.

(6) It is the intent of the Legislature that the commission make available to each high school and school district a report identifying all grade 12 pupils within the high school or school district, respectively, who have and have not completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or the California Dream Act Application.

(d) (1) The school district or charter school shall, no later than October 15 of a pupil's grade 12 academic year, notify, in writing, each grade 12 pupil and, for a pupil under 18 years of age, his or her parent or guardian that, pursuant to subdivision (a), the pupil will be deemed a Cal Grant applicant unless the pupil opts out within a period of time specified in the notice, which shall not be less than 30 days. The required notice shall indicate when the school will first send grade point averages to the commission. The school district or charter school shall provide an opportunity for the pupil to opt out of being automatically deemed a Cal Grant applicant.

(2) Until a pupil turns 18 years of age, only a parent or guardian may opt the pupil out. Once a pupil turns 18 years of age, only the pupil may opt himself or herself out and, if prior to the conclusion of the notice period, the pupil may opt in over the prior decision of a parent or guardian to opt out.

SEC. 2. Section 69432.92 is added to the Education Code, to read:

69432.92. (a) The commission may require verification of high school graduation or its equivalent to be electronically submitted for all former grade 12 pupils who graduated from public schools, including charter schools, in the prior academic year, except for pupils who have opted out as provided in subdivision (d) of Section 69432.9.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that high schools or high school districts verify the graduation of their pupils in time to meet the deadlines imposed by subdivision (e) of Section 69433.9.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.