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AB-2015 Pupil instruction: information about completion of applications for student financial aid. (2017-2018)

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Date Published: 09/19/2018 09:00 PM

Assembly Bill No. 2015

CHAPTER 533

An act to add Section 51225.8 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

[Approved by Governor September 19, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State September 19, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2015, Reyes. Pupil instruction: information about completion of applications for student financial aid.

(1) Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary schools pursuant to which local educational agencies, including school districts and charter schools throughout the state, provide instruction to pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.

This bill would require, commencing with the 2020–21 school year, the governing board of a school district and the governing body of a charter school, as appropriate, to ensure that each of its pupils receives information on how to properly complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application, as appropriate, at least once before the pupil enters grade 12. The bill would provide that the manner in which information is provided pursuant to the bill would be at the discretion of the governing board of the school district or the governing body of the charter school, as appropriate. The bill would specify several types of material that would be required to be provided under the bill. The bill would require the governing boards of school districts and the governing bodies of charter schools to ensure that a paper copy of the FAFSA or the California Dream Act Application is provided to a pupil upon the request of that pupil or upon request of a parent or guardian of that pupil. The bill would also require the governing boards of school districts and the governing bodies of charter schools to ensure that any information shared by parents, guardians, and pupils pursuant to the bill is handled according to applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

Because the bill would impose new duties on school districts and charter schools, it would constitute a state-mandated local program.

(2) 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 the statutory provisions noted above.

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

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

SECTION 1. Section 51225.8 is added to the Education Code, to read:

51225.8. (a) Commencing with the 2020–21 school year, the governing board of a school district and the governing body of a charter school, as appropriate, shall ensure that each of its pupils receives information on how to properly complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application, as appropriate, at least once before the pupil enters grade 12. The manner in which information is provided pursuant to this section shall be at the discretion of the governing board of the school district or the governing body of the charter school, as appropriate, and may include, but not necessarily be limited to, information dissemination through in-class instruction, an existing program, family information sessions, or group or individual sessions with school counselors. The information provided shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, material related to all of the following:

(1) The types of documentation and personal information that each student financial aid application requires, including, but not necessarily limited to, documents relating to income taxes, finances and income, college choices, academic status, and personal identification such as social security or taxpayer identification numbers.

(2) An explanation of definitions used for each application. These definitions may include, but are not necessarily limited to, definitions of “legal guardianship,” “household size,” “parent,” “dependent,” and “taxable college grants and scholarships.”

(3) Eligibility requirements for student financial aid that may be applied for using the FAFSA or the California Dream Act Application.

(4) Application timelines and submission deadlines.

(5) The importance of submitting applications early, especially when student financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

(b) The governing board of a school district and the governing body of a charter school shall ensure that a paper copy of the FAFSA or the California Dream Act Application is provided to each pupil, upon request by that pupil or upon request of a parent or guardian of that pupil.

(c) The governing board of a school district and the governing body of a charter school shall ensure that any information shared by parents, guardians, and pupils under this section is handled according to applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations.

SEC. 2. 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.