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AB-2403 Community colleges: student equity plan. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 2403

CHAPTER 715

An act to amend Section 78220 of the Education Code, relating to community colleges.

[Approved by Governor September 27, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2403, Bonta. Community colleges: student equity plan.

Existing law, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, provides that the purpose of the act is to increase California community college student access and success by providing effective core matriculation services, including orientation, assessment and placement, counseling, other education planning services, and academic interventions. Existing law establishes the Student Equity and Achievement Program and requires a community college district, as a condition of the receipt of funds under the program, to comply with specified requirements, including the maintenance of a student equity plan to ensure equal educational opportunities and promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances. Existing law requires a student equity plan to be developed with the active involvement of all groups on campus as required by law, including, but not limited to, the academic senate, academic faculty and staff, student services, and students, and with the involvement of appropriate people from the community.

This bill would require a student equity plan to also include a description of the active involvement of all groups on campus in developing the student equity plan for each community college in the community college district. To the extent that the bill would impose new duties on community college districts, it would constitute 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 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 78220 of the Education Code is amended to read:

78220. (a) As a condition for receiving Student Success and Support Program funding, and in order to ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances, the governing board of each community college district shall maintain a student equity plan that includes all of the following for each community college in the community college district:

(1) Campus-based research, as to the extent of student equity by gender and for each of the following categories of students, that uses the methodology established pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 78221:

(A) Current or former foster youth.

(B) Students with disabilities.

(C) Low-income students.

(D) Veterans.

(E) Students in the following ethnic and racial categories, as they are defined by the United States Census Bureau for the 2010 Census for reporting purposes:

(i) American Indian or Alaska Native.

(ii) Asian.

(iii) Black or African American.

(iv) Hispanic or Latino.

(v) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

(vi) White.

(vii) Some other race.

(viii) More than one race.

(F) Homeless students.

(G) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender students.

(H) Additional categories of students determined by the governing board of the community college district.

(2) To the extent that student data described in paragraph (1) has been collected, the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall make the data available to community college districts for determining student equity and disproportionate impact.

(3) Goals for access and retention, degree and certificate completion, English as a Second Language and foundational skills, completion, and transfer for the overall student population and for each population group of high-need or disadvantaged students, and a determination of what activities are most likely to effectively meet those goals.

(4) Whether significant underrepresentation is found to exist pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (3), based on the methodology established pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 78221, measures for addressing the disparities in those areas, implementation activities designed to attain the goals specified in paragraph (3), including, but not limited to, the adoption of evidence-based models of remediation, implementation of placement and enrollment policies that more accurately predict student success and identify students' pretransfer needs, and a means of coordinating with, at a minimum, the following student equity-related categorical programs or campus-based programs:

(A) Students with disabilities.

(B) Extended Opportunity Programs and Services and Special Services.

(C) Fund for Student Success.

(D) Student Success and Support Program.

(E) Programs for foster youth.

(F) Programs for veterans.

(G) Special Services for CalWORKs Recipients.

(H) Student Financial Aid Administration.

(I) Student Success for Basic Skills Students.

(5) Sources of funds for the activities in the plan.

(6) A schedule and process for evaluation.

(7) An executive summary that includes, at a minimum, the student groups for whom goals have been set, the goals, the initiatives that the community college or community college district will undertake to achieve these goals, the resources that have been budgeted for that purpose, and the community college district official to contact for further information. Commencing with the 2016–17 academic year, the executive summary shall also include a detailed accounting of how funding was expended and an assessment of the progress made in achieving the identified goals.

(8) A description of the active involvement of all groups on campus, including, but not limited to, those identified in subdivision (b), in developing the student equity plan.

(b) Student equity plans shall be developed with the active involvement of all groups on campus as required by law, including, but not limited to, the academic senate, academic faculty and staff, student services, and students, and with the involvement of appropriate people from the community.

(c) The plan shall be adopted by the governing board of the community college district and submitted to the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges on or before January 1, 2015, who shall publish all executive summaries, sending copies to the appropriate policy and budget committees of the Legislature, the Department of Finance, every community college and community college district, each consultation group identified in subdivision (b) that so requests, and additional individuals and organizations as deemed appropriate.

(d) The plan shall be updated every three academic years and plan updates shall be submitted to the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges for publication and distribution as provided for in subdivision (c).

(e) (1) Funding included in the Budget Act for the Student Equity and Achievement Program may be used for the provision of emergency student financial assistance to help an eligible student overcome unforeseen financial challenges that would directly impact the student's ability to persist in the student's course of study. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the immediate need for shelter or food. Each community college district and campus is encouraged to consider the unique characteristics of its student body in developing specific guidelines for further defining what constitutes an unforeseen financial challenge for its students.

(2) In order for emergency student financial assistance to be an allowable use of Student Equity and Achievement Program funds, emergency student financial assistance shall be included in the institution's plan for interventions to students.

(3) For purposes of this subdivision, the following terms are defined as follows:

(A) "Eligible student" means a student who has experienced an unforeseen financial challenge, who is making satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the college the student attends, and who is at risk of not persisting in the student's course of study due to the unforeseen financial challenge. For purposes of this paragraph, the definition of satisfactory academic progress used by the community college shall provide that homelessness, as defined as a "homeless individual" within the meaning of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11302(a)), or as defined as a "homeless child or youth," as defined in subsection (2) of Section 725 of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a(2)), is an extenuating circumstance for students who are otherwise unable to meet the requirements deemed to constitute "satisfactory academic progress" at that community college, and that extenuating circumstance may be considered by the institution to alter or excuse compliance with those progress requirements.

(B) "Emergency student financial assistance" means financial support to assist a student to overcome unforeseen financial challenges, including, but not limited to, direct aid in the form of emergency grants, housing and food assistance, textbook grants, and transportation assistance, so that the student can continue the student's course of study.

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.