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AB-934 Community colleges: degrees and certificates: education plans. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 934

Introduced by Assembly Member Berman

February 19, 2025

~~An act relating to postsecondary education.~~ *An act to add Section 78222.5 to, and to add Article 9 (commencing with Section 78093) to Chapter 1 of Part 48 of Division 7 of Title 3 of, the Education Code, relating to community colleges.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 934, as amended, Berman. ~~Postsecondary education: student access and success.~~ *Community colleges: degrees and certificates: education plans.*

Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as one of the segments of postsecondary education in this state. 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 of orientation, assessment and placement, counseling, and other education planning services, and academic interventions.

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that ensures timely completion of student comprehensive education plans and identifies current and former community college students who have completed degree or certificate requirements and award those degrees and certificates. The bill would make related findings and declarations.~~

This bill would require the board of governors to require all community colleges to award degrees and certificates retroactively in accordance with specified provisions. The bill would require, commencing with the 2026–27 academic year, a community college, before the beginning of the spring term of the academic year, to identify students who, during the previous 5 academic years, (1) have completed the semester or quarter units required to receive a degree or certificate, (2) need 12 semester units or 18 quarter units, or less, to complete the minimum number of units required to receive a degree or certificate, or (3) have completed the general education transfer requirements, and to notify those students, as provided.

This bill would require, beginning in September 2026, a community college to annually identify and notify new and returning students who do not have an education plan and ensure that the students identified receive education plans before the end of their first academic year, as provided.

By imposing additional duties on community colleges, 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 the statutory provisions noted above.

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

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California needs to support students seeking to earn baccalaureate degrees, associates degrees, or certificates to align to our state's evolving workforce development demands.

(b) The California Community Colleges are the state's largest workforce provider, offering associate degrees and short-term job training certificates in more than 175 different fields.

(c) Meeting the current and future need for higher education requires improving success rates with current students and attracting and graduating individuals from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

(d) By 2031, approximately 72 percent of jobs nationally will require higher education and training. Failure to make significant improvements in certificate or degree completion will result in a less productive economy, lower incomes for residents, less tax revenue for the state, and more dependence on social services.

(e) Earning a certificate or degree from a community college adds between \$5,000 and \$11,100 to an individual's wages compared to workers with only high school diplomas.

~~(f) Since the Seymour Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 (Chapter 624 of the Statutes of 2012) was enacted, California Community Colleges have been mandated to work with students to develop an education plan leading to a course of study and guidance on course selection that is informed by, and related to, a student's academic and career goals.~~

(f) California Community Colleges are already required to provide students with education plans, which are developed and take into account a student's interests, skills, career and education goals, major, potential transfer institutions, and the steps the student needs to take on their educational path to complete their identified course of study.

(g) As of *August 1, 2024*, and required by the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021 (Chapter 566 of the Statutes of 2021), *the California Community Colleges are required to place* students ~~that start at a community college and declare a goal of transfer in order to earn a baccalaureate degree are placed by default on an~~ *on the* Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway ~~if one such a pathway exists in for their intended major of study. This ADT pathway placement is facilitated through the existing student comprehensive study and the students declare a goal of transfer on their~~ education plans.

(h) Statewide coordinated efforts to improve access to higher education and career education for adult learners and Californians with some college credits accrued but no degree or certificate awarded are underway through the Master Plan for Career Education.

(i) California should bolster existing efforts to advance educational access and success.

SEC. 2. *Article 9 (commencing with Section 78093) is added to Chapter 1 of Part 48 of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code, to read:*

Article 9. Degree Reclamation

78093. (a) *The board of governors shall require all community colleges to award degrees and certificates retroactively in accordance with this article.*

(b) *Commencing with the 2026–27 academic year, and before the beginning of the spring term of the academic year, each community college shall do all of the following:*

(1) (A) Identify students who have completed the semester or quarter units required to receive a degree or certificate during the previous five academic years.

(B) Notify students identified pursuant to subparagraph (A) that they are eligible to receive a degree or certificate. Those students shall have the choice to opt out or to receive the degree or certificate.

(2) (A) Identify students who, during the previous five academic years, need 12 semester units or 18 quarter units, or less, to complete the minimum number of units required to receive a degree or certificate.

(B) Notify students identified pursuant to subparagraph (A) that they need 12 semester units or 18 quarter units, or less, to receive a degree or certificate.

(3) (A) Identify students who have completed the general education transfer requirements during the previous five academic years.

(B) Notify students identified pursuant to subparagraph (A) that they have completed the general education transfer requirements and are eligible for certification.

SEC. 3. Section 78222.5 is added to the Education Code, immediately following Section 78222, to read:

78222.5. (a) Beginning in September 2026, each community college shall do both of the following:

(1) Annually identify and notify new and returning students who do not have an education plan, also known as a Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP).

(2) Ensure that all students identified pursuant to paragraph (1) receive CEPs before the end of their first academic year.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that ensuring all students receive CEPs before the end of their first academic year will help enable each community college to meet the existing requirement of placing students on the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway if students declare a goal of transfer on their CEPs and such a pathway exists for their intended major.

SEC. 4. 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.

~~SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that does both of the following:~~

~~(a) Ensures timely completion of student comprehensive education plans.~~

~~(b) Identifies current and former community college students who have completed degree or certificate requirements and award those degrees and certificates.~~