
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 1075 **Hearing Date:** June 26, 2019
Author: Holden
Version: May 16, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Lynn Lorber

Subject: California State University: speech-language pathologist programs.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU) to allocate funds to campus speech-language pathologist programs to expand enrollment in those programs.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the CSU, under the administration of the Trustees of the CSU, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CSU comprises 23 institutions of higher education throughout the state, and the Chancellor of the CSU serves as the university's chief executive officer. (Education Code § 89000, et seq.)

ANALYSIS

This uncodified bill requires, contingent upon the enactment of an appropriation for this purpose to the Trustees of the CSU for the 2019-20 fiscal year, those funds to be allocated in accordance with all of the following:

- 1) Requires the Chancellor of the CSU to allocate funds through competitive grants to each campus speech-language pathologist programs.
- 2) Requires campus programs, as part of their applications, to specify how many enrollment slots they plan to add during the grant period and how they propose to address any potential impediments to expanding their enrollment capacity.
- 3) Requires the Chancellor's office to evaluate campus applications, award and oversee the grants, and report periodically to the Legislature on the progress of the CSU toward increasing enrollment in speech-language pathologist programs.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "California is experiencing one of the worst teacher shortages in history. We all know there is a severe shortage of Special Education teachers but what might be less well known is that there is a serious shortage of Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs). SLPs provide many services in a student's individualized education program. Speech and language is one of the largest disabilities in students and is growing each year.

Due to the shortage in SLPs, school districts are forced to contract with speech service agencies and pay higher rates. We do not have enough certified SLPs to meet the need of our current student population. The CSU graduate programs graduate the large majority of our SLPs. There are huge waiting lists to get into the CSU's speech pathologist preparation graduate programs. Last year the CSU graduated 422 SLPs and there were 1,443 vacant SLP district positions. By expanding the number of seats in these CSU SLP graduate programs we will be able to meet the desperate need for SLPs in our schools. If we do not expand SLP graduate programs in California we will never meet the growing demand of SLPs."

- 2) ***This uncodified bill is funded in the Budget Act of 2019.*** AB 74 (Ting, 2019), which is the Budget Act of 2019, allocates \$3 million for the CSU to increase enrollment in graduate specialist programs in speech and language pathology. While this bill differs somewhat from the budget bill language, both address funding to increase enrollment in CSU speech and language pathology programs. AB 74 accomplishes that goal (albeit not yet signed by the Governor). Therefore, this bill is unnecessary and conflicts with the Budget Act.
- 3) ***Need for additional speech-language pathologists.*** The CSU offers a number of -accredited Master's Degree speech-language pathologist programs. Currently, 13 CSU campuses offer master's degree programs that prepare speech-language pathologists. Of these programs, 11 are state funded and two are entirely supported by student fees. According to the CSU Chancellor's Office, in 2017-18, CSU enrolled a total of 933 full-time equivalent students in these programs and graduated about 400 students.

According to the Assembly Higher Education Committee's analysis of this bill, high speech-language pathologist education costs are due primarily to accreditation standards that require programs to maintain a 3:1 student-to-clinical faculty (supervisor) ratio in their on-campus clinics. (Programs do not have a required student-to-faculty ratio for classroom instruction.) Speech-language pathologist programs also often purchase expensive equipment, such as high-tech mannequins that can simulate speech impairments for students. On average, total program costs are well beyond costs for typical CSU programs. According to program administrators interviewed at CSU by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), these high relative costs limit the size of the cohort they can enroll each year.

SUPPORT

California Hospital Association
Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board

OPPOSITION

None received

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