
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 1097 **Hearing Date:** June 26, 2019
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Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
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Subject: Pupil instruction: credit recovery programs: report.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), by July 1, 2021, to provide a report to the governor and Legislature on credit recovery programs.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires pupils enrolled in county community schools to be assigned to classes or programs deemed most appropriate for reinforcing or reestablishing educational development, and authorizes those classes or programs to include, but need not be limited to, basic educational skill development, on-the-job training, school credit recovery assistance, tutorial assistance, and individual guidance activities. (Education Code § 1983)
- 2) Requires school districts to permit a pupil who is 16-18 years old and has not graduated from high school to enroll in continuation classes. (EC § 48413)
- 3) States legislative intent that continuation schools and classes provide an opportunity for pupils to complete the courses required for high school graduation, a program of instruction which emphasizes occupational orientation or work-study and offers intensive guidance services, a program designed to meet the educational needs of each pupil. (EC § 48430)
- 4) Requires the State Board of Education (SBE), on or before October 1, 2016, to adopt evaluation rubrics for all of the following purposes:
 - a) To assist a school district, county office of education, or charter school in evaluating its strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement.
 - b) To assist a county superintendent of schools in identifying school districts and charter schools in need of technical assistance, and the specific priorities upon which the technical assistance should be focused.
 - c) To assist the Superintendent in identifying school districts for which intervention.

- 5) Requires the evaluation rubrics to reflect a holistic, multidimensional assessment of school district and individual schoolsite performance and shall include all of the state priorities.
- 6) Requires the SBE to adopt, as part of the evaluation rubrics, state and local indicators to measure school district and individual schoolsite performance in regard to each of the state priorities, and authorizes the SBE to adopt alternate methods for calculating the state and local indicators for alternative schools, if appropriate to more fairly evaluate the performance of these schools or of a specific category of these schools. Alternate methods may include an individual pupil growth model. (EC § 52064.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the CDE, by July 1, 2021, to provide a report to the governor and Legislature on credit recovery programs. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the report to include all of the following:
 - a) Information about local educational agencies (LEAs) operating credit recovery programs, including, but not limited to, both of the following:
 - i) The number and location of credit recovery programs.
 - ii) Whether credit recovery programs are delivered over the summer, on school breaks, after school, on weekends, at pupils' homes, at night in school computer labs, online, or during the schoolday.
 - b) Information about pupils participating in credit recovery programs, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - i) The number of pupils enrolled in credit recovery programs.
 - ii) Demographic information about pupils enrolled in credit recovery programs, including low-income status, special education status, English learner status, age, race, and ethnicity.
 - c) Outcomes of pupils who have enrolled in credit recovery programs, including the number of credits earned, graduation rates, dropout rates, and transfer rates.
- 2) Defines "credit recovery," for purposes of the report and "school credit recovery assistance" for purposes county community school classes or programs as referring "to a pupil passing, and receiving credit for, a course that the pupil previously attempted, but for which the pupil was unsuccessful in earning academic credit towards graduation. The pupil can recover the credit by satisfying requirements for the course in which they were unsuccessful and can focus on earning credit based on competency in the content standards for that particular course. Credit recovery programs aim to help schools graduate more pupils by giving pupils who have fallen behind the chance to recover credits

through a multitude of different strategies. Different programs allow pupils to work on their credit recovery classes over the summer, on school breaks, after school, on weekends, at home on their own, at night in school computer labs, online, or even during the schoolday.”

- 3) Defines “local educational agency,” for purposes of the report, as “a school district, county office of education, or charter school.”

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “the California Department of Education does not have a definition of credit recovery and credit recovery is not defined in Education Code.

Credit recovery programs have drawn both acclaim and concern as high school graduation rates have hit record highs five times in the past five years. These programs let students who fail a class “recover” credit via abbreviated makeup courses, instead of repeating a year of school. Credit recovery helps more students stay on track for graduation, but flat national test scores and numerous credit recovery scandals raise red flags about graduation-rate inflation. High-volume, low-quality credit recovery programs can boost graduation rates while eroding expectations and harming the very students they aim to help.

Done well, credit recovery programs provide students with legitimate second chances to graduate on time. But some, particularly high-volume programs, have quality-control problems that create a second track to graduation that erodes school cultures and lowers expectations—particularly for disadvantaged students. Unfortunately, too little is known across the nation or in California about these programs’ effectiveness or operations. California leaders should increase attention to these rapidly expanding programs to ensure they are helping, not harming, students struggling to graduate.”

- 2) ***Available data regarding California credit recovery programs.*** As noted by the Assembly Education Committee, Very little statewide data is available related to the use of and characteristics of credit recovery programs in California. The CDE does not collect this data set, however schools and LEAs self-report information about credit recovery programs as a part of the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). The CRDC’s 2015-16 survey provided the following definition: “credit recovery programs (including courses or other instruction) aim to help schools graduate more students by giving students who have fallen behind the chance to “recover” credits through a multitude of different strategies, including online. Different programs allow students to work on their credit recovery classes over the summer, on school breaks, after school, on weekends, at home on their own, at night in school computer labs, or even during the school day.” According to the American Enterprise Institute’s State Profile of High School Credit Recovery in California, fewer California high schools (66 percent) offered credit recovery programs than the national average (74 percent) in 2015-16, but California’s high school student participation (10 percent) is above the national average (6 percent).

- 3) **Alternative schools.** Existing law specifies, for purposes of the statewide system of support, that alternative schools include schools under the jurisdiction of a county board of education or a county superintendent of schools; community day schools; nonpublic, nonsectarian schools; and alternative schools serving high-risk pupils, including continuation high schools, dropout recovery high schools, and opportunity schools.
- 4) **The Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS).** DASS is for schools that serve high-risk students. DASS Schools will receive a Dashboard for the first time in Fall 2018. Schools that participate in DASS will have their information displayed on the same Dashboard and be measured on the same set of indicators as non-alternative schools:
 - a) Academic Indicator (English Language Arts and Mathematics).
 - b) Chronic Absenteeism Indicator.
 - c) College/Career Indicator.
 - d) English Learner Progress Indicator (2018 Dashboard data are limited to assessment results).
 - e) Graduation Rate Indicator.
 - f) Suspension Rate Indicator.

Like non-alternative public schools, DASS schools will receive one of five color-coded performance levels for each indicator, identical to those given to non-alternative schools. Performance levels range from lowest to highest performance and include red, orange, yellow, green, and blue.

According to CDE, the state indicators and standards were developed for non-alternative schools. In order to fairly evaluate the success and progress of alternative schools that serve high-risk students, modified measures may be used for certain indicators. This means that these indicators may be calculated differently, or use different criteria, for DASS schools. At this time, the only modified indicator for alternative schools is the graduation rate indicator, which uses only grade 12 for alternative schools, as opposed to the four-year graduation cohort that is used for non-alternative schools.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received