
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: SB 554

Hearing Date: April 3, 2019

Author: Roth

Version: February 22, 2019

Urgency: No

Fiscal: Yes

Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: Public schools: adult school pupils: Advanced Scholastic and Vocational Training Program.

SUMMARY

This bill allows community college district governing boards to admit adult school pupils pursuing a high school diploma or the equivalent as special part-time or full-time dual enrollment students.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires a community college district governing board to admit any California resident, and allows for admittance of any nonresident, possessing a high school diploma or the equivalent.
- 2) Allows a community college district governing board to determine whether to admit any other person who is over 18 years of age and who, in the judgment of the board, would benefit from community college instruction.
- 3) Allows a community college district governing board to establish and maintain classes for adults for the purpose of providing instruction in civic, vocational, literacy, health, homemaking, technical, and general education.
- 4) Allows a community college district governing board to admit to any community college under its jurisdiction as a special part-time or full-time student in any session a student who is determined by their school district governing board as likely to benefit from advanced scholastic or vocational work, upon recommendation by the pupil's principal and with parental consent, or petitioned for community college attendance by a parent or guardian and approved.
- 5) Allows unified or high school districts to establish separate adult schools in the following program areas:
 - a) Adult literacy/high school diploma.
 - b) English as a second language/citizenship.
 - c) Adults with disabilities.

- d) Career technical education/apprenticeships.
- e) Parenting, family, and consumer awareness.
- f) Older adults.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Adds adult school pupils who are pursuing a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate to the students that the governing board of a community college district may admit as a special part-time or full-time dual enrollment student.
- 2) Specifies that the governing board of a school district may determine which adult school pupils who are pursuing a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate would benefit from advanced scholastic or vocational work.
- 3) Allows the governing board of a school district to authorize those pupils, upon recommendation of the administrator of the pupil's adult school or community college noncredit program of attendance, to attend a community college during any session or term as special part-time students, and to undertake one or more courses of instruction offered at the community college level.
- 4) Specifies that if the governing board of a school district denies a request for the pupil's special part-time enrollment at a community college for any academic session or term, the governing board shall issue its written recommendation and the reasons for the denial within 60 days. The written recommendation and denial shall be issued at the next regularly scheduled board meeting that falls at least 30 days after the request has been submitted.
- 5) Specifies that a pupil shall receive credit for community college courses that the pupil completes at the level determined appropriate by the governing boards of the school district and community college district.
- 6) Requires, for purposes of allowances and apportionments from Section B of the State School Fund, a community college to be credited with additional units of average daily attendance attributable to the attendance of pupils at the community college as special part-time students.
- 7) Specifies that attendance of a high school pupil at a community college as a special part-time or full-time student is authorized attendance for which the community college shall be credited or reimbursed, provided that no school district has received reimbursement for the same instructional activity.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "Research both nationally and in California has documented that dual enrollment, a student enrolled in both a high school and community college at the same time, is a powerful strategy for increasing college success and affordability for low-income students, including underperforming students and students from underserved communities. To date, both regular dual enrollment and the new College Access and Career Pathways (CCAP) dual enrollment program have focused on students in traditional high schools."

This bill would provide a streamlined approach for adults enrolled in a High School Equivalency (HSE) program to concurrently enroll in one or more community college course without tuition or fees. In doing so, this bill encourages adult education programs and community colleges to create partnerships and pathways into college for a population of students with historically low levels of participation in post-secondary education and training."

- 2) **Adult education programs and funding.** Adult schools are public schools offering free to low-cost classes for adults 18 and older. The primary purpose of adult education is to provide adults with the pre-collegiate knowledge and skills they need to participate in civic life and the workforce. Toward this end, most adult education course offerings are in three instructional areas: basic math and English, English as a second language, and career technical education.

Community colleges and school district-run adult schools are the primary providers of adult education. In addition, various other entities provide adult education, including community-based organizations, libraries, and jails. Due to longstanding concerns with a lack of coordination among providers, the state budget created the Adult Education Block Grant in 2015-16, later renamed the Adult Education Program as part the 2018-19 budget. The program is currently appropriated \$526 million supporting consortia in various adult education regions.

As a condition of apportionment under the Adult Education Program, consortia must develop and annually update a three year plan containing, among other things, an evaluation of the educational needs of adults in the region, the funding available among all of the entities within the consortia, and actions to be taken to better integrate services offered and transitions into postsecondary education and the workforce.

- 3) **Concurrent enrollment.** Concurrent enrollment provides pupils the opportunity to enroll in college courses and earn college credit while still enrolled in high school. Generally, a pupil is allowed to concurrently enroll in a community college as a "special-admit" while still attending high school, if the pupil's school district determines that the pupil would benefit from "advanced scholastic or vocational work." Special-admit students have typically been advanced pupils wanting to take more challenging coursework or pupils who come from high schools where Advanced Placement or honors courses are not widely available. Additionally, programs such as middle college high schools and early college high schools use concurrent enrollment to offer instructional programs for at-risk pupils that focus on college preparatory curricula. These programs are

developed through partnerships between a school district and a community college.

- 4) **Concurrent enrollment options.** Community college districts have several statutorily authorized means by which apportionments can be claimed for minors enrolled by the district. These include:
 - a) *Special part-time full-time students.* School district governing boards can recommend students who would benefit from advanced scholastic or vocational work for attendance at a community college upon recommendation of the principal. The number of students who can be recommended for summer session enrollments is capped at five percent of the students in each grade. Community colleges can claim state funding for these students only if the course is open and advertised to the general public. Under this authority, students are limited to enrolling in a maximum of 11 units per semester, and must be assigned low enrollment priority by the college to avoid displacement of adults.
 - b) *Early College High Schools (ECHS) and Middle College High Schools (MCHS).* ECHS are designed for young people who are underrepresented in postsecondary education, including students who have not had access to the academic preparation needed to meet college readiness standards, students for whom the cost of college is prohibitive, students of color, first generation college-goers, and English language learners. MCHS is a collaborative program that enables high-potential, "at-risk" students to obtain a high school education while concurrently receiving direct access to college courses and services. High school students attend classes at a community college and earn credit toward a high school diploma while having the opportunity to concurrently take college courses and to receive more intensive counseling and administrative attention. These programs are subject to the same conditions that exist for special admit students, with the exception that MCHS students are exempt from the low enrollment priority provisions for classes necessary for completion of their programs.
 - c) *College Promise Partnership Act.* SB 650 (Lowenthal, Chapter 633, Statutes of 2011) authorized a partnership between the Long Beach community college and school district to provide a seamless bridge to college for students who were not already college bound and to reduce the time needed for advanced students to complete programs. These students are exempted from the requirements applicable to special admit students that they must be recommended by the school principal. The community college is eligible to receive state funding for these students but is prohibited from receiving apportionment for instructional activity for which the school district received apportionment. Formerly set to sunset on January 1, 2018, this partnership was extended indefinitely by AB 1533 (O'Donnell, Chapter 762, Statutes of 2017).
 - d) *College Access and Career Pathways (CCAP) program.* The CCAP program allows for partnerships between school and community college

districts such that high school students dual enroll in up to 15 community college units per term; students may enroll in no more than four courses per term. Unlike other concurrent enrollment options, College Access and Career Pathways (CCAP) offers dual enrollment as a pathway, rather than a series of disconnected individual courses, and provides greater flexibility in the delivery of courses at the high school campus.

- 5) ***Can adults seeking a high school diploma already enroll in community college courses?*** As mentioned above, existing law requires community college districts to admit California residents possessing a high school diploma or the equivalent and allows community college districts to admit any other person who would likely benefit from community college instruction. Therefore, a person attending any type of adult school can already also enroll in community college courses as well. However, such adult school students would not be assigned the “special-admit” designation because they are over 18 years of age. This bill would allow adult school attendees to obtain the special-admit designation only if they are pursuing their high school diploma or the equivalent and the governing board of the school district in which they attend adult school determines that community college courses would be beneficial.
- 6) ***What advantage would the “special admit” status provide for adult learners?*** Even though adult school students can already dual-enroll in community college courses without obtaining the special-admit designation, supporters of this bill argue that their ability to obtain this designation is critical. Relative to traditional community college students, special-admit students: (1) automatically have their tuition and fees waived without having to submit additional paperwork, (2) are not required to submit any proof of residency, and (3) are not required to pay for books, if they are a dual-enrollment student pursuant to a College and Career Access Pathways partnership agreement.
- 7) ***Technical amendment.*** As currently drafted, this bill would limit the students pursuing a high school diploma or the equivalent eligible to obtain special admit status to those attending adult schools administered by a school district. Given that community colleges also administer noncredit programs for adults pursuing a high school equivalency certificate, ***staff recommends*** that the bill be amended to specify that the governing board of a school district overseeing an adult education program or the governing board of a community college district overseeing a noncredit program may authorize students pursuing a high school diploma or the equivalent, upon recommendation of the administrator or the student’s adult school or noncredit program, to attend a community college under special admit status, provided that no school district has received reimbursement for the same instructional activity.

SUPPORT

Baldy View Regional Occupational Program
California Business Education Association
California Competes
California EDGE Coalition
Campaign for College Opportunity

Chaffey Joint Union High School District
East Los Angeles College

OPPOSITION

None received

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