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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

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**Bill No:** SB 860 **Hearing Date:** May 12, 2020  
**Author:** Beall  
**Version:** January 16, 2020  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Lynn Lorber

**Subject:** Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program: postsecondary education financial aid applications.

### SUMMARY

This bill modifies elements of the Foster Youth Services (FYS) Coordinating Program relative to ensuring program participants complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA), and the reporting of information about the completion of those financial aid applications.

### BACKGROUND

Existing law:

#### *FYS Coordinating Programs*

- 1) Authorizes a county office of education, or a consortium of county offices of education, to operate an education-based FYS Coordinating Program to provide educational support for students who are in foster care. (Education Code § 42921)
- 2) Requires each FYS Coordinating Program, as a condition of receiving funds for that purpose, to develop and implement a FYS coordinating plan for purposes of establishing guiding principles and protocols to provide supports for students who are in foster care. (EC § 42921)
- 3) Requires each FYS coordinating plan to include:
  - a) A description of how the program will establish ongoing collaboration with local educational agencies (LEAs), county child welfare agencies, and county probation departments, to determine the proper educational placement of the foster youth.
  - b) Policies and procedures to ensure educational placement for a foster youth is not delayed.
  - c) A description of how the program will facilitate coordination with local postsecondary educational institutions to ensure foster youth meet admission requirements and access programs that support their matriculation needs.

- d) Policies and procedures for LEAs, county welfare agencies, and county probation departments to share all relevant educational information for foster youth to ensure the court has updated and accurate information as it makes decisions regarding foster youth.
- 4) Requires each FYS program, as a condition of receiving funds, to report the following to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI):
    - a) Recommendations regarding the effectiveness and continuation of the FYS coordinating program.
    - b) Aggregate educational outcome data for each county in which there were at least 15 students in foster care who attended school in the county, with information on the following indicators.
      - i) The number of students in foster care who attended school in the county.
      - ii) The academic achievement of the students in foster care, as determined by quantitative and qualitative data.
      - iii) The number of students in foster care who were suspended or expelled.
      - iv) The number of students in foster care who were placed in a juvenile hall, camp, ranch or other county-operated juvenile detention facility.
      - v) The truancy rates, attendance rates, and dropout rates for students in foster care.
      - vi) The number of students in foster care participating in FYS Coordinating Programs who successfully transition to postsecondary education.
      - vii) The amount of funds allocated and spent by each FYS Coordinating Program in the previous two fiscal years.
    - c) A discussion of the meaning and implications of the indicators.
    - d) Information about how the program has supported the development and implementation of new policies, practices, and programs aimed at improving the educational outcomes of students in foster care.
    - e) Information about how the program has improved coordination of services between LEAs and county agencies, including the types of services provided to students in foster care. (EC § 42923)
  - 5) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to collaborate with the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and the Chancellor of the

California State University to identify indicators that can be used to track access to postsecondary education for students in foster care participating in a FYS Coordinating Program. (EC § 42923)

*Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA)*

- 6) Requires submission of a FAFSA or CADAA as a condition of being eligible for various forms of student financial aid. (EC § 69433)
- 7) Authorizes a community college to waive some or all of the fees for first-time community college students who are enrolled full time, and who complete and submit either a FAFSA or CADAA. (EC § 76396.3)
- 8) Requires submission of a FAFSA or CADAA as a condition of being eligible for the Middle Class Scholarship Program. (EC § 70022)
- 9) Requires submission of a FAFSA as a condition of waiving mandatory systemwide tuition or fees. (EC § 66025.3, § 69000)

## ANALYSIS

This bill modifies elements of the FYS Coordinating Program relative to ensuring program participants complete the FAFSA or CADAA, and the reporting of information about the completion of those financial aid applications. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) This bill expands the components of the required FYS coordinating plan to also include a description of how the program will coordinate efforts to ensure completion of the FAFSA or the CADAA for foster youth students who are in grade 12.
- 2) This bill expands the indicators that must be included in each FYS Coordinating Program's report to the SPI to also include the number and percentage of students in foster care who successfully complete a FAFSA or CADAA while in grade 12.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Financial aid is critical for success in higher education, but currently just 40 percent of foster youth received the Pell Grant and only 11 percent received the Cal Grant, despite virtually all meeting income eligibility requirements. One of the primary barriers that foster youth students face is that many do not complete the FAFSA. The low rate of financial aid attainment speaks to the fact that foster youth are not receiving the support they need to complete the required steps necessary to receive most forms of financial aid. The FYS Coordinating Programs, housed within each county's office of education, are the obvious entity to facilitate this coordination. [These programs] interface with school districts, child welfare and probation agencies, and community partners to coordinate educational support services for foster

youth in their county. Further, they are tasked with coordinating support for college matriculation for foster youth. This bill will clarify that FAFSA completion is a specified element of this responsibility.”

- 2) ***Why is the FAFSA or CADAA so important?*** The FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for federal student aid, and the FAFSA and CADAA are used to determine eligibility for state aid such as the Cal Grant or California College Promise Grant, as well as for various student support programs.

Community college students do not need to submit a FAFSA or CADAA to receive a California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the Board of Governors waiver). However, community college students do need to submit a FAFSA or CADAA to be eligible for various student support programs.

A recent study showed that half of the foster youth students who received a Promise Grant were not eligible for a student support program specifically for foster youth (NextUp) merely for a lack of submitting a FAFSA or CADAA.

<https://www.ibaforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Charting-the-Course-Final.pdf>

While FYS Coordinating Programs are required to coordinate with local postsecondary educational institutions to ensure foster youth meet admission requirements and access programs that support their matriculation needs, there is no requirement that programs coordinate with other entities to ensure foster youth complete the FAFSA or CADAA. This bill requires the coordinating plan to also include a description of how the program will coordinate efforts to ensure completion of the FAFSA or the CADAA for foster youth students who are in grade 12.

- 3) ***Indicators of access to postsecondary education.*** Existing law requires the CDE to work with the California Community Colleges and California State University to identify indicators that can be used to track access to postsecondary education for students in foster care who participate in the FYS Coordinating Program. According to the CDE, FYS Coordinating Programs have been asked to provide this data point to the CDE for the past two years (for purposes of inclusion in CDE’s biennial report on the coordinating program). This bill adds information on FAFSA or CADAA completion to the list of indicators to be tracked.
- 4) ***FYS Coordinating Program report.*** Existing law requires the SPI to report to the Legislature specified information on the FYS Coordinating Program, by July 1 of each even-numbered year. According to the CDE, the 2020 report is in the approval process. It appears that the most recent report available on the CDE’s website is from the 2012-13 school year.  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/lrlegreport2014.asp>
- 5) ***Author’s amendments.*** The author wishes to amend this bill to clarify that the addition component of the FYS coordinating plan is to include a description of

how the program will coordinate efforts to ensure, *to the extent possible*, completion of the FAFSA or the CADAA for foster youth students who are in grade 12. Specifically, on page 5, line 12, after “ensure” insert “to the extent possible.”

- 6) ***Related legislation.*** AB 1617 (Reyes, 2019) would have required students to complete a FAFSA, or opt-out from doing so, as a condition of graduation from high school. AB 1617 was not heard.

SB 958 (Leyva, 2020) would have expanded eligibility for priority enrollment and for a program of support for current and former foster youth at California Community Colleges, clarifies that the program may provide direct financial assistance to students prior to the beginning of an academic term, and requires regulations to allow the waiving of income criteria for students who were employed prior to enrollment. The author is not proceeding with SB 958 because it is not related to COVID-19 nor does the proposed change to statute absolutely need to occur this year.

## SUPPORT

John Burton Advocates for Youth (Sponsor)  
 AdvancED Consulting, LLC  
 Alameda County CASA  
 Alliance for Children's Rights  
 Beyond Emancipation  
 Bill Wilson Center  
 California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
 California Faculty Association  
 California Federation of Teachers  
 California School Boards Association  
 California State University, Monterey Bay, College Support Programs  
 California Student Aid Commission  
 California Teachers Association  
 California Youth Connection  
 Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County  
 Children's Law Center of California  
 County Welfare Directors Association of California  
 Creative Alternatives  
 East Bay Children's Law Offices  
 Excite Credit Union  
 First Place for Youth  
 First STAR  
 Foster Care Counts  
 Modesto Junior College Student Success

Moreno Valley College, Grants and Student Equity Initiatives  
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
National Center for Youth Law  
Norco College, Special Funded Programs  
One Day, INC.  
Reedley College, NextUp & Extended Opportunity Programs and Services  
Rio Hondo College,  
Riverside Community College District, Foster Youth Support Network  
Santa Rosa Junior College, Student Financial Services  
Silicon Valley Leadership Group  
Skyline College, Guardian Scholars Program  
STAR Vista, Transitional Youth Services  
Swipe Out Hunger  
Tipping Point Community  
UNITE-LA  
Unity Care  
Walden Family Services  
Wesley House  
Youth Law Center

**OPPOSITION**

None on file.

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