

Senate Bill No. 1023

CHAPTER 771

An act to add Article 7 (commencing with Section 79220) to Chapter 9 of Part 48 of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code, relating to community colleges.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2014. Filed with
Secretary of State September 29, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1023, Liu. Community colleges: foster youth.

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 public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law establishes community college districts throughout the state, and authorizes them to operate campuses and provide instruction.

This bill would authorize the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to enter into agreements with up to 10 community college districts to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for foster youth. The bill would provide that these services include, when appropriate, but are not necessarily limited to, outreach and recruitment, service coordination, counseling, book and supply grants, tutoring, independent living and financial literacy skills support, frequent in-person contact, career guidance, transfer counseling, child care and transportation assistance, and referrals to health services, mental health services, housing assistance, and other related services.

The bill would require a community college district that wishes to participate in this program to apply to the board of governors for funding under the program created by the bill, as specified. The bill would require, if more than 10 community college districts apply for funding, the board of governors to give priority to those districts with the higher number of eligible students. The bill would require that a participating student be a current or former foster youth in California whose dependency was established or continued by the court on or after the student's 16th birthday and be no older than 25 years of age at the commencement of any academic year in which he or she participates in the program.

The bill would express the intent of the Legislature that, consistent with specified requirements in the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, and to the extent that a participating community college meets specified responsibilities set forth in that act, any student who participates in the program established by this bill also receive specified matriculation services under that act.

The bill would require the board of governors to adopt regulations for the program and to be responsible for the administration of funds for the program, as specified. The bill would require the board of governors to submit a biennial report, commencing no later than March 31, 2018, and every 2 years thereafter, providing prescribed information, including recommendations on whether and how the program can be expanded to all community college districts and campuses.

The bill would be operative in a fiscal year only if sufficient funds have been appropriated for purposes of the bill for that fiscal year.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

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

(a) There are 57,000 children and youth in California's foster care system who have been removed from their biological families due to maltreatment and placed into the care and custody of the State of California.

(b) The Legislature recognizes the historic underrepresentation of foster youth in postsecondary programs and the need for equitable efforts that enhance the enrollment and retention of foster youth in public colleges and universities in California.

(1) By 21 years of age, 45 percent of former foster youth will graduate from high school, as compared to 80 percent of Californians of the same age. By 26 years of age, 4.4 percent of foster youth will receive a two-year degree and 3.8 percent will earn a four-year degree, rates significantly below the same-age population in California.

(2) Low educational attainment is a factor in the poor adult outcomes experienced by youth in foster care. Compared to their same-age counterparts, former foster youth at 26 years of age are 400 percent more likely to have been incarcerated and 300 percent more likely to be living below the federal poverty level.

(3) Current and former foster youth who attend community college experience a low rate of persistence, transfer, and degree completion. Only 41 percent of current and former foster youth in community college persisted at least one year as compared to 62 percent of the general student population.

(c) The Legislature recognizes its responsibility to provide and adequately fund postsecondary programs and services for students who are current and former foster youth attending public postsecondary institutions.

(d) Therefore, it is necessary and appropriate to take steps to encourage the enrollment, retention, and transfer of current and former foster youth in California's community colleges by establishing an education program that provides services that promote their academic success. Providing academic support to current and former foster youth in California's community colleges serves a significant governmental and public interest, namely the reduction in poverty and criminal justice involvement among youth who have been in foster care in California.

SEC. 2. Article 7 (commencing with Section 79220) is added to Chapter 9 of Part 48 of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 7. Support Services for Foster Youth Attending Community College

79220. The Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges may enter into agreements with up to 10 community college districts to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for foster youth. This program shall be known as the Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support Program, and shall expand the number of students participating in the Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services and shall not displace other students. The funding provided pursuant to this article shall be separate and apart from the funding provided under existing cooperative agencies resources for education programs pursuant to Article 4 (commencing with Section 79150). In addition to the delivery of Student Success and Support Program services, as defined in Section 78212, services shall include, when appropriate, but not necessarily be limited to, outreach and recruitment, service coordination, counseling, book and supply grants, tutoring, independent living and financial literacy skills support, frequent in-person contact, career guidance, transfer counseling, child care and transportation assistance, and referrals to health services, mental health services, housing assistance, and other related services.

79221. (a) A community college district that wishes to participate in this program shall apply to the board of governors for funding pursuant to this article. The application of each participating community college district shall provide the estimated number of foster youth who will be served. The application shall also describe the extent of cooperation between the local county child welfare department, the county probation department, the local educational opportunity programs and services program, and the district to ensure that services provided under this article to eligible youth are coordinated with, and do not supplant, other services provided by the county and state.

(b) If more than 10 community college districts apply for funding under the program, the board of governors shall give priority to those districts with the higher number of eligible students.

79222. A student participant in this program shall meet both of the following requirements:

(a) Be a current or former foster youth in California whose dependency was established or continued by the court on or after the youth's 16th birthday.

(b) Be no older than 25 years of age at the commencement of any academic year in which he or she participates in the program.

79223. The board of governors shall adopt regulations that authorize the director of the Community College Extended Opportunity Programs

and Services at each community college to accept students who are enrolled for at least nine units into this program.

79224. It is the intent of the Legislature that, consistent with the requirements and intent outlined in subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 78215, and to the extent that a participating community college meets the responsibilities outlined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 78212, any student who participates in the program pursuant to this article participate in the program of services outlined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 78212.

79225. The board of governors, in consultation with the State Department of Social Services, shall adopt regulations for the program. The board of governors shall be responsible for the administration of funds for the program. To the extent possible, the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association of California, the Chief Probation Officers of California, and other advocates, shall consult with the chancellor's office to ensure that services provided under this article to eligible youths are coordinated with, and do not supplant, other services provided by the county and state.

79226. Notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, commencing March 31, 2018, and every two years thereafter, the board of governors shall submit a report to the Governor, the education policy committees of the Legislature, and the California Child Welfare Council describing its efforts to serve students who are current and former foster youth. These biennial reports shall also include a review on a campus-by-campus basis of the enrollment, retention, transfer, and completion rates of foster youth, including categorical funding of those programs. The reports shall also include recommendations on whether and how the program under this article can be expanded to all community college districts and campuses.

79227. This article shall be operative in a fiscal year only if funds have been appropriated for purposes of this article for that fiscal year.

79228. The board of governors may authorize the chancellor, consistent with the requirements the board may impose, to designate up to 2 percent of the funds allocated pursuant to this article for program administration.

79229. The board of governors may authorize the chancellor, consistent with the requirements the board may impose, to designate up to 3 percent of the funds allocated pursuant to this article for program development and program accountability.