

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1994**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Lopez**

February 16, 2016

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An act to add Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalWORKs.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1994, as introduced, Lopez. CalED Program.

Existing law requires each county to provide cash assistance and other social services to needy families through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program using federal, state, and county funds. Under existing law, a recipient of CalWORKs is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities for a specified number of hours each week as a condition of eligibility for aid. Existing law authorizes certain welfare-to-work participants to engage in adult basic education in satisfaction of these work requirements.

Existing law establishes the Cal-Learn Program, under which a recipient of CalWORKs aid who is under 19 years of age and who does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent is required to participate in the program as a student attending school on a full-time basis. Existing law provides for a supplement to, or a reduction in, a Cal-Learn participant's aid grant based on his or her performance in school.

This bill would create the CalED Program for the purpose of assisting CalWORKs recipients who are at least 19 years of age to obtain high school diplomas or equivalency certificates. The bill would provide a \$100 aid supplement if a CalED participant maintains satisfactory

progress in school, as defined, and a \$500 aid supplement if the participant successfully completes high school or a high school equivalency examination. The bill would provide that participation in the program is optional and would authorize recipients of CalWORKs to opt out in writing. The bill would require the department to develop a comprehensive form that explains the benefits of the program and would require the county, at the time it conducts a welfare-to-work appraisal, to provide the form to the recipient. The bill would also require counties to arrange for the provision of education and supportive services that an individual needs to successfully participate in the CalED Program. By imposing these duties on counties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
 State-mandated local program: yes.

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

1 SECTION 1. Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) is  
 2 added to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and  
 3 Institutions Code, to read:

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5 Article 3.7. CalED Program

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7 11340. (a) This article shall be known, and may be cited, as  
 8 the CalED Program.

9 (b) The Legislature finds and declares that the connection  
 10 between education and long-term welfare dependency has been  
 11 well documented by social science research. Average time on aid  
 12 for parents without a high school diploma or its equivalent is  
 13 significantly longer than for parents who have completed high  
 14 school or an equivalent program.

15 (c) The Legislature finds that CalWORKs recipients have unique  
 16 education, vocational, training, health, and other social service

1 needs that are not specifically provided for as part of the  
2 welfare-to-work activities. Research shows that successful  
3 programs that help CalWORKs recipients achieve self-sufficiency  
4 increase the earning capacity of those individuals.

5 11341. A recipient of aid under this chapter is eligible to  
6 participate in the CalED Program if all of the following  
7 requirements are met:

8 (a) The person is at least 19 years of age.

9 (b) The person does not have a high school diploma or its  
10 equivalent.

11 (c) The person is attending school on a full-time basis, as  
12 normally defined by the school in which the participant enrolls.

13 11342. (a) Participation in the CalED Program is optional. If  
14 a person declines to participate, he or she shall opt out in writing.

15 (b) At the time the county conducts an appraisal pursuant to  
16 Section 11325.2, the county shall inform each person who does  
17 not have a high school diploma or its equivalent that he or she may  
18 participate in the CalED Program or may opt out in writing, and  
19 shall give the person the form described in subdivision (c).

20 (c) The State Department of Social Services shall develop a  
21 comprehensive form that explains the benefits of the program,  
22 including the bonuses that are available pursuant to Section 11344,  
23 in order to empower the person to make an informed decision.

24 11343. Counties shall arrange for the provision of education  
25 and supportive services that a person needs to successfully  
26 participate in the CalED Program. The county shall identify the  
27 need of each person for, and the method of providing, the following  
28 services:

29 (a) Supportive services, including child care and transportation,  
30 as specified in Section 11323.2. Supportive services shall be limited  
31 to those that are necessary to enable the person to attend school  
32 regularly.

33 (b) Any other services necessary for the person to successfully  
34 participate in the CalED Program, which may include, but not be  
35 limited to, mental health services and substance abuse treatment.

36 11344. (a) A participant in the CalED Program who maintains  
37 satisfactory progress in school shall, not more than four times in  
38 a calendar year, receive a one hundred dollar (\$100) supplement  
39 to the amount of aid paid pursuant to Section 11450. The  
40 supplement shall be paid to the assistance unit of which the

1 participant is a member in the month following submission of the  
2 report card, if received by the county no later than the 11th calendar  
3 day of the month, or in the second month following submission  
4 of the report card, if received by the county after the 11th calendar  
5 day of the month.

6 (b) A participant who fails to demonstrate that he or she has  
7 made adequate progress in school, either by failing to provide the  
8 report card or based on the grades on the report card, shall be  
9 assigned to another welfare-to-work activity.

10 (c) A participant who successfully completes high school or a  
11 California high school equivalency examination shall receive a  
12 five hundred dollar (\$500) supplement. An assistance unit shall  
13 not receive a one hundred dollar (\$100) supplement when a five  
14 hundred dollar (\$500) supplement for the same report card or  
15 progress report is paid. The five hundred dollar (\$500) supplement  
16 shall be paid to the participant in the month following submission  
17 of the record of completion, if received by the county no later than  
18 the 11th calendar day of the month, or in the second month  
19 following submission of the record of completion, if received by  
20 the county after the 11th calendar day of the month.

21 (d) (1) For purposes of this section, in schools that provide  
22 periodic report cards with letter grades, "satisfactory progress"  
23 means maintaining a grade point average of at least 2.0 on a scale  
24 where A equals 4.0 points and F equals 0 points, and adequate  
25 progress means maintaining a grade point average of at least 1.0  
26 on the same scale.

27 (2) For the purposes of this section, in schools or other  
28 educational programs that do not provide letter grades indicating  
29 student performance, satisfactory progress or inadequate progress  
30 shall be determined by the school's regular assessment of periodic  
31 progress.

32 SEC. 2. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that  
33 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to  
34 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made  
35 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division  
36 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.