



Talking Points for Lobby Day

We are very appreciative of the approach that the Administration took in laying out their priorities in their proposed budget. The Administration takes a very student-centric approach to funding for community colleges and addresses increasing pension costs. The proposed budget also would increase financial aid through the Student Aid Commission which is funding that is critical to our students.

We do, however, have some suggestions regarding how the budget could be further refined:

Additional Ongoing Funding for Community Colleges: We are appreciative that the Administration proposes to pay down much of the overall deferral as well as provides community colleges with a cost-of-living adjustment for 2021-22. However, community colleges should receive more ongoing funding. Community colleges are the lowest funded system on a per-student basis and did not receive a COLA in the current year. Further, as additional Proposition 98 funding is made available, the lost purchasing power from 2020-21 is not proposed to be made up. We support additional ongoing funding to community colleges that would go toward base funding for our colleges.

Additional Flexibility for One-Time Funding: We are appreciative of the student-centered lens through which the Governor has built this budget, however, by providing almost all of the one-time funding as student aid, the proposed budget does not acknowledge that student supports are also addressed through institutional support. We propose an institutional support block grant that would provide for flexible spending on district needs in order to compliment a student support block grant. The institutional support block grant could fund items like scheduled maintenance and instructional equipment, as well as other critical needs that districts will have as we try to return to on-campus learning.

Support for Expansion of Community College Baccalaureate Degree Program: Currently 15 community colleges are able to offer baccalaureate degrees. These degrees ensure that local labor market demands are met, and students graduate from these programs and are routinely successful in being placed in high paying jobs. There is, however, a need to expand opportunities for other communities to have access to quality baccalaureate degree education. More and more, employers are requiring a baccalaureate degree for entry level positions. The expansion of the baccalaureate degree will ensure that these labor market demands are being met.

Support for Additional Funding for Retirement Contributions: We are supportive of the Administration proposal to use non-Proposition 98 funding to “buy down” required employer contributions to CalPERS and CalSTRS. This results in freeing up critical operating funding that districts can use to promote student success.

Support FASFA and Dream Act Application Requirement: We support the Administration’s proposed requirement to have all high school seniors fill out a FASFA or a California Dream Act application. This requirement will ensure that much needed federal financial aid gets to our students. Additionally, the Community College Promise Program requires that participants fill out one of these forms. This requirement will ensure that more students can more easily access the California Promise Program.

Support Increase of Competitive Cal Grant by 9,000 Awards: While we believe that there is need for more comprehensive Cal Grant reform and anticipate the Legislature examining this. We believe that increasing the number of competitive awards, which disproportionately go to community college students, is a good first step in addressing community college student need.

Support for Funding for Learning Ecosystem: We support providing funding to subsidize many of the learning tools that community college districts use to best deliver education to our students. This funding will help the state Chancellor's Office utilize their economy of scale to pass along savings to local community college districts.

Support Change to Census Date for Certain Noncredit Courses: We support a change in the accounting methodology for noncredit courses that are focused on career development and college preparation (CDCP). Currently, community college funding methodology disincentivizes community colleges from offering critical noncredit courses. These courses impact those students that have been most impacted by the current pandemic – short-term vocational, ESL, high school equivalency. This pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income students that would most benefit from these courses. Changing accounting methodology from positive attendance to census date would encourage districts to offer courses that are critical to job recovery and retraining.

Support for Kern CCD Capital Outlay Projects: The Governor proposed one new start facilities project and 17 projects to move to the construction phase. Included in those projects to move to the construction phase are the Delano Center Learning Resource Center and the Porterville College Allied Health Building. These two facilities are critical to access in our service area and we appreciate the Administration moving them forward to begin construction.