

AGENDA

ASSEMBLY BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2 ON EDUCATION FINANCE

Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, Chair

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2016
10 AM, OXNARD COLLEGE, ROOM LA-6

IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN REMEDIAL EDUCATION

I. OPENING REMARKS

Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, Chair

Legislative Guest – Assembly Member Jacqui Irwin

Committee Members

II. BASIC SKILLS OVERVIEW

Judy Heiman, Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

III. STATE-WIDE PERSPECTIVES

Pamela D. Walker, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Deborah Harrington, California Community College Success Network

Janet Fulks, Faculty, Bakersfield College, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Theresa Tena, Vice Chancellor, Institutional Effectiveness Division, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Michele Siqueiros, President, The Campaign for College Opportunity

IV. LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

Summer Serpas, Associate Professor of English, Basic Skills Coordinator, Irvine Valley College

Olivia Light , San Diego Miramar College Student Trustee, Associated Students Council President, Region X Governance and Internal Policy Senator, Student Success Peer

Marlene Dean, Professor of Mathematics, Lead Instructor for Transitional Mathematics, Oxnard College

Luis A. Gonzalez, Ed.D., Assistant Dean Transitional Studies, Academic Support & Library Services, Oxnard College

V. 2016-17 BASIC SKILLS BUDGET PROPOSAL

Chris Ferguson, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance

Judy Heiman, Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

Theresa Tena, Vice Chancellor, Institutional Effectiveness Division, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

6870 CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**BACKGROUND**

Many students need basic skills courses, but outcomes are poor. Almost 75% of entering California community college students are unprepared for college-level coursework in English and/or math. These students are referred to basic skills courses, which are intended to boost students' understanding of these key subjects. Most students are required to take basic skills courses before advancing to college-level courses needed for a certificate, degree or transfer program. Colleges enrolled more than 157,000 students, or nearly 128,000 full-time equivalent students, in basic skills courses in 2014-15.

As the chart below indicates, basic skills courses are significant at most community colleges, comprising about one-quarter of English and math classes.

Subject	Basic Skills	Non-Basic Skills	Total	% Basic Skills
English FTES	31,227	78,793	110,020	28%
Math FTES	35,104	113,178	148,282	24%
Tutoring and Study Skills FTES	7,377	227	7,604	97%
Other Basic Skills FTES	54,232	855,965	910,197	6%
Total FTES	127,940	1,048,163	1,176,103	11%

Outcomes for students who begin in basic skills courses are poor. According to the 2015 Statewide Student Success Scorecard:

- Only 31% of students who took a basic skills math course completed a college-level math course within six years;
- Only 43% of students who took a basic skills English course completed a college-level English course within six years;
- And only 39% of degree, certificate or transfer-seeking students who took a basic skills math or English course completed a degree or certificate program within six years.

Categorical program has sought to improve student success. The community college system and the state have sought to improve these outcomes in the past. Most notably, legislation in 2007 established the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), which created a categorical program with ongoing funding to support basic skills programs and students. This funding supports program and curriculum planning and development, advisement, counseling and supplemental instruction for basic skills students, and professional development for basic skills faculty. (Colleges also receive apportionment funding for basic skills courses.)

The program received about \$33 million Proposition 98 General Fund in its first year, but during the Great Recession, funding dropped to only about \$20 million, where it has remained. About \$1.2 million of this funding is specifically set aside for professional development.

Perhaps due to limited funding, the BSI has not significantly altered outcomes. A recent report on the program to the Board of Governors noted that over the past 5 years, the remedial math completion rate grew by 3%, while the remedial English completion rate grew by 2%. However, the program's professional development funding, which is distributed through the California Community Colleges Success Network, or 3CSN, has allowed some faculty and campuses to develop basic skills programs with better outcomes through small scale or pilot programs.

2015 Budget Act funds major new basic skills program. In an effort to scale up basic skills programs that yield better outcomes for students, the 2015 Budget Act provided \$60 million Proposition 98 General Fund for a one-time incentive grant program to improve community college remediation practices over the next three years. This new effort, called the Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program, is the focus of this hearing.

The program's goals are to increase the number of basic skills students who complete a college-level English or math course, or both, within a sequence of three or fewer courses after enrollment, and/or increase the number of basic skills students who earn an industry-relevant college certificate or a degree within two years of beginning college-level courses.

Districts may apply for grants to help them adopt or expand the use of evidence-based models for basic skills assessment, placement, instruction, and student support. Eligible activities under the grant program include curriculum redesign, professional development, release time for faculty and staff, and data collection and reporting. The number of awards and grant amounts will depend on the number of successful applicants. Statutory language requires the Legislative Analyst's Office to evaluate the program's effectiveness in interim and final reports to be issued by December 1, 2019 and December 1, 2021, respectively.

The 2015 Budget Act also included one other new basic skills program, which provides \$10 million Proposition 98 General Fund program to promote more and better collaboration in delivery of basic skills instruction among high schools, community colleges, and California State University (CSU) campuses. The Chancellor's Office will award five grants of \$2 million each. To qualify for awards, community college districts must collaborate with local school districts and CSU campuses to better articulate English and math instruction across segments. Participating CSU campuses must commit to directing their underprepared students—either currently enrolled or planning to enroll—to basic skills instruction at community colleges.

Chancellor's Office working to implement the new program. The Chancellor's Office has determined that it will provide up to \$1.5 million per awardee, and on January 21 released documents with instructions for the grant proposals. Proposals are due by March 25.

In addition, the Institutional Effectiveness Division is conducting regional workshops around the state this month to showcase different evidence-based practices that can be funded through this program. The workshops are intended to allow districts and campuses to review various practices and determine which would work best for their students before they apply for funding.

The Community College Board of Governors is expected to announce grant winners at its May meeting.

Governor's 2016-17 Budget proposes increased funding and reform for Basic Skills categorical program. Released last month, the Governor's 2016-17 Budget proposes an ongoing increase of \$30 million Proposition 98 General Fund for the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), which would bring total spending to \$50 million Proposition 98 General Fund. The Administration states that it expects the new funding to allow for reform of the program and to support community colleges in efforts to collaborate with high schools, CSU campuses, and UC campuses to prepare students for college-level English and math courses; develop and use open educational resources to expand underprepared students' access to instructional materials; further the purposes of the Basic Skills Transformation and Student Outcomes Program; and improve outcomes for students requiring remediation.

Trailer bill language detailing how this new funding will be distributed and for what specific purposes was released this week. The Department of Finance will provide further details of this proposal at the hearing.

STAFF COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Current practices can limit student success in basic skills. Improving outcomes for basic skills students is one of the key issues facing California community colleges. Past efforts have simply not had a widespread impact.

There are numerous reasons for poor outcomes among students designated unprepared for college-level work and placed in basic skills courses. Notably, students entering community colleges unprepared for college-level work often come from poor-performing high schools or have other educational disadvantages. But many experts have identified systemic problems with community college basic skills programs that hinder student success. Problematic policies and practices include:

- Failing to send clear signals to students while they are still in high school about how well their reading, writing, and math skills are aligned with college-level standards and expectations;
- Failing to provide “refresher” classes or at least encouraging students to prepare/study before taking assessment tests;
- Relying heavily on standardized tests and inconsistent assessment practices - rather than students' actual past performance in school - to place students in math and English courses;

- Creating multi-layered, semester-length sequences of remedial math and English courses and requiring students to complete sometimes years of remedial coursework before making it to college-level math and English;
- Designing and teaching remedial math and English courses that tend to be lecture-based, abstract in nature, and unconnected to other subject areas or students' educational or professional interests and needs;
- Failing to integrate counseling, tutoring, and other support services with classroom instruction; and
- Failing to provide comprehensive and ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty and other staff regarding basic skills education.

Basic Skills Transformation and Student Outcomes Program designed to fund what works. Over the last few years, numerous studies and reviews have provided clear evidence as to the types of policies and programs that improve student outcomes. The Basic Skills Transformation and Student Outcomes Program is intended to move a significant portion of California community college basic skills programs toward these evidence-based practices. Among these practices are:

- Early outreach and engagement with high school students, and their teachers;
- Requiring first-time students to undergo assessment as a condition of receiving priority enrollment, which began at California Community Colleges in Fall 2014;
- Offering “brush up” classes to incoming students before their assessment or pre-term summer bridge programs;
- Changing the placement and assessment policies that rely primarily on students' past performance in school (such as their grades in high school math and English courses) as a criterion for placement. At Long Beach City College, for example, a pilot program that incorporates high school grades into the placement process saw immediate impacts. After the launch of the program, the percentage of students who placed into and passed college English in their first year more than tripled, and for college math, the increases in enrollment and successful completion were almost as large;
- Moving away from multi-sequences of semester-based remedial courses in favor of approaches such as compression (consolidating curricula from multiple sequential basic skills courses into one semester), modularization (breaking up content into bite-sized pieces and having students focus on their identified deficiencies), and mainstreaming (placing students directly into college-level math and English classes with learning supports). The California Acceleration Project, which is an initiative of the California Community Colleges Success Network, supported 16 California colleges as they redesigned curricula to reduce

students' time remedial courses by one or more semesters. The results: in English, students' odds of completing a college-level English class were 2.3 times greater than students in traditional remediation sequences, and in math, students' odds were 4.5 times greater;

- Using a variety of engaging instructional strategies such as encouraging interaction in the classroom with and among students, using contextualized learning (teaching math and English in a way that references “real world” situations or students’ career interests), creating cohort-based learning communities and first-year experience programs, and emphasizing math and English content that is relevant to students’ educational and career interests (such as creating statistics-based remedial pathways for students majoring in the social sciences);
- Integrating support services with instruction through a variety of means, such as embedding counselors in basic skills classes and emphasizing supplemental instruction programs;
- Providing meaningful and sustained professional development for faculty and staff through intra- and inter-departmental workshops on basic skills, coaching and peer-consultant programs, faculty inquiry groups, and other learning opportunities.

Is program sufficient to "scale up" proven practices? A key feature of the Basic Skills Transformation Program is the intent to scale up existing efforts by colleges to implement these evidence-based practices. While some colleges may already be implementing these practices, they may only be doing so at a very small scale and therefore these courses or programs may not be available to most students. The new program is intended to allow colleges who receive grants to adopt proven practices throughout their basic skills programs, such that all or most basic skills students at a campus can enroll in courses and programs designed to have better outcomes. However, there are 113 community college campuses in California. It is unclear how far \$60 million in one-time funding can go in transforming programs throughout the state. A key question for the Legislature to consider is whether more funding is needed in future years to allow every campus in the state the support to make these changes.

How will the basic skills categorical program and the new program interact? The current Basic Skills Initiative provides supports basic skills programs and students. The Governor is proposing to more than double the funding for this categorical, from about \$20 million annually to about \$50 million annually. While more funding is needed, it is unclear how the categorical program will support the Basic Skills transformation Program and vice versa. The Legislature should scrutinize both the current categorical program and the proposed language regarding the new funding to ensure that the entire basic skills program is moving toward models that achieve better student outcomes.