

Introduced by Senator Scott

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Portantino)

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February 23, 2007

An act to add Article 6.3 (commencing with Section 54710) to Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, relating to pupils.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 890, as introduced, Scott. Pupils: early college commitment program.

Existing law requires a school district maintaining any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, to offer to all otherwise qualified pupils in those grades a course of study fulfilling the requirements and prerequisites for admission to the California public institutions of postsecondary education and to provide a timely opportunity to each of those pupils to enroll within a 4-year period in each course necessary to fulfill those requirements and prerequisites.

Existing law authorizes a school district to apply to establish a University and College Opportunities Program with existing local or categorical funds. The program plan developed by a school district or school is required to include, among other things, college counseling to assist pupils in preparing application forms for college admission, to procure scholarships, and other financial aid, and to meet all deadlines for these programs.

This bill would establish the early college commitment program. Participation by school districts in the program would be voluntary. The bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction, among other program duties, to designate the 30% of school districts that

operate middle and high schools with the highest proportion of low-income pupils, as defined, as college opportunity zones. A participating school district that is identified as a college opportunity zone by the Superintendent would be required to give all pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, the opportunity to sign “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge cards developed by the Superintendent. Other participating school districts would be required to give pupils who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and are enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, the opportunity to sign a pledge card and would be authorized to give any pupil enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, the opportunity to sign a pledge card. The bill would require participating school districts to provide college information and college preparation events targeted towards pupils who sign pledge cards.

The bill would provide that a pupil who signs a pledge card declares a commitment to prepare for college, finish high school, and enroll in college and commits, among other things, to meet all graduation requirements, take rigorous college preparatory or career technical coursework, complete and file a free application for federal student aid and submit their grade point average to the Student Aid Commission by March 2 of their senior year.

The bill would encourage the California Community Colleges, the University of California, the California State University, independent colleges, the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, the Student Aid Commission, and other nonprofit, business, or other community organizations to provide support services as needed in coordination with local school districts.

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

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

1 SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a
 2 program to ensure early notification and early commitment of
 3 college opportunities for pupils in middle school and high school
 4 and their families. It is the intent of the Legislature that the program
 5 motivate pupils to stay in school, graduate from high school, take
 6 rigorous coursework, and, if they choose to do so, seek
 7 postsecondary opportunities.

1 SEC. 2. Article 6.3 (commencing with Section 54710) is added
2 to Chapter 9 of Part 29 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education
3 Code, to read:

4
5 Article 6.3. Early College Commitment Program
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7 54710. The early college commitment program is hereby
8 established for the purpose of accomplishing all of the following
9 goals:

10 (a) Increase high school completion rates, direct college-going
11 rates, and college preparation of pupils attending schools with the
12 greatest poverty and among low-income pupils in general.

13 (b) Motivate pupils to prepare for college by taking rigorous
14 college preparatory coursework or rigorous career technical
15 coursework, depending on their interests in pursuing direct
16 university admission or specific technical education programs in
17 community college.

18 (c) Help families understand that college is attainable and
19 affordable, that financial aid is available, and that with the right
20 preparation their children can go to college if they choose to do
21 so.

22 (d) Provide a clear path for pupils through middle schools, high
23 schools, community colleges, universities, and state and federal
24 financial aid programs, thereby improving opportunity and
25 efficiency.

26 (e) Strengthen the state's historic promise of college access
27 made in the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education and express
28 this commitment directly to middle and high school pupils and
29 their families.

30 (f) Prepare the highly skilled workforce necessary to keep
31 California's economy competitive, maintain the income and quality
32 of life for California residents, increase tax revenues, and provide
33 for improved civic and democratic participation.

34 54711. (a) Participation by school districts in the early college
35 commitment program is voluntary. A school district that chooses
36 to participate in the program is encouraged to do so districtwide,
37 with all schools in the district participating, and shall provide
38 schoolwide college information and college preparation events
39 targeted towards pupils who sign "Save Me a Spot in College"
40 pledge cards.

1 (1) A participating school district that is identified as a college
2 opportunity zone district shall give all pupils enrolled in grades 6
3 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, or the appropriate
4 person in the case of foster youth, the opportunity to sign a “Save
5 Me a Spot in College” pledge card.

6 (2) Other participating school districts shall give pupils who are
7 eligible for free and reduced-price meals and are enrolled in grades
8 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal guardian, or the
9 appropriate person in the case of foster youth, the opportunity to
10 sign a “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge card and may give any
11 pupil enrolled in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, and their parent or legal
12 guardian, or the appropriate person in the case of foster youth, the
13 opportunity to sign a “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge card.

14 (b) A participating school district shall record data and track
15 pupils who enroll in the program in their existing pupil records
16 and provide necessary reports to the Superintendent to monitor
17 and evaluate the program.

18 54712. The Superintendent shall perform the following
19 responsibilities:

20 (a) Identify school districts as college opportunity zones. In
21 determining which school districts shall be identified as college
22 opportunity zones, the Superintendent shall designate the 30
23 percent of school districts that operate middle and high schools
24 with the highest proportion of low-income pupils. For purposes
25 of this subdivision, a low-income pupil is a pupil who is eligible
26 for free or reduced-price meals.

27 (b) Develop the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge card.

28 (c) Develop the letter and information materials about the
29 program and college opportunities to be mailed to all school
30 districts and accredited private and independent schools that
31 maintain any of grades 6 to 9, inclusive.

32 (d) Consult with the California Community Colleges, the
33 University of California, the California State University, the
34 Student Aid Commission, and independent colleges and universities
35 in developing the pledge, letter, and supporting materials.

36 (e) Determine the form of special recognition pupils who meet
37 the requirements of the pledge will receive at the time of high
38 school graduation.

1 (f) Develop a method to collect data from participating school
2 districts to track enrolled pupils and evaluate the effectiveness of
3 the program.

4 54713. (a) A pupil who signs a pledge card declares a
5 commitment to prepare for college, finish high school, and enroll
6 in college and commits to do all of the following:

7 (1) Meet all graduation requirements to finish high school in
8 California.

9 (2) Take rigorous college preparatory or career technical
10 coursework.

11 (3) Seek proficiency in mathematics and in reading and writing
12 in English.

13 (4) Complete and file a free application for federal student aid
14 and submit his or her grade point average to the Student Aid
15 Commission by March 2 of his or her senior year.

16 (5) Meet application and other requirements for university
17 admission or enroll directly in community college soon after high
18 school graduation.

19 (b) At the time of enrollment, each pupil shall receive a
20 certificate of participation in the early college commitment
21 program, with his or her name, and bearing the signature of the
22 Superintendent and the Governor.

23 (c) Participating pupils shall also to receive a booklet of college
24 information providing more specific information about eligibility
25 requirements, preparation steps, and other pertinent information.
26 School districts shall provide information and services, through
27 existing programs, to the pupils who sign pledge cards through
28 their middle school and high school years.

29 (d) Pupils enrolled in early college commitment program who
30 meet their pledge will be eligible to continue their postsecondary
31 education at a California community college to pursue career
32 technical education or a degree, or to transfer to a four-year
33 university, or, if they meet the admission requirements and apply
34 for admission, at the University of California or the California
35 State University. Pupils who are eligible and demonstrate financial
36 need, as determined pursuant to the free application for federal
37 student aid, to help cover the costs of fees, books, supplies,
38 transportation, and living expenses at postsecondary institutions
39 will receive financial aid.

1 54714. The Legislature encourages the California Community
2 Colleges, the University of California, the California State
3 University, independent colleges, the California Student
4 Opportunity and Access Program, the Student Aid Commission,
5 and other nonprofit, business, or other community organizations
6 to provide support services as needed in coordination with local
7 school districts.

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