

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 1173 (O'Donnell) – As Amended April 22, 2019

**[Note: This bill is double referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee and was heard by that Committee on April 9, 2019.]**

**SUBJECT:** California State University: Center to Close Achievement Gaps

**SUMMARY:** Establishes The Center to Close the Achievement Gaps (Center) at a campus of the California State University (CSU) system to be chosen by the Chancellor of the CSU, or at the office of the chancellor. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes The Center to Close the Achievement Gaps, to be located at a campus in the CSU system to be chosen by the Chancellor of the California State University, or at the Office of the Chancellor. If considering a campus for the location of the center, requires the chancellor shall use all of the following criteria in choosing the campus:
  - a) Its graduation rates for both undergraduate programs and programs of professional preparation of educators
  - b) Its capacity to establish and maintain the Center
  - c) Its capacity to operate in partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE), the State Board of Education (SBE), the California Collaborative for Education Excellence (CCEE), each county office of education (COE) engaged in assisting schools as part of the statewide system of support, and the University of California (UC)
- 2) States that the mission of the Center is to provide resources and assistance to LEAs in order to eliminate gaps in academic achievement between subgroups of pupils enrolled in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, as identified on the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), through both of the following:
  - a) Providing professional preparation of educators in the CSU system
  - b) Serving as a resource for LEAs on strategies for closing achievement gaps
- 3) Defines an LEA as a school district, charter school or county office of education (COE).
- 4) Requires the Center to seek to fulfill its mission and improve the capacity of teachers, education specialists, and school administrators to close gaps in academic achievement through both of the following:
  - a) Strengthening professional preparation on effective instructional practices, effective school leadership practices, effective local educational agency (LEA) leadership practices, and the use of data and continuous improvement strategies.

- b) Serving LEAs as a clearinghouse for evidence-based strategies and promising practices for closing academic achievement gaps.
- 5) Requires the Center to also do all of the following:
- a) Engage in and disseminate research on evidence-based strategies and promising practices to close academic achievement gaps.
  - b) Develop and disseminate tools and resources to implement evidence-based strategies for closing academic achievement gaps.
  - c) Document and promote effective practices used in higher performing, high-poverty schools and LEAs.
- 6) Requires the Center to operate in partnership with the CDE, SBE, CCEE, each COE engaged in assisting schools as part of the statewide system of support, and the UC.
- 7) Requires, on or before January 30 of the year following the first full year of operation, and on or before January 30 annually thereafter, the Center to submit to the Legislature a report prepared by a third party evaluating the support provided to LEAs by the Center during the previous year.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the single multiple measures public school accountability system, which must measure the overall performance of numerically significant pupil subgroups in schools, including charter schools, school districts and COEs. Numerically significant pupil subgroups include: ethnic subgroups, socioeconomic disadvantaged pupils, English learners, pupils with disabilities, foster youth and homeless youth. (Education Code Section 52052)
- 2) Establishes a single system for providing support (System of Support) to LEAs and schools and for programs established by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.
- 3) Establishes the purpose of the System of Support to build the capacity of LEAs to do all of the following:
  - a) Support the continuous improvement of pupil performance within the state priorities
  - b) Address the gaps in achievement between pupil subgroups
  - c) Improve outreach and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that the goals, actions and services described in school district and COE LCAPs reflect the needs of pupils and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving populations (Education Code 52059.5)
- 4) Requires school districts to adopt and annually revise LCAPs.
- 5) Requires LCAPs to address how the district will address and improve in eight state priority areas, including pupil achievement as measure by, among other things, the percentage of

pupils who have successfully completed courses that satisfy the requirements for entrance to the UC and the CSU, or the completion of career pathways. (Education Code Section 52060)

- 6) Establishes The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, whose purpose is to advise and assist school districts, county superintendents of schools, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in their LCAPs. The CCEE is required to achieve this purpose by facilitating continuous improvement for LEAs within California's system of public school support. (Education Code Section 52074)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:** *Need for the bill.* According to the author, "Despite numerous reform and intervention efforts, a student achievement gap continues to exist in California. The implementation of the System of Support is in its infancy. For too long there have been inadequate supports for LEAs, schools, and classroom teachers directly targeted at addressing strategies to close the achievement gap. Similarly, many preservice educator preparation programs lack effective methods for teaching strategies to close the achievement gap. California needs a one-stop resource for closing the achievement gap targeted to educators.

While using the research conducted by institutions of higher education, like the University of California, will be critical to closing the gap, the primary functions and mission of the Center to Close the Achievement Gaps is not to conduct research, but rather serve as a clearinghouse of resources and practical strategies for public school teachers and administrators to use in their classrooms every day to close the achievement gap. The CSU system is far better equipped to provide this practical information to the field."

**Achievement Gaps.** Achievement gaps are significant and persistent disparities in student performance and educational attainment between student groups. Achievement gaps exist between different student ethnic and racial groups, as well as between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In California, achievement levels between student groups on nearly every indicator of student performance has been making progress in closing the achievement gap, but some student groups still fall behind state averages.

According to a 2015 report from the Economic Policy Institute, "Early Education Gaps by Social Class and Race Start U.S. Children Out on Unequal Footing: A Summary of the Major Findings in Inequalities at the Starting Gate" achievement gaps begin as early as birth, particularly among students with different socioeconomic backgrounds. The key foundations for learning begin as soon as a child is born, and starting school behind their peers typically persists as children progress through school.

Studies show that the black-white achievement gap has persisted, but changed over time. It narrowed in both reading and math from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, then widened in the early 1990s, but has been narrowing consistently since 1999 (Reardon, 2014). In addition, even though the Black/African American subgroup includes pupils at all income levels, its scores are below the scores of economically disadvantaged pupils, which suggests that poverty alone does not explain this outcome. According to Reardon, et al.:

A relatively common question addressed in studies of racial/ethnic achievement gaps (particularly the black-white gap) is the extent to which the observed gaps

can be explained by socioeconomic differences between the groups. [Research shows] that socioeconomic factors explain almost all (85 percent) of the black-white math gap, and all of the reading gap at the start of kindergarten....By the third grade, however, ...the same socioeconomic factors account for only about 60 percent of both the math and reading black-white gaps. This finding suggests that socioeconomic factors explain, in large part, the black-white differences in cognitive skills at the start of formal schooling, but do not account for the growth of the black-white gap as children progress through elementary school.

The Getting Down to Facts II Current Conditions and Paths Forward for California Schools Summary Report 2018, states: "Difference between black and white students, and Latino and white students, are...greater in California than in most other states. However...family income is more predictive of achievement differences than race/ethnicity. The size of the [achievement] gap shrinks noticeably when student socioeconomic status is considered—and California's white-Latino gap become smaller than in other states. But the black-white gap persists and exceeds the gap in other states."

Student achievement on standardized test results in California demonstrate achievement gaps between different race and ethnic groups, students with disabilities and students without disabilities, and socioeconomic status. For example, the 2018 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress results for 8th grade included 17.7% of Black or African American students and 23.9% of Latino students that met or exceeded targeted benchmarks for mathematics, compared to 51.8% of White students, and 74.4% of Asian students.

Academic achievement gaps have consequences beyond school. A recent report from the Equality of Opportunity Project at Stanford University found that "black children born to parents in the bottom household income quintile have a 2.5% chance of rising to the top quintile of household income, compared with 10.6% for whites," and "American Indian and black children have a much higher rate of *downward* mobility than other groups [emphasis in original]."

***Recent statewide efforts to close achievement gaps in California.*** Since the creation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the related accountability measures in 2013, California has developed the "Statewide System of Support" for all LEAs, including school districts, COEs and charter schools. The goal for support at all levels is to assist LEAs and their schools in meeting the needs of each student served, with a focus on building capacity to sustain improvement and effectively address inequities in student opportunities and outcomes. The System of Support is comprised of four entities in current law: the CDE, SBE, COEs, and CCEE.

***The Committee may wish to consider*** that current law articulates a system of policymaking (the Governor, Legislature and SBE), data collection (CDE and LEAs), technical assistance (CDE, COEs, and CCEE), and practice (LEAs), but there is no entity formally tasked with collecting research related to achievement gaps, and supporting undergraduate and preservice preparation of educators programs. Although achievement gaps are widely studied both at the national and statewide levels, few supports exist to collect, distill and distribute the findings from that research to practitioners and technical assistance providers.

***California Collaborative on Educational Excellence.*** Current law establishes the CCEE with a purpose to advise and assist school districts, county superintendents of schools, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in their LCAPs. According to the CCEE's website, "The

CCEE is a statewide agency that works to strengthen California's public school system so that districts can build their capacity to improve student outcomes. Our agency does this by working collaboratively with other statewide agencies, county offices of education, and stakeholders so we — as a collective group — can tackle challenges as a team. In some cases, the CCEE can also offer one-on-one support to districts through direct technical assistance.” The CCEE is governing by a board that includes: the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the SBE, a county superintendent of schools appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, a teacher appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and a superintendent of a school district appointed by the Governor.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:****Support**

None on file.

**Opposition**

None on file.

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