

Date of Hearing: January 15, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 150 (Cooper) – As Amended January 6, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Pupils: school transfers: coursework for high school graduation

**SUMMARY:** Requires, when students in foster care and other specified students enroll in a new local educational agency (LEA) without full or partial credit for work satisfactorily completed at a prior school, the LEA to contact the prior school to request that the students' full or partial credits be delivered on a transcript, and requires that partial credit earned in a prior school in a subject required for graduation to be combined with other coursework in that subject.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires that if a student in foster care, a pupil who is a homeless child or youth, a former juvenile court school pupil, a pupil who is a child of a military family, a pupil who is a migratory child, or a pupil participating in a newcomer program enrolls without full or partial credit for work satisfactorily completed at a prior public school, juvenile court school, charter school, school in a country other than the United States, or nonpublic, nonsectarian school, a LEA contact the prior school within two business days to request that the pupil's full or partial credits be delivered on a transcript.
- 2) Requires the prior school, to deliver that transcript to the LEA within two business days of either a notification of enrollment or a request for records.
- 3) Requires, for purposes of accepting or issuing credit, a LEA to combine any partial coursework that was satisfactorily completed while enrolled in courses within the same subject, provided that coursework in that subject is required for graduation.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires LEAs to accept coursework satisfactorily completed in another school by a student in foster care, a student who is homeless, a student who transfers from juvenile court schools, a student from a military family, a migrant student, or a student enrolled in a newcomer program even if the student did not complete an entire course. Requires that, when partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the student be enrolled in the same or equivalent course. (EC 51225.2)
- 2) Requires each LEA to designate a staff person as the educational liaison for foster children, and requires the liaison to assist foster children when transferring from one school to another school or from one school district to another school district in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records, and grades. (EC 48853.5)
- 3) Requires, within two business days of the foster child's request for enrollment, the educational liaison for the new school to contact the school last attended by the foster child to obtain all academic and other records. Requires the last school attended by the foster child shall provide all required records and requires the educational liaison for the school last

attended provide all records to the new school within two business days of receiving the request. (EC 48853.5)

- 4) Requires a local educational agency (LEA), when a student transfers from one school to another, to compile the complete educational record of the pupil, including a determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, and other records. (EC 49069.5)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** This bill has been keyed a state mandated local program by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Assembly Bill 150 will remove barriers for foster youth and other highly mobile youth in graduating from high school and achieving educational success. This bill clarifies that all credits earned in a given subject area, including partial credits, must be combined to establish a ‘one year course’ to meet state minimum graduation requirements. Not combining partial credits for foster youth who transfer schools forces them to repeat coursework, delaying their ability to graduate and increasing their potential to dropout.”

***Who issues and who accepts credit, and how is it counted?*** Current law requires that LEAs accept coursework satisfactorily completed in another school by a student in foster care, a student who is homeless, a student who transfers from juvenile court schools, a student from a military family, and a migrant or newcomer student, even if the student did not complete an entire course, and requires that a student be issued full or partial credit for work completed.

According to the author, this provision is sometimes rendered ineffective because sending school districts do not issue partial credit when students leave. As a result, there is no partial credit for the receiving school district to accept. Districts participating in a professional learning network convened by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) report that this is sometimes the case.

Additionally, according to the author, inconsistency in course titles causes some school districts to record partial credit in core academic subjects as elective credit, instead of as credit in the subject in which the credit was earned. This may lead to students accruing elective credit instead of the credit toward graduation they have earned in a prior school.

***Effect of mobility on academic outcomes.*** Numerous studies indicate that student mobility is associated with poor educational outcomes. One meta-analysis (Mehana, 2004) on the effects of school mobility on reading and math achievement in the elementary grades found the equivalent of a 3–4 month performance disadvantage in achievement. Another (Reynolds, 2009) found that frequent mobility was associated with significantly lower reading and math achievement by up to a third of a standard deviation, and that students who moved three or more times had rates of school dropout that was nearly one-third of a standard deviation higher than those who were school stable. One longitudinal study (Temple, 1999) found that half of the one year difference between mobile and non-mobile students could be attributed to mobility, and that it is “frequent, rather than occasional, mobility that significantly increases the risk of underachievement.” And another longitudinal study (Herbers, 2014) found that students who experience more school changes between kindergarten and twelfth grade are less likely to complete high school on time,

complete fewer years of school, and attain lower levels of occupational prestige, even when controlling for poverty. Results of this study indicated more negative outcomes associated with moves later in the grade school career, particularly between fourth and eighth grade.

**California's partial credit model policy.** In response to long-standing concerns about challenges students in foster care face in obtaining partial credit for completed coursework, in 2013 the California Child Welfare Council and numerous other agencies and organizations published California's Partial Credit Model Policy, a statewide model policy to provide guidance to school districts, county offices of education, and child welfare agencies on how to implement the partial credit mandate in current law. The California School Boards Association turned this partial credit model policy into a model board policy with corresponding administrative regulations, which school districts can adopt. The manual provides a partial credit calculation formula and implementation tools for use by school staff and social workers. The partial credit formula used in the model policy is shown in the table below:

7 CLASS PERIODS = 0.5 CREDITS PER SUBJECT	
7-13 class periods = 0.5 credits per subject	42-48 class periods = 3 credits per subject
14-20 class periods = 1 credit per subject	49-55 class periods = 3.5 credits per subject
21-27 class periods = 1.5 credits per subject	56-62 class periods = 4.0 credits per subject
28-34 class periods = 2 credits per subject	63-69 class periods = 4.5 credits per subject
35-41 class periods = 2.5 credits per subject	70+ class periods = 5 credits per subject

**Should these provisions be extended to all students?** The right to acceptance of partial credit is one of a number of rights afforded to groups of highly mobile students, such as students in foster care, students who are homeless, and students of migrant workers. These rights include the right to be exempted from local graduation requirements when students transfer into a new school after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. **The Committee may wish to consider** whether all students should have rights related to partial credit and exemption from local graduation requirements, as many students who do not fall into one of the named categories change schools and encounter the same challenges.

**Foster youth academic outcomes.** A 2013 report by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd, titled *The Invisible Achievement Gap*, identified the disparity in academic outcomes for students in foster care relative to their peers. It found, based on 2009-10 educational data, that students in foster care represented a subgroup distinct in many ways from other low-income students. Among the findings in this report were that foster youth:

- have among the lowest scores in English/Language Arts
- have the lowest scores in mathematics of any subgroup
- have the highest dropout rate, nearly three times the rate of other students
- have the lowest high school graduation rate of any subgroup

The report also found that students in foster care are more likely to change schools during the school year, more likely to be enrolled in low-performing schools, less likely to participate in state assessments, and significantly more likely to be enrolled in nontraditional schools.

**Recommended amendments.** *Staff recommends that the bill be amended* as follows:

- 1) Require that prior educational placements issue partial credit on an official transcript.
- 2) Require that if a student enrolls without full or partial credit for work satisfactorily completed the LEA must contact the prior placement within two business days to request that the pupil's full or partial credits be delivered on a transcript. Requires that the prior placement deliver that transcript to the LEA within two business days of either a notification of enrollment or a request for records.
- 3) Require that when LEAs accept partial credits they transfer the credits onto their own official transcript, denoting grades, full or partial credits awarded and the educational placement in which they were earned. Require that the credits be listed independently on the transcript by educational placement. Require that accepted credits be counted as credit in the subject in which the coursework was taken. Require that, when determining whether a pupil has met state or local graduation requirements and the admissions requirements of the University of California and the California State University, credits earned in the same subject be combined to ensure that a student receives the maximum credit for coursework satisfactorily completed.

**Arguments in support.** The Alliance for Children's Rights writes, "Youth in foster care demonstrate the poorest high school graduation outcomes of any group statewide – 58% compared to 84% for all students. This achievement gap is caused, in part, by the high mobility of foster youth, who transfer schools an average of eight times while in care, losing up to six months of their education with each move. In addition, one-third attend two or more schools during a single school year compared to 7% of students statewide. In order to reduce the achievement gap, current law requires schools to calculate partial credit so that highly mobile youth receive credit for the coursework completed when they must change schools to prevent undue disruptions and delays in achieving graduation. However, while youth are awarded partial credits, those partial credits of the same or equivalent course may not be combined to meet state minimum graduation requirements. AB 150 addresses school stability and academic achievement by requiring the combination of similar coursework completed at different schools with different course titles to allow students to meet state minimum graduation requirements."

**Prior and related legislation.** AB 2121 (Caballero), Chapter 581, Statutes of 2018, extends to currently migratory students (migrant students) certain rights currently afforded to other groups of highly mobile students regarding exemptions from local graduation requirements and acceptance of partial credit.

AB 365 (Muratsuchi), Chapter 739, Statutes of 2017, extends to students from military families certain rights regarding exemptions from local graduation requirements and acceptance of partial credit which are currently afforded to other groups of highly mobile students.

AB 2306 (Frazier) Chapter 464, Statutes of 2016, requires school districts to exempt former juvenile court school students who transfer into school districts after their second year in high school from local graduation requirements that exceed those of the state, and requires a county office of education to issue a diploma of graduation to a pupil who completes statewide coursework requirements for graduation while attending a juvenile court school.

AB 1166 (Bloom), Chapter 1166, Statutes of 2015, allows students in foster care and those who are homeless to be eligible for the exemption from local graduation requirements even if they are

not notified of this right within 30 days of enrollment, and allows homeless students to be exempt even if they are no longer homeless or if they transfer to another school or district.

AB 167 (Adams), Chapter 224, Statutes of 2009, grants pupils in foster care an exemption from coursework adopted by a school district in addition to statewide requirements while the pupil is in grades 11 and 12.

AB 490 (Steinberg), Chapter 862, Statutes of 2003, requires LEAs to accept full or partial coursework for credit while attending a public school, juvenile court schools, or nonpublic school or agency, among numerous other changes related to the education of foster youth in the areas of educational placement, coursework credit, records transfer, and educational programs offered to foster youth.

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

Alliance for Children's Rights (sponsor)  
Aspiranet  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
California Youth Connection  
Children Now  
Children's Law Center of California  
Edvoice  
John Burton Advocates for Youth  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
Seneca Family of Agencies  
Youth Law Center

**Opposition**

None on file

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