

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 1509 (Quirk-Silva) – As Amended April 11, 2023

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: Cambridge Assessment International Education programs.

SUMMARY: Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to annually update information on the Cambridge Assessment International Education program available on the California Department of Education's (CDE's) website to include current information on the various programs available to school districts to offer or access Cambridge Assessment International Education Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) level courses, including online courses. Requires and authorizes the use of the Cambridge Assessment International Education program throughout the Education Code where Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) are currently specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires A–G Access Grants and A–G Success Grants to be used for activities that directly support pupil access to, and successful completion of, the A–G course requirements. Eligible grant activities may include the payment of AP, IB, and Cambridge Assessment International Education fees for unduplicated pupils.
- 2) Authorizes a school principal evaluation to include, but not be limited to, evidence of academic growth of pupils based on multiple measures that may include pupil work as well as pupil and school longitudinal data that demonstrates pupil academic growth over time. Assessments used for this purpose must be valid and reliable and used for the purposes intended and for the appropriate pupil populations. Academic assessments include, but are not limited to, state standardized assessments, formative, summative, benchmark, end of chapter, end of course, college entrance, and performance assessments, AP exams, IB exams, and the Cambridge International AS and A Level examinations. For career and technical education, authentic performance assessment is a strong indicator of effective teaching and learning.
- 3) Authorizes the governing board of a school district to, and urges it to, provide access to a comprehensive educational counseling program for all pupils enrolled in the school district. States the intent of the Legislature that a school district that provides educational counseling to its pupils implement a structured and coherent counseling program within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. Authorizes educational counseling to include counseling in schools that enroll pupils in grades 6 to 12, inclusive, developing a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist and counsel each pupil to begin to satisfy the A–G requirements for admission to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) and encourage participation in college preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, and early college, dual enrollment, AP, IB, and Cambridge International AS and A Level programs.
- 4) States the State Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school pupil in one or more languages, in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets specified criteria, including proficiency in one or more languages

other than English, demonstrated through one of several specified methods, including passing a world language AP examination with a score of 3 or higher, an IB examination with a score of 4 or higher, a Cambridge International A Level examination with a score of E or higher, or a Cambridge International AS Level examination with a score of E or higher.

- 5) States that the state priorities for purposes of an LEAs's local control and accountability plan (LCAP), including pupil achievement, measured by applicable specified methods including the percentage of pupils who have passed an AP examination with a score of 3 or higher, a Cambridge International A Level examination with a score of E or higher, or a Cambridge International AS Level examination with a score of E or higher.
- 6) Requires the SPI to annually update information on the Cambridge Assessment International Education program available on the CDE's website to include current information on the various programs available to school districts to offer or access Cambridge Assessment International Education AS and Advanced A level courses, including online courses. Requires the SPI also to provide support to high schools that offer Cambridge Assessment International Education AS and A level courses to facilitate communication with the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, the Academic Senate of the California State University, and the Academic Senate of the University of California to ensure students receive college credit for successful participation in Cambridge Assessment International Education assessments.
- 7) Authorizes a school district that offers Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), or AS or A level courses and examinations, to help pay the test fees for pupils in need of financial assistance.
- 8) Requires, in order to be eligible to receive a Golden State Pathways Program grant award, grant recipients to commit to providing participating pupils with the opportunity to earn at least 12 postsecondary credits that are applicable toward the completion of a degree, certificate, or credential through specified methods including Cambridge Assessment International Education courses.
- 9) Requires an applicant of the California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program to meet specified eligibility standards, including offering high quality curriculum and instruction aligned with the California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards, including programs that integrate academic and career technical education and that offer the opportunity for participants to prepare for postsecondary enrollment and to earn postsecondary credits through AP courses, IB courses, Cambridge Assessment International Education courses, or by formal agreement with a postsecondary partner to provide dual enrollment opportunities.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Allocates \$547 million for the A–G Completion Improvement Grant Program. Authorizes, as a use of the grant, AP and IB exam fees for unduplicated (foster youth, low-income, and English learner) pupils. (Education Code (EC) 41590)

- 2) Authorizes a school principal evaluation to include local and state academic assessments, state standardized assessments, formative, summative, benchmark, end of chapter, end of course, AP, IB, college entrance, and performance assessments. (EC 44671)
- 3) Authorizes the governing board of a school district to, and urges it to, provide access to a comprehensive educational counseling program for all students enrolled in the school district. States the intent of the Legislature that a school district that provides educational counseling to its pupils implement a structured and coherent counseling program within a MTSS framework. Authorizes educational counseling to include counseling in developing a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist and counsel each pupil to begin to satisfy the A–G requirements for admission to the UC and the CSU and encourage participation in college preparation programs, including, but not limited to, the AVID program, and early college, dual enrollment, AP, and IB programs. (EC 49600)
- 4) Ratifies the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Requires, as it relates to course placement, when the student transfers before or during the school year, the receiving state school to initially honor placement of the student in educational courses based on the student’s enrollment in the sending state school and/or educational assessments conducted at the school in the sending state if the courses are offered and there is space available, as determined by the school district. Requires course placement to include, but not be limited to, Honors, IB, AP, vocational, technical and career pathways courses. Requires continuing the student’s academic program from the previous school and promoting placement in academically and career challenging courses should be paramount when considering placement. (EC 49701)
- 5) Establishes The State Seal of Biliteracy to certify attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school pupil in one or more languages, in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets specified criteria, including passing a world language AP examination with a score of 3 or higher or an IB examination with a score of 4 or higher. (EC 51461)
- 6) Requires the LCAP template, adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE), and the LCAP adopted by a school district, COE, or charter school, to include as a measure of pupil achievement the percentage of pupils who have passed an AP examination with a score of 3 or higher. (EC 52060, 52066)
- 7) Requires the SPI to annually update the information on AP available on the CDE’s website to include current information on the various means available to school districts to offer or access AP courses, including online courses. Requires the SPI to annually communicate with high schools that offer AP courses in fewer than five subjects, and inform them of the various options for making AP courses and other rigorous courses available to pupils who may benefit from them.
- 8) Authorizes a school district to help pay for all or part of the costs of one or more AP and IB examinations that are charged to economically disadvantaged pupils. (EC 52240 and 52922)
- 9) Requires the SPI to annually update information on the IB Diploma Program available on the CDE’s website. Requires the SPI to also provide support to high schools that offer IB courses to facilitate communication with the Academic Senate for the California Community

Colleges, the Academic Senate of the CSU, and the Academic Senate of the UC about the rigor of those courses and to ensure that college credit is given to pupils who participate so that they benefit from successful efforts in IB programs. (EC 52922)

- 10) Establishes the Golden State Pathways Program as a competitive grant program. Requires, in order to be eligible to receive a grant award, grant recipients to, in part, commit to providing participating pupils the opportunity to earn at least 12 postsecondary credits that are applicable toward the completion of a degree, certificate, or credential through College and Career Access Pathways dual enrollment courses, AP courses, or IB courses. (EC 53023)
- 11) Requires the CDE to administer the California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program as a competitive grant program. Requires the applicant to meet minimum eligibility standards, including offering high quality curriculum and instruction aligned with the California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards, including, but not limited to, providing a coherent sequence of career technical education courses that enable pupils to transition to postsecondary education programs that lead to a career pathway or attain employment or industry certification upon graduation from high school, including programs that integrate academic and career technical education and that offer the opportunity for participants to prepare for postsecondary enrollment and to earn postsecondary credits through AP courses, IB courses, or by formal agreement with a postsecondary partner to provide dual enrollment opportunities. (EC 53071)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “As an educator in K-12 schools for over 25 years in my District, I know first-hand how important the role of a Principal is for school administrative staff, teachers, and especially their students. My bill will provide parity in current statute between Cambridge International, and other established providers of advanced placement curriculum and assessments. AB 1509 does not place additional requirements on school districts or students, it provides school districts another option to consider for the benefit of their students, whom are our future leaders and workforce.”

Key provisions of the bill. Current law authorizes the use of AP and IB throughout the Education Code for various purposes, including authorizing grant funds to pay for AP and IB exam fees for specified student populations, use of AP and IB exam results in principal evaluations. Current law also requires the SPI to annually update information on the AP and IB options available on the CDE’s website, to annually communicate with high schools that offer AP courses in fewer than five subjects, and inform them of the various options for making AP courses and other rigorous courses available to pupils who may benefit from them. Current law further requires the SPI to also provide support to high schools that offer IB courses to facilitate communication with the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, the Academic Senate of the CSU, and the Academic Senate of the UC about the rigor of those courses and to ensure that college credit is given to pupils who participate so that they benefit from successful efforts in IB programs. This bill seeks to extend the same requirements and authorizations to Cambridge International.

Cambridge International. According to Cambridge Assessment International Education, Cambridge International offers a fully integrated and flexible K-12 educational system—the Cambridge Pathway—that brings together teaching and learning with assessments that measure student mastery. Each stage of the Cambridge Pathway builds on learners’ development from the previous one. Schools can offer any of the four stages and any of the courses, alongside other curricula. Over 10,000 schools in over 160 countries offer Cambridge qualifications, and are a part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a not-for-profit organization and part of the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Currently, the Fullerton Joint Union High School District, Inglewood Unified School District, and Placentia-Yorba Unified School District are the only California LEAs in California utilizing Cambridge International. The Montebello Unified School District is currently in registration process.



According to information provided by the sponsor, the costs of the annual program vary based on the grade levels served and courses offered. End of course exam fees range from \$72.95 for Pre-Advanced courses, to \$242.85 for A level Global Perspectives & Research courses.

Advanced Placement. The AP program is overseen by the College Board, a not-for-profit organization that, according to their website, “connects students to college success and opportunity.” According to a 2017 Sage Open article, *Research on the Academic Benefits of the Advanced Placement Program: Taking Stock and Looking Forward*, the AP program provides a framework in which high school teachers can teach introductory college-level courses to high school students. These students then take one of 34 standardized tests at the end of the year, and students who score well on their course’s AP test can receive college credit from their university in which they later enroll.

The AP program currently offers 35 exams on the topics of Arts (3), English (2), History and Social Sciences (9), Math and Computer Science (6), Sciences (7), and World Languages and Cultures (8). According to the College Board, the final score for each AP Exam is reported on a 5-point scale that offers a recommendation about how qualified exam takers are to receive college credit and placement, however, each college makes its own decisions about what scores it will grant credit or placement for. The AP program conducts studies in all AP subjects to correlate the performance of AP students with that of college students in comparable college courses. These studies inform the “cut points” that determine how AP students’ composite scores are translated into an AP score of 1–5, with a score of 1 being low, and 5 being high. The mean score for the 2022 AP Exams was 2.92. The 2022-23 fee for most exams is \$97. More

than 60% of all exams taken earned a score of 3 or higher. Participation in an AP course may add extra points to a student's grade point average, in accordance with locally developed policies.

The College Board has conducted a body of research related to the AP program and student outcomes, however, until 2004 there was far less independent peer-reviewed research. According to the 2017 Sage Open article, *Research on the Academic Benefits of the Advanced Placement Program: Taking Stock and Looking Forward*, the first non-College Board study that examined the academic impact of AP program participation was Geiser and Santelices's (2004) study of the relationship between students' high school records and their performance at college was prepared as a technical report for the UC System. The authors found that neither AP course participation nor AP exam scores had any predictive power for students' college grade point average (GPA) or for college persistence after controlling for demographic variables, SAT scores, high school GPA, and other variables, which lead to a significant increase in the study of the AP Program. According to a 2011 College Board study, *Advanced Placement Exam-Taking and Performance: Relationships with First-Year Subject Area College Grades*, students' first-year college subject area grade point averages, when controlled for gender, racial or ethnic identity, socioeconomic status and prior academic ability, increased in relationship to the students AP Exam score. According to a 2015 Journal of Educational Research article, *The Impact of Participation in the Advanced Placement Program on Students' College Admissions Test Scores*, "Even when scholars recognize the benefits of AP courses, it is sometimes due to characteristics of the classes, and not the AP program itself. Because these students and teacher characteristics are often shown to be linked to positive academic outcomes, it is possible that any benefits of the AP program may be merely due to more prepared students and more experienced teachers—not the program itself."

International Baccalaureate. The IB is a non-profit organization based in Switzerland that serves students in multiple countries, and reports more than 1,700 schools in the United States. Through its three programs (Primary Years Program, Middle Years Program and pre-university Diploma Program (DP)), aims to develop students who contribute to a more peaceful world through promoting intercultural understanding and respect. The curriculum is made up of the DP core (theory of knowledge; extended essay; and a creativity, activity, and service), and six subject groups (studies in language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts) for students 16-19 years of age. The IB program provides a curriculum framework in which teachers can teach from, and an end of course exam for students. The 2022-23 fee for most exams is \$76. Participation in an IB course or program may add extra points to a student's grade point average, in accordance with locally developed policies.

Concerns related to racial/ethnic access and participation equity. According to a 2014 American Secondary Education Journal article, *Minority Students in High School Advanced Placement Courses: Opportunity and Equity Denied*, with the exception of Asian and Pacific Islanders, minority students are severely underrepresented in AP programs. Further, the authors finds a positive relationship between parents' profession and income and students' enrollment in such programs. According to a 2015 Sage Open study, *Unequal Access to Rigorous High School Curricula: An Exploration of the Opportunity to Benefit from the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)*, although rates of participation in IB have steadily increased across the United States to serve low-income and Hispanic students over the last two decades, the characteristics of student participating in IB programs are much less diverse. "IB

programs are experiencing less success enrolling Black, Hispanic, and low-income students into the program. These findings raise questions about the extent to which the expansion of IBDP has the potential to improve academic preparation for college among groups of students that average lower levels of preparation.”

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

- Require the SBE to consider authorizing for school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools the use of additional courses with accompanying end of course exams which institutions of higher education may accept for placement or credit with a qualifying score. Authorizes the SBE to develop a reasonable frequency for which exam publishers may request authorization.
- Require the SBE, on or before the date the first request for authorization is submitted to the SBE by an exam publisher, the SBE to begin to develop a criteria for use in evaluating courses with accompanying end of course exams which institutions of higher education may accept for placement or credit with a qualifying score.
- Require, if the SBE authorizes the use of additional courses with accompanying end of course exams, the SBE to also authorize a qualifying score for the purposes of EC 52060, and 52066.
- Remove proposed changes to the State Seal of Biliteracy and return EC 51461 to existing law.

Arguments in support. The Inglewood Unified School District writes, “Cambridge International is a non-profit world-renowned provider of college-level advanced academic curriculum and end of course assessments with a 160-year history as part of the University of Cambridge. Over the course of our district’s partnership with Cambridge International, we have seen tremendous benefit to our students. Cambridge International has a proven track record of preparing high school students for success in higher education, and deserves to be on par with other providers in the eyes of California code. This bill will only help current and prospective Cambridge International students.”

Related legislation. AB 181 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 52, Statutes of 2022, establishes and allocates \$547 million for the A–G Completion Improvement Grant Program. Authorizes, as a use of the grant, AP and IB fees for unduplicated (foster youth, low-income, and English learner) pupils.

AB 815 (Brownley), Chapter 618, Statutes of 2011, establishes the State Seal of Biliteracy to be voluntarily affixed to the diploma or transcript of a high school graduate who has attained functional proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing skills in one or more languages, in addition to English.

SB 532 (Hernández), Chapter 238, Statutes of 2011, requires the SPI to annually update the information on AP available on the CDE website to include current information on the various means available to school districts to offer or access AP courses, including online courses, and to annually communicate with high schools that offer AP courses in fewer than 5 subjects and

inform them of the various options for making AP courses and other rigorous courses available to pupils who may benefit from them. Requires the SPI to annually update information on the IB Diploma Program available on the CDE's website and to provide support to high schools that offer IB courses. Encouraged the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, the Academic Senate of the CSU, and the Academic Senate of the UC to continue their efforts to adopt consistent systemwide guidelines for the acceptance and granting of credit for IB Diploma Program courses taken by students while they are in high school.

AB 2216 (Escutia), Chapter 7933, Statutes of 1998, established a 5-year pilot grant program, administered by the CDE, for the purpose of awarding grants to cover the costs of AP examination fees. Authorized any school district to apply to the CDE for grant funding based on the number of economically disadvantaged pupils in the district who would take the next offered AP examinations. Authorized any economically disadvantaged pupil enrolled in an AP course to apply to designated school district staff for a grant. Required pupils receiving grants to pay \$5 of the examination fee.

SB 553 (Hart), Chapter 83, Statutes of 1992, authorized school districts receiving economic impact aid funds to expend those funds to pay for all or part of the costs of AP examinations that are charged to economically disadvantaged pupils. Required the SPI, no later than June 30, 1995, to submit a report to the Legislature describing the effectiveness of that funding in increasing the number of economically disadvantaged pupils enrolled in AP courses who take and pass AP examinations.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Fullerton Joint Union High School District
Inglewood Unified School District
Montebello Unified School District

Opposition

None on file

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