Assembly Bill No. 1645

CHAPTER 788

An act to add Section 66021.8 to the Education Code, relating to student support services.

[Approved by Governor October 12, 2019. Filed with Secretary of State October 12, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1645, Blanca Rubio. Student support services: Dreamer Resource Liaisons.

Existing law establishes the segments of the public postsecondary education system in the state, including the University of California administered by the Regents of the University of California, the California State University administered by the Trustees of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

Existing law provides that a student, other than a nonimmigrant alien, as defined, who has attended high school in California for 3 or more years, who has graduated from a California high school or attained the equivalent thereof, who has registered at or attends an accredited institution of higher education in California not earlier than the fall semester or quarter of the 2001–02 academic year, and who, if the student is an alien without lawful immigration status, has filed a specified affidavit, is exempt from paying nonresident tuition at the California Community Colleges and the California State University.

This bill, commencing with the 2020–21 academic year, would require the California Community Colleges and the California State University, and request the University of California, to designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison on each of their respective campuses, as specified, to assist students meeting specified requirements, including undocumented students, by streamlining access to all available financial aid, social services, state-funded immigration legal services, internships, externships, and academic opportunities for those students. By requiring community colleges to designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would encourage those institutions to establish Dream Resource Centers, and would authorize those centers to provide specified support services.

The bill would authorize the trustees, the board of governors, and the regents to seek and accept on behalf of the state any gift, bequest, devise, or donation for the creation and operation of Dream Resource Centers for their respective systems.
The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to increase enrollment and graduation rates among students meeting the requirements of Assembly Bill 540 of the 2001–02 Regular Session (Firebaugh, Chapter 814 of the Statutes of 2001) by requiring the designation of Dreamer Resource Liaisons and encouraging the creation of Dream Resource Centers at public institutions of higher education.

(b) It is estimated that each year approximately 65,000 undocumented pupils graduate from high schools, and while California has been a leader in enacting innovative and bold laws to provide opportunities for undocumented youth to attain higher education, only 20 percent of these pupils attend college. Many undocumented youth and their families are unaware of recent policy changes, such as the enactment of Assembly Bill 540 of the 2001–02 Regular Session (AB 540), the California Dream Act of 2011, the California Dream Loan Act of 2013 and the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, that make college graduation more attainable. Currently, the majority of college campuses do not have a centralized location that provides specialized support services and resources for students meeting the requirements of AB 540 (AB 540 students).

(c) Since the passage of AB 540, the California Dream Act of 2011, and other pieces of legislation, and the establishment of DACA, college affordability has become more attainable for AB 540 Students, including undocumented students. This bill seeks to address this issue faced by AB 540 Students, including undocumented students, by creating a centralized space that those students will be able to utilize in order to access necessary resources and opportunities to ensure they succeed, regardless of their immigration status.

(d) The creation of Dream Resource Centers would save staff time and resources by streamlining all available financial aid and academic opportunities for AB 540 students. These Dream Resource Centers would seek to empower and create a safe and welcoming environment for those students. These centers would increase enrollment, transfer, and graduation rates among this population.

(e) A number of college campuses have acknowledged the needs and challenges of these students and have created Dream Resource Centers.
These include: the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of California, Davis; California State University, Los Angeles; California State University, Fullerton; and California State University, Northridge. These centers provide, among other things, informational workshops, legal clinics, information on programs available to undocumented immigrants, and peer mentoring and support services to increase awareness of existing programs and available resources, enhance professional development, and increase employment opportunities.

(f) President Trump has threatened to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, and it is imperative, now more than ever, to provide these essential resources to our students on all college campuses.

SEC. 2. Section 66021.8 is added to the Education Code, to read:

66021.8. (a) Commencing with the 2020–21 academic year, the California Community Colleges and the California State University shall, and the University of California is requested to, designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison on each of their respective campuses, as specified in subdivision (b), to assist students meeting the requirements set forth in Section 68130.5 by streamlining access to all available financial aid and academic opportunities for those students.

(b) (1) Each campus of the California Community Colleges shall ensure that it has a staff person designated as a Dreamer Resource Liaison who is knowledgeable in available financial aid, social services, state-funded immigration legal services, internships, externships, and academic opportunities for all students meeting the requirements set forth in Section 68130.5, including undocumented students. The Legislature encourages each of these campuses to place this designated staff person in the campus’ extended opportunity programs and services office or financial aid office.

(2) Each campus of the California State University shall ensure that it has a staff person designated as a Dreamer Resource Liaison who is knowledgeable in available financial aid, social services, state-funded immigration legal services, internships, externships, and academic opportunities for all students meeting the requirements set forth in Section 68130.5, including undocumented students. The Legislature encourages each of these campuses to place this designated staff person in the campus’ educational opportunity programs office or financial aid office.

(3) The University of California is encouraged to designate a Dreamer Resource Liaison on each of its campuses. That staff person should be knowledgeable in available financial aid, social services, state-funded immigration legal services, internships, externships, and academic opportunities for all students meeting the requirements set forth in Section 68130.5, including undocumented students. The Legislature encourages each of these campuses to place this designated staff person in the campus’ educational opportunity programs office or financial aid office.

(c) (1) The California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California are encouraged to establish Dream Resource Centers on each of their respective campuses.
(2) Dream Resource Centers may offer support services, including, but not necessarily limited to, state and institutional financial aid assistance, academic counseling, peer support services, psychological counseling, referral for social services, and state-funded immigration legal services.

(d) (1) This section shall not be construed as encouraging the construction of a new or separate space for Dream Resource Centers.

(2) Dream Resource Centers may be housed within existing student service or academic centers.

(3) The space in which the Dreamer Resource Liaison is located may be deemed a Dream Resource Center.

(e) Notwithstanding Section 11005 of the Government Code and any other law requiring approval by a state officer of gifts, bequests, devises, or donations, the Trustees of the California State University, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and the Regents of the University of California may seek and accept on behalf of the state any gift, bequest, devise, or donation whenever the gift and the terms and conditions thereof will aid in the creation and operation of Dream Resource Centers for their respective systems.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.