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NEW STATE SENATE BILL SEEKS TO REDUCE THE COST FOR EARLY COLLEGE FAMILIES - BAY AREA SENATORS CALLED ON TO LEAD THE EFFORT

By Kent Clark

The Dual-Enrollment Tax Incentive & Excellence Act (SB-2), introduced by Senator Choi(a Republican from District 37), would offer families a tax credit and textbook vouchers to lower early college barriers for California families. This act could make a significant difference for thousands of San Francisco and Bay Area high school students seeking early access to higher education and workforce opportunities.

While existing law allows high school students to take tuition-free college classes through dual-enrollment programs, hidden costs like textbooks, digital platforms, lab/class materials, and transportation, create incredibly hard financial barriers, especially for working-class and low-income urban families. The Dual-Enrollment Tax Incentive & Excellence Act attempts to eliminate these secondary costs.

SB-2 would establish a refundable state tax credit of up to $2,000 per year for eligible households earning up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level whose high school pupils complete college-level coursework.



To ensure families that face high costs of living are not forced to pay out-of-pocket, the Dual-Enrollment Tax Incentive & Excellence Act includes an Advance Payment Option, establishing a voucher mechanism for required course materials and technology directly at the school site. With over 160,000 students in the state that participate in dual-enrollment programs, 20% of which are in the Bay Area alone, the families of these students would have ensured financial assistance, regardless of income-level.

Spotlight on Sacremento Senators



Supporters of SB-2 urge multiple Bay Area influential legislative delegations, including San Francisco's Senator Scott Wiener (D-11), Senator Aisha Wahab (D-10) who are part of the Business, Law and Health Committee (where the bill will have to pass), and Senate Majority Leader Mike McGuire, to support this initiative and expand early college access across the region.

"Despite living in one of the world's leading innovation hubs, many Bay Area families struggle with the crushing cost of living, where even a $150 textbook or $500 laptop can prevent a talented student from taking college courses," said Jessie Ryan (President, The Campaign for College Opportunity). "We strongly urge Senator Wiener, Senator Wahab, and our regional leaders to rally behind this bill. Removing barriers to higher education and early career pathways at institutions like City College of San Francisco, the College of San Mateo, and the Peralta Community College District should be an urgent, pragmatic priority for all our legislators, regardless of party line."

BAY AREA SENATORS CALLED ON TO LEAD THE EFFORT ON SB-2 (CONTINUED)

In the Bay Area, dual enrollment has expanded as a key strategy to bridge educational equity gaps and accelerate career readiness. Statewide, more than 150,000 high school students take community college courses, with roughly 62 percent of community college students coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.



Key Highlights of SB-2:

- **Direct Financial Relief**: Grants $1,000 for completing one college course and up to $2,000 for two or more courses or verified high-need transportation and specialized equipment costs.
- **Upfront Textbook & Tech Vouchers**: Establishes an advance disbursement system so low- and middle-income families do not need to front out-of-pocket costs.
- **District Performance Incentives**: Provides performance grants to local school districts and educational agencies that successfully expand CCAP dual-enrollment participation among economically disadvantaged students.
- **Equity Investment**: Draws funding directly from dedicated Proposition 98 higher-education equity and career technical education (CTE) streams.

SB-2 will be heard in the Senate Business, Law and Health Committee during the upcoming legislative session.



"This bill will open doors for those who are willing to take a step forward in education. Many of these students are first generation students" – California Senator Steve Choi

Learn more about California Senator Steve Choi's bill here! SB-2->