



Early Commitment to College Program

California Department of Education Report to the Legislature

Prepared by the
Career and College Transition Division
Teaching and Learning Support Branch

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Description: California *Education Code* Section 54715 states that the Superintendent shall submit a report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on or before November 1, 2017, on the status of the Early Commitment to College Program. As part of this report, the Superintendent shall provide a recommendation on whether the program should be continued.

Authority: California *Education Code* Section 54715

Recipient: Legislature

Due Date: November 1, 2017

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... i
Early Commitment to College Program Report..... 1
Superintendent’s Recommendation..... 3

Early Commitment to College Program

California Department of Education Report to the Legislature

Executive Summary

Senate Bill (SB) 890 (Scott) was signed into law in September 2008 (Chapter 472, Statutes of 2008). Among other provisions, Section 9 of SB 890 added California *Education Code (EC)* sections 54710–54716 to govern the implementation of the Early Commitment to College (ECC) program by the California Department of Education (CDE). The intent of the Legislature was to establish a program to ensure early notification and early commitment of college opportunities for pupils in middle school and high school and their families. The ECC was intended to motivate low income pupils to stay in school, graduate from high school, take college preparatory coursework, and if they choose to do so, seek postsecondary opportunities.

Specifically, *EC* Section 54715 states that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) shall submit to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on or before November 1, 2017, on the status of the ECC program, including, but not limited to the following information:

- (a) The number of school districts and pupils participating in the program.
- (b) The number of participating pupils who fulfilled the requirements of the pledge pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 54711.
- (c) Any relevant outcome data reported by school districts to the Superintendent pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 54711.

As part of this report, the SSPI shall provide a recommendation on whether the program should be continued.

In compliance with the legislative reporting requirement cited above, this report provides the compilation of information required by *EC* Section 54715.

This report is available on the CDE High School Web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/>. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Pete Callas, Administrator, Career and College Transition Division, by phone at 916-319-0669 or by e-mail at pcallas@cde.ca.gov.

Early Commitment to College Program

California Department of Education Report to the Legislature

Early Commitment to College Program Report

The Early Commitment to College (ECC) Program is a voluntary program that was created by SB 890 (Scott) in 2008 (Chapter 472, Statutes of 2008). The purpose of ECC was to motivate low income pupils to stay in school, graduate from high school, take college preparatory coursework, and if they choose to do so, seek postsecondary opportunities.

ECC has the following major provisions:

- The core element of the program is the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge, to be signed by students and their parents or guardians, outlining their agreement to take the steps to finish high school and prepare for college.
- Participants would gain access to the University of California system or the California State University system, if they meet the eligibility requirements and apply. They also would be guaranteed the opportunity to attend a California Community College.
- It is inclusive of career technical and college preparatory classes in middle school and high school, and of career technical and degree programs in college.
- Eligible participants, upon enrollment at a community college, would receive a fee waiver under the fee waiver program of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

By signing the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge, students and their parents or guardians would agree to:

- Meet all graduation requirements to finish high school in California.
- Complete rigorous courses, which may include a-g and career technical courses.
- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid and apply for financial aid by March 2 of their senior year.
- Meet application and other requirements for university admissions or enroll directly in community college after high school graduation.

To date, no funding has been provided to the CDE to carry out its ECC program-related responsibilities. As required by statute, the CDE has completed the tasks needed to implement the program, which included:

Early Commitment to College Program

California Department of Education Report to the Legislature

- On August 31, 2010, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) communicated about the ECC program by letter sent via e-mail to all county and district superintendents and charter school administrators.
- At about the same time, the CDE posted ECC program information on the CDE Web site.
- The CDE was not able to collect ECC program data requirements that included the schools participating in the program, the students signing pledges, and the students completing the requirements of the ECC program in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) database. The data requirements for the ECC report could not be added to the CALPADS database.

The ECC program consisted of two launch phases: the Early Adopter Phase in spring 2009 and the regular launch in fall 2010. The Early Adopter Phase was administered by the California Education Roundtable Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC). The ICC implemented two rounds of the Early Adopter Phase, which included the first round in spring 2009 and the second round in spring 2010.

There were approximately 18 school districts that participated in the Early Adopter Phase of the ECC program with approximately 42 schools in 2009 and over 90 schools in 2010. The ICC was not able to collect pledge signing data from all Early Adopter schools. In fall 2010, the ICC informed the CDE that they would no longer be able to administer or assist in the implementation and data collection of the ECC program.

In fall 2010, the CDE announced the regular launch phase of the ECC program. The SSPI delivered a letter sent via e-mail to all county and district superintendents and charter school administrators announcing the launch of the ECC program. CDE staff also posted ECC Program information on the CDE Web site.

The following are ECC program-related reporting requirements:

- The number of school districts and pupils participating in the program.
- The number of participating pupils who fulfilled the requirements of the pledge pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 54711.
- Any relevant outcome data reported by school districts to the Superintendent pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 54711.

As previously noted, the CDE was not able to collect the ECC program data in the CALPADS database. Thus, there is no program participation or outcome data that can be included in this report to provide an analysis of the ECC program.

Early Commitment to College Program

California Department of Education Report to the Legislature

Superintendent's Recommendation

As part of this report, the SSPI shall provide a recommendation on whether the program should be continued.

After reviewing the information on the work that has been completed to administer and implement the ECC program and the lack of State funding and resources that were provided for data collection for this program, there is no evidence of success for the ECC program. The recommendation from the SSPI is to not continue the ECC program.