

2022-23 POLICY AGENDA

Key Points in Meetings with Legislators:

- Support the Legislature's proposed base increase of \$700 million to better meet student needs and to support colleges in hold harmless or stability to maintain their capacity to serve students and their local region.
- Support the Administration's \$750 million block grant proposal to provide colleges more flexibility to address their campus and student needs.
- Adopt the Legislature's proposal on financial aid, The Cal Grant Equity Framework (consistent with AB 1746), to assist students and families with the total cost of attendance.

Overview

On behalf of the 116 colleges and 73 districts, the Community College League of California (League) wants to thank the Governor and the Legislature for their thoughtful proposals that help California Community Colleges recover from the pandemic. The League shares with Governor Newsom and state legislative leaders the need to move our economy and society from a K-shaped economy, where only a few can benefit, to an E-shaped one, that is equity-focused and where all can participate and prosper. The investments in our students, including the Legislative expansion of the number of colleges that can receive housing funds this year, are deeply appreciated by our colleges and districts.

Below, the League highlights its member district's perspective on some of the key distinctions among the Governor's and Legislature's proposals:



Allocation

While we are very appreciative of the Governor's approach to providing our districts with a \$375 million base increase to help districts transition to the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF), we strongly encourage adoption of the Legislature's proposal of \$700 million to the base.

A \$700 million investment is warranted given the size of the overall budget surplus, high inflationary pressures, and the small number of districts currently on the SCFF. The timing is ripe for this level of investment as our districts are facing unique challenges in accommodating students in this phase of the pandemic. Equally important, the increased investment will help more districts transition to the SCFF and away from Hold Harmless or other forms of stability.



Block Grant

The Governor's proposed one-time \$750 million discretionary block grant for community colleges offers districts the flexibility required to address regional and local short-term needs and long-term obligations. Allowing the use of these funds to be used to protect staffing levels, address student learning challenges, operational costs, and support the mental health and wellness needs of pupils and staff is critically important, especially as our federal COVID-19 dollars expire.



Reforming Financial Aid

Despite comprising two-thirds of the California higher education population, community college students receive only six percent of Cal Grant resources. This glaring disparity must end if we are serious about building a more equitable California. We thank the Legislature for its continued advocacy on the Cal Grant Equity Framework to address the unmet needs of our students as need-dependent financial aid is critical to the interdependent goals of equity and success.