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Legislature's Budget Includes Funding to Improve College Readiness

Last Wednesday, June 15, 2016, the Legislature passed and sent a \$122 billion State Budget to Governor Jerry Brown with hours to spare before the constitutional deadline of midnight. While much of the buzz on the education portion of the State Budget centered on early childhood education, less attention was given to a key priority of Senate President pro Tempore Kevin DeLeon (D-Los Angeles), which is enhancing college access for California's minority students.

The final State Budget compromise contains a significant investment for what is referred to as the "College Readiness Block Grant". Senate Bill 828—the Education Budget Trailer Bill—calls for the appropriation of \$200 million in one-time Proposition 98 funds to be allocated among school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools for high school students (grades 9-12, inclusive) who are English learners, foster youth, or are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, commonly referred to under the Local Control Funding Formula as "unduplicated students".

Specifically, the Budget allocates funding to a local educational agency (LEA) based on its count of unduplicated high school students who, in school year 2015-16, attended a high school accredited or obtaining accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, with no LEA scheduled to receive fewer than \$75,000.

The College Readiness Block Grant contains several expenditure limitations and reporting requirements as a condition of receipt of funds. Spending limitations include, but are not limited to, professional development for educators on improving college readiness and college-going rates, enhancing counseling services on college admissions requirements, and implementing partnerships between high schools and postsecondary institutions to support successful student matriculation and transitions.

School Services of California, Inc., will be covering the College Readiness Block Grant and other new program funding in more depth at our upcoming [School Finance and Management Conference](#) for those interested in learning more about the new funding and program requirements.

—Patti Herrera and Michelle McKay Underwood

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