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POLICY BRIEF
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California Higher Education Policy: The 2025–26 Legislative Session

Five Policy Areas Shaping the Conditions for Student Success

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ABOUT THIS BRIEF

California's 2025–26 legislative session adjourned on August 31, 2026. More than 90 education-related bills now sit with Governor Newsom, who has until September 30 to sign or veto them. This brief offers a selective reading of five policy areas that are particularly relevant to the Pullias Center's work and potentially consequential for equity and student success. Drawing on insights from research, we examine the significance and implications of these bills and identify what will be important to monitor if they become law. The five areas and the measures anchoring each, are:

01	**Dual enrollment**	AB 1871, with AB 2248 and AB 731
02	**Community college baccalaureate**	SB 960 and AB 2694
03	**State institutional designations**	SB 1255, AB 2374 and AB 1641
04	**Foster youth access and continuity**	AB 2766, AB 2768 and AB 1659
05	**Financial aid delivery**	AB 2422, with SB 1006

Bill statuses were verified on September 12, 2026 against official legislative records, covering enrollment and presentation actions dated August 21 through September 10, supplemented by individual bill histories.

The Pattern Across the Five

Across these measures, California appears to be changing the conditions that shape who gets access, who is served, and what helps students stay on track once enrolled in college. The next questions are which bills become law, how they are implemented and whether students experience meaningful differences as a result.

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INTRODUCTION

Student success is a shared responsibility between students and institutions. While students bring effort, aspirations and agency to their educational experiences, **their ability to access, persist in and complete college depends heavily on the conditions institutions and public policy create around them.**

Now that California's 2025–26 legislative session has adjourned, more than 90 education-related bills sit on Governor Newsom's desk awaiting action. This brief takes up five policy areas that are particularly consequential for student success and closely connected to questions that are foundational to the work of the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education.

To some, these measures may appear to address discrete and largely unrelated issues. But when read together, they raise an important common question: **What conditions are we creating for students to succeed and what responsibilities do institutions have to sustain those conditions?** Consider dual enrollment policy, which shapes who has access to college coursework and informs academic momentum before arriving on a college campus. Community college baccalaureate programs shape whether a bachelor's degree is available where a student already lives. Institutional student-serving designations recognize and encourage campuses to organize around the needs of historically marginalized student populations. Foster youth provisions affect whether students have the material resources and continuity necessary to remain enrolled. And financial aid policy shapes whether resources reach students when they actually need them.

Completion, in other words, is not simply the product of individual student choices or effort—**it is the cumulative product of these conditions.**

Reading the legislation together also reveals a tension that is less visible when each bill is considered on its own. **Across several of these areas, California lawmakers are poised to expand access, establish expectations, or remove barriers, while measures that would provide additional resources or capacity did not advance.** For example, with dual enrollment, lawmakers advanced measures to reduce participation barriers, while earlier proposals to pair expansion with more comprehensive student supports did not survive the legislative process. Lawmakers addressed friction in financial aid disbursement while Cal Grant indexing failed to reach a floor vote. New institutional designations advanced, but their impact will depend in part on whether resources follow the commitments they establish. **Foster youth legislation, however, provides an instructive contrast.** In this case, access and material support were addressed together through provisions spanning housing, fees, savings and educational continuity.

> That tension—between expanding opportunity and building the institutional capacity necessary to make opportunity meaningful—is one of the central questions we must address.

This brief is intentionally not a comprehensive survey of the 90-plus education-related measures considered this session. Instead, it offers a selective reading of five areas with particular relevance to equity and student success, drawing on research to consider what the evidence suggests, where it remains unsettled and what will be important to monitor if these measures become law.

SECTION 1 · MOMENTUM BEFORE ENTRY

Dual Enrollment: The Door Widens, but the Supports Do Not

Access to early college credit is associated with both near-term outcomes, including high school graduation and college enrollment, and longer-term outcomes such as college completion. And the benefits are not limited to students who are already academically or economically advantaged. In their review of the research, An and Taylor conclude that **dual enrollment generally benefits students regardless of race or socioeconomic status.**[1]

Whether it benefits some groups more than others is less settled. Some studies find the largest gains among students with lower prior academic achievement or from lower-income backgrounds. Others find that groups benefit about equally. And still others find smaller gains for racially minoritized and low-income students than for their peers—a pattern An and Taylor note runs counter to the principle that policy should benefit at least equally those who are least advantaged.[1]

In California, dual enrollment takes several forms. One is College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP), a specific type of partnership between community colleges and K–12 districts created to expand dual-enrollment opportunities, particularly for students who may not already be college-bound or who have historically been underrepresented in higher education. CCAP courses can be offered on high school campuses during the school day and exclusively to high school students, reducing some of the logistical barriers associated with other forms of dual enrollment.[2] **CCAP has grown rapidly and now accounts for about 45 percent of dual enrollment course participation in California.**[3]

The enrollment of Black and Latinx students in CCAP programs versus broader dual enrollment signals an important distinction for equity. Black and Latinx students are underrepresented in dual enrollment overall. Among the high school class of 2024, Latinx students represented 49 percent of dual enrollees but 57 percent of high school students statewide; Black students represented 3 percent of dual enrollees but 5 percent of high school students. Their representation is more equitable within CCAP: Latinx students account for 56 percent and Black students 4 percent of CCAP participants.[3] **This suggests that participation is shaped not simply by student interest or readiness, but also by how opportunities are structured.**

	Share of high school students	Share of dual enrollees	Share of CCAP participants
Latinx	57%	49%	**56%**
Black	5%	3%	**4%**

High school class of 2024. Source: Zhou et al. (2025), Public Policy Institute of California.

Evidence on outcomes also supports taking expansion seriously. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) has found that Black and Latinx students who participate in CCAP generally fare better on several college outcomes than their peers who do not participate in dual enrollment.[4] More recent research also suggests that historically-underserved students in CCAP often outperform their peers in other forms of dual enrollment on measures such as completing gateway college coursework.[5] These findings are descriptive rather than causal, and racial gaps remain even within CCAP. Still, the pattern matters: **how dual enrollment is designed appears to shape not only who participates, but what students are able to accomplish.**

What AB 1871 Would Change

This evidence provides important context for **AB 1871**, authored by Assemblymember Mike Fong, which aims to remove additional barriers within CCAP. The bill eliminates the requirement that students obtain a principal's recommendation to participate, allows a single community college application to cover the duration of a student's participation, removes the four-course-per-term cap while retaining the existing 15-unit limit and changes state reporting to include the number of students who complete 12 or more college units by high school graduation, earn a certificate or complete the coursework required for an associate degree or associate degree for transfer.[6] The bill passed the Legislature and is awaiting action by the governor.[7]

Each of these provisions tackles a barrier that can shape who gets access to college-level coursework. For example, the principal-recommendation requirement creates a discretionary gate. Removing it reduces one point at which access can depend on an individual decision rather than a student's interest in participating. The broader evidence on CCAP suggests why such design choices matter: a model built to reduce barriers has reached Black and Latinx students more equitably than dual enrollment overall.

The Support Question

Widening the door, however, is not the same as ensuring students are positioned to succeed once they walk through it. Students also need clear information about the opportunities available to them and help navigating college coursework. **AB 2248**, authored by Assemblymember Josh Hoover and also awaiting action by the governor, addresses part of the information side of that equation. Existing law requires school districts, county offices of education and charter schools to notify families annually of available dual-enrollment and International Baccalaureate courses. AB 2248 would require that notice to also explain the benefits of the California College Guidance Initiative, the state's college and career planning platform and encourage parents and guardians to create accounts.[8]

The history of another dual enrollment measure raises a different question about student support. **AB 731**, introduced by Fong in 2025, initially went further than the provisions now found in AB 1871. An earlier version authorized asynchronous online CCAP courses and would have required comprehensive supports for students enrolled in those courses, including academic counseling, tutoring, technical assistance, orientation, access to office hours, progress monitoring and student success workshops.[9] **Those provisions were ultimately removed** and the final version of AB 731—which was held in Senate Appropriations and did not advance—was substantively identical to AB 1871.[10] Fong subsequently introduced AB 1871 in 2026, which his office describes as a reintroduction of AB 731.[11]

> **The Unresolved Question**
>
> California is moving toward reducing barriers to dual enrollment participation and improving the information available to students and families. But the trajectory of these bills leaves an important question unresolved. As the state widens access to dual enrollment, will the advising and academic supports students need to translate that access into success widen with it?

SECTION 2 · WHETHER A DEGREE IS ATTAINABLE

The Community College Baccalaureate: Making a Bachelor's Degree Attainable

Whether a bachelor's degree is attainable depends in part on whether one is offered where a student already lives. That is part of the premise behind California's community college baccalaureate programs: allowing community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees in fields tied to regional workforce needs and providing another pathway for students for whom a traditional university route may not be practical.

SB 960 (Cabaldon) and **AB 2694** (Alvarez) would expand that authority, including by creating a pathway for community colleges to offer programs similar to those at a nearby California State University campus when the CSU program has been impacted for three consecutive years.[12] The two-bill package passed the Legislature on August 31 and is awaiting action by the governor.[13]

The two measures are legally interlocked: each is drafted contingent on the enactment of the other, so **neither takes effect alone and a veto of either would nullify both.**

But the package that reached the governor looks substantially different from the one community colleges initially supported. Late amendments created a tiered system that limits how many new baccalaureate programs a district may offer based in part on its existing rates of degree completion and transfer. They also reduced the overall cap on baccalaureate programs, added restrictions affecting fully online programs and imposed additional requirements for program review and approval.[12] **The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office withdrew its support and opposed the final package, while CSU supported the compromise.**

That opposition matters because of what it may signal for the governor's decision. Newsom has declined to expand community college degree authority before. In October 2025 he vetoed **AB 1400** (Soria), which would have authorized ten districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. His veto message noted that the state had already committed $60 million annually through 2029 to partnerships between community colleges and universities that already offer the degree, and that both systems hold expanded authority to offer programs outside their traditional roles so long as they do not duplicate existing ones. He encouraged community colleges to focus on implementing the degrees current law already permits.[14]

SB 960 and AB 2694 ask for something closer to the opposite: broader authority and an explicit basis for offering a program that duplicates an impacted CSU offering. **With the Chancellor's Office now opposed and the two bills contingent on one another, a veto of either would leave current law unchanged.**

What the Evidence Shows

Behind the disagreement is a larger question about what community college baccalaureates accomplish for students. The evidence that students can succeed in these programs is promising. A 2023 UCLA Civil Rights Project analysis found that **67 percent of students graduated within two years of beginning upper-division coursework and 78 percent within three years.** The researchers argue that community college baccalaureates have considerable potential to expand bachelor's degree attainment and close racial equity gaps.[15]

There is also growing evidence that these programs serve students who look different from the traditional bachelor's degree population.[16]

	Community college baccalaureate graduates	Bachelor's degree graduates nationally
Age 25 or older	**70%**	28%
Black or Latinx	**40%**	26%

Source: Meza & Vo (2026), Community College Baccalaureate Association.

Qualitative research offers additional insights. Interviews with community college baccalaureate students have found that many are working adults with family responsibilities who choose these programs because of their proximity, affordability, familiarity and flexibility.[17]

What the Evidence Does Not Settle

What is harder to establish is the counterfactual: **how many of these students would have earned a bachelor's degree somewhere else if the community college option did not exist?** The Legislative Analyst's Office raised that question in its evaluation of California's original pilot. Early participants were more demographically similar to successful community college transfer students than to the broader population at their colleges. At the same time, students interviewed by the LAO frequently described themselves as place-bound and unable to relocate to attend a university. The LAO therefore concluded that it was unclear whether the programs were expanding access to bachelor's degrees or shifting some students from existing university pathways.[18]

The newer evidence gives more reason to believe that community college baccalaureates are reaching students for whom traditional university pathways may be difficult or unrealistic. But it does not fully resolve the question the LAO raised. High completion rates tell us that students can succeed once they enroll. The demographic and qualitative evidence tells us something important about whom these programs serve and why students choose them. **Neither, by itself, tells us how many additional bachelor's degrees are being produced because the community college option exists.**

> **Why the Distinction Matters**
>
> If the purpose of the community college baccalaureate is to make a bachelor's degree attainable for students whom the existing system does not adequately serve, then success should be measured not only by how many programs are created or degrees awarded. It should also be measured by whether those programs are extending bachelor's degree opportunities to students and communities for whom they would otherwise remain out of reach.

SECTION 3 · WHO THE INSTITUTION SERVES

State Designations in the Shadow of Federal Retreat

California has already started to define more explicitly what it means for an institution to be "serving." In 2024, the state established the **California Black-Serving Institution (BSI)** designation through SB 1348 (Bradford). To qualify, institutions must meet an enrollment threshold—either at least 10 percent Black enrollment or 1,500 Black students—and demonstrate, through an application, how they are supporting Black student success. **The designation was designed to recognize not just where Black students enroll, but also institutions that make an intentional commitment to serving them.**[19]

Two bills now before the governor would extend that approach. **SB 1255** (Reyes) would establish a California Hispanic-Serving Institution designation, while **AB 2374** (Fong) would create a parallel designation for institutions serving Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.[20] Both build on the BSI model by asking institutions to show more than enrollment numbers. Applicants must report student outcomes and describe their goals, strategies, resources and institutional practices for serving the populations for which they seek recognition. SB 1255 would establish an eight-member governing board and make designations renewable every five years; implementation is contingent in part by a state appropriation. AB 2374 also establishes a governing board and a five-year renewable designation.[20]

Why the Timing Matters

The bills come at a time when **federal support for Minority-Serving Institutions has become increasingly uncertain.** In 2025, the U.S. Department of Education discontinued several discretionary grant programs supporting MSIs, including programs serving Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students, while the federal Hispanic-Serving Institution program has faced legal and political challenges. The authors of SB 1255 and AB 2374 have explicitly described the measures as a response to that changing federal environment and as an extension of the model California first established for Black-Serving Institutions.[21]

That state model is meaningfully different from the federal approach. Federal HSI status, for example, depends largely on enrollment and institutional eligibility requirements; an institution qualifies as an HSI when at least 25 percent of its full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment is Hispanic, along with other statutory requirements.[22] **California's approach asks institutions to show what they are actually doing to support the students they enroll.**

What "Serving" Means

That question has been central to research on institutional "servingness." Garcia, Núñez, and Sansone argue that servingness encompasses student outcomes and experiences, internal organizational practices and the external conditions that shape institutions.[23] **In other words, enrolling a historically-underserved population is not the same as organizing an institution around that population's success.** California's BSI designation, and now the proposed HSI and AANHPI designations, move state policy closer to that distinction.

Recognition Is Not Capacity

Designation and capacity are not the same thing. A state designation can establish expectations, recognize institutions doing the work and create a framework for accountability. However, **it does not, by itself, provide the sustained resources that institutions may need** to change curricula, strengthen advising and student supports, build data capacity or develop structures needed to serve students well. As federal MSI resources become less certain, the resource question becomes even more important. SB 1255 itself is contingent on a future appropriation. Whether these designations become a meaningful tool for institutional change will depend in part on whether the expectations attached to them are matched by resources.

AB 1641 (Jackson) addresses a different form of institutional recognition. Rather than creating another serving designation, it would amend state law to formally include tribally operated colleges and universities located in California within the state's Master Plan for Higher Education.[24] The bill raises a related question about which institutions and student populations are recognized within California's higher education structure in the first place.

> **Recognition, and What Follows It**
>
> California is building a state-level approach to recognizing institutions that serve historically marginalized student populations. The BSI designation provided the blueprint, and SB 1255 and AB 2374 would extend it at a moment when the federal role is receding. Whether recognition is matched by the resources and institutional changes needed to improve students' experiences and outcomes remains an open question.

SECTION 4 · THE CONDITIONS OF STAYING ENROLLED

Foster and System-Involved Youth: Timing, Transitions and Staying Enrolled

Getting into college is only one part of the problem for students with foster care experience. California's own longitudinal data make that clear. Nearly 62 percent of participants in the CalYOUTH study had enrolled in college by around age 23, but only 9.6 percent had completed a two- or four-year degree.[25] **The gap between enrollment and completion points to a different student success problem: what happens after students arrive.**

62%
of CalYOUTH participants had enrolled in college by around age 23

9.6%
had completed a two- or four-year degree by around age 23

Several measures before the governor address specific places where that trajectory can break down. **AB 2766** (Ahrens) focuses on housing and registration. It expands priority housing protections for foster youth and students experiencing homelessness, addresses housing deposits and fees that come due before financial aid is available and strengthens priority registration for foster youth.[26] **AB 2768** (Ahrens) addresses the same timing problem more broadly by requiring participating institutions to defer unpaid enrollment fees and costs for eligible foster youth until their initial financial aid disbursement.[27]

The Timing Problem

That timing issue is easy to overlook. **A student may have enough financial aid on paper to cover college and still be unable to produce a housing deposit or institutional payment weeks before that aid arrives.** For students who cannot rely on family to bridge the gap, the timing of aid can matter almost as much as its amount. AB 2766 and AB 2768 treat that mismatch as an institutional problem rather than leaving students to solve it themselves.

California has also begun investing earlier in the pipeline. **AB 2508** (McCarty), enacted in 2024, expanded CalKIDS eligibility so that foster youth in grades 1-12 can receive state-funded college savings accounts, rather than limiting eligibility to first-grade foster youth. The 2025–26 state budget provided $6.1 million in one-time funding to establish those additional accounts.[28] Although different in purpose from the higher education measures, the policy extends the state's attention to college affordability further upstream.

Transitions and Lost Academic Credit

AB 1659 (Ransom) addresses another important factor in student success: the transition between juvenile court schools and local school districts. The bill requires greater coordination around students returning from court schools, including designated transition liaisons and timelines for determining and awarding full and partial academic credit.[29] Those requirements may sound administrative, but the problem they address is consequential. **When records do not move, credits are not recognized or reenrollment is delayed, mobility through the juvenile justice system can translate directly into lost academic progress.**

Young people with juvenile justice contact often move across institutions with different records, requirements, and responsibilities. Each handoff can result in coursework disappearing, enrollment being delayed or students disengaging altogether. A named liaison cannot eliminate those disruptions, but it does establish responsibility for making sure a student gets from one institution to the next without losing academic momentum.

One important lesson from these measures is that persistence is shaped by more than academic preparation or student motivation. A housing payment due before financial aid arrives, a missed course registration window, or credits lost during a school transition can each disrupt a student's educational path. For students without family resources or institutional advocates to support them, an ordinary administrative process can become a barrier to persistence.

Enough, or a More Coordinated Approach?

The measures before the governor address several of those points directly. The question worth following is whether removing individual barriers is enough—or whether California ultimately needs a more coordinated approach to the conditions that shape educational continuity for foster and system-involved students.

SECTION 5 · WHETHER MONEY ARRIVES IN TIME

Financial Aid: Addressing Timing, but Not Adequacy

For many students, financial aid determines whether college is financially possible. But **how well that aid works depends on both how much students receive and whether the money is available when they need it.** A 2023 California Student Aid Commission survey of financial aid applicants found high levels of basic needs insecurity among respondents.[30]

Community colleges	California State University	University of California
65% reported housing insecurity	**52%** reported housing insecurity	**27%** reported housing insecurity

Financial aid applicants, 2023. Source: California Student Aid Commission.

A separate 2023 survey of students at 88 California community colleges found that **58 percent experienced housing insecurity and 24 percent experienced homelessness.**[31]

When Aid Arrives Late

AB 2422 (Caloza) focuses on what happens when financial aid is delayed. Beginning in 2027–28, the bill would require CSU, community college districts and specified private institutions—and have requested the University of California system—to extend enrollment and payment deadlines for students whose financial aid is delayed for reasons outside their control. It would also protect those students from being dropped from courses, charged late fees or interest or subjected to administrative or transcript holds while they wait.[32]

Having financial aid and having money available when a bill is due are not the same thing. A processing delay, institutional error or delayed disbursement can leave a student technically funded but unable to pay an immediate bill. Students with savings or family support may be able to cover that gap temporarily. Students without those resources may not. AB 2422 places more of the responsibility for addressing that delay on institutions rather than students.

Whether the Aid Is Enough

But getting aid to students on time does not answer the question of whether the aid is enough. **SB 1006** (Padilla) would have addressed that issue by increasing the Cal Grant B access award over time. The award helps low-income students pay for non-tuition expenses such as food, housing, transportation, books and supplies, but **its maximum remains $1,648 per year.** SB 1006 would have indexed the award to inflation beginning in 2027–28.[33]

The bill passed the Senate Education Committee 7–0 but was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.[34] So while legislation addressing delayed aid made it through the Legislature, **the proposal to keep the Cal Grant B access award from losing value over time did not.**

Both Problems Matter

Aid that arrives after a student has been dropped from classes does little good in that moment. But getting an award to a student on time does not make it sufficient to cover food, housing, transportation and other costs of attending college. California has taken on the first problem this session—the second remains.

SECTION 6 · WHAT FOLLOWS

What We Are Watching

The Legislature has finished its work for the year, but the governor has not. **The first thing to watch is what happens to these bills between now and September 30.** Some may be signed, others vetoed. Those decisions will determine which of the changes discussed in this brief actually move forward.

If they become law, the next questions are about implementation. Across the five areas in this brief, California is changing some of the conditions that shape students' educational paths: who gets access to college coursework in high school, whether a bachelor's degree is available where students live, what institutions must demonstrate to be recognized as serving historically marginalized populations, whether foster and system-involved students lose momentum during transitions and whether financial aid works when students need it. Those are the same conditions the brief identifies at the outset as central to access, persistence and completion.

If the Bills Become Law

- **Dual enrollment.** Does removing the principal recommendation and other administrative barriers under AB 1871 change who participates in CCAP? As participation grows, do advising and academic supports keep pace?
- **Community college baccalaureates.** Do SB 960 and AB 2694 reach students for whom a university pathway would otherwise be difficult or unavailable? Or do they mostly change where students earn a bachelor's degrees?
- **State serving designations.** If SB 1255 and AB 2374 are signed, what do institutions actually do to earn and maintain the designations? Do resources to support implementation follow the expectations the state is setting?
- **Foster and system-involved youth.** Do the housing, financial aid, registration and transition provisions reduce the kinds of disruptions that can knock students off course? And can institutions absorb the additional responsibilities these bills create?
- **Financial aid.** Does AB 2422 reduce the number of students who face enrollment or financial penalties because their aid is delayed? And with SB 1006 stalled, what happens to the value of the Cal Grant B access award over time?

For now, the immediate question is which of these measures the governor signs. **After that, the more important question is whether students experience any real difference because of them.**

The brief begins with the premise that student success depends heavily on the conditions institutions and public policy create around students. **The coming months and years will show whether the changes considered this session make those conditions more supportive of students' ability to access, persist in and complete college.**

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SECTION 8 · REFERENCE

Appendix: Bills Discussed

Bill	Author	Subject	Status
AB 1871	Fong	Dual enrollment: CCAP partnerships	Enrolled Sep 4; not yet presented
AB 2248	Hoover	Educational counseling: CCGI	Presented to governor Aug 28
SB 1255	Reyes	State Hispanic-Serving Institution designation	Presented to governor Sep 4
AB 2374	Fong	State AANHPI-Serving Institution designation	Presented to governor Sep 3
AB 1641	Jackson	Tribal colleges in the Master Plan	Presented to governor Sep 4
AB 2766	Ahrens	Student housing: foster and homeless youth	Presented to governor Aug 27
AB 2768	Ahrens	Financial aid: fee deferral, foster youth	Presented to governor Sep 3
AB 1659	Ransom	Juvenile court school transition planning	Presented to governor Sep 3
AB 2508	McCarty	CalKIDS: foster youth college savings	Enacted 2024
AB 2422	Caloza	Delayed financial aid awards: extensions	Presented to governor Aug 28
SB 761	Ashby	CalFresh eligibility for college students	Enacted 2025
SB 960	Cabaldon	CCC baccalaureate expansion (with AB 2694)	Presented to governor Sep 10
AB 2694	Alvarez	CCC baccalaureate expansion (with SB 960)	Enrolled Sep 4; not yet presented
DIED WITHOUT A FLOOR VOTE — ALL ON APPROPRIATIONS SUSPENSE FILES			
AB 731	Fong	Dual enrollment: CCAP partnerships	Held, Senate Appropriations
SB 1006	Padilla	Cal Grant B access award indexed to inflation	Senate Ed 7-0; held, Sen. Appropriations

Statuses verified September 12, 2026. As of that date the governor had taken no action on any measure before him; his deadline is September 30. “Not yet presented” indicates the final vote is taken and the enrolled bill has not yet been delivered to the governor, so no action clock has begun.

SECTION 9 · REFERENCE

Methodology

This brief is a selective reading of measures consequential for equity and student success. It is not a survey of the 2025–26 session, and it does not recommend action on any bill.

Bill statuses were verified on September 12, 2026 against official legislative records for the 2025–26 California legislative session, covering enrollment and presentation actions dated August 21 through September 10, supplemented by individual bill histories and committee analyses. Vote counts are as recorded on final passage or, where indicated, on committee action. Sources for all research and legislative claims appear in the endnotes.

Because several measures remained before the governor at the time of writing, readers should confirm final action on any bill before relying on its status here.

Terminology follows the author's usage rather than that of every source. *Latinx* is used throughout; the enrollment data reported here come from the Public Policy Institute of California, which uses *Latino*. *Hispanic* appears only where it names a federal or state statutory designation.

AI DISCLOSURE

Generative AI tools were used to support the design and production of this brief and as an editorial aid for grammar, clarity and accessibility for a broad audience. The author developed the analysis, interpretation, arguments and substantive content and takes full responsibility for the final text.

ABOUT THE USC PULLIAS CENTER

The mission of the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education is to bring a multidisciplinary perspective to complex social, political and economic issues in higher education. Our work is devoted to the key issues of college access, retention and accountability for underserved students—and the effectiveness of the colleges and universities that serve them. Both directly and through our research, we engage with institutional leaders, policymakers and the community at large to address the major challenges in educational equity today.

Founded in 1995 as the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, the Earl and Pauline Pullias Center for Higher Education was established in 2012 with a generous bequest from the Pullias Family estate. The Center is housed at the USC Rossier School of Education and is led by Co-Directors Zoë Corwin and Royel M. Johnson.

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