

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2528 (Solache)
As Introduced February 20, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Increases the maximum monthly compensation a community college district may provide members of the district's local governing board.

Major Provisions

- 1) Permits a community college district, that is not located in San Francisco and has a full – time student population of more than 60,000, to increase the annual compensation for each trustee of the district's local governing board from a maximum amount of \$1,500 to \$4,500. Requires a trustee to attend every meeting of the board in order to receive full compensation; however the trustee may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the trustee.
- 2) Permits a community college district, with a full – time student population between 60,000 and 25,000, to increase the annual compensation for each trustee of the district's local governing board from a maximum amount of \$750 to \$3,000. Requires a trustee to attend every meeting of the board in order to receive full compensation; however permits the trustee may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the trustee.
- 3) Permits a community college district, with a full – time student population between 25,000 and 10,000, to increase the annual compensation for each trustee of the district's local governing board from a maximum amount of \$240 to \$1,200. Requires a trustee to attend every meeting of the board in order to receive full compensation; however permits the trustee may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the trustee.
- 4) Permits a community college district, with a full – time student population between 1,000 and 150, to increase the annual compensation for each trustee of the district's local governing board from a maximum amount of \$120 to \$600. Requires a trustee to receive to attend every meeting of the board in order to receive full compensation; however the trustee may receive a pro-rated compensation based on the number of meetings attended by the trustee.
- 5) Stipulates in determining the "full-time student" population, the community college district will use the student population from the prior academic year to determine the maximum compensation.

COMMENTS

Governance structure of the California Community Colleges (CCC). The CCC system includes 116 community colleges and is the largest system of higher education in the United States serving 2.2 million students in the 2024-2025 academic year. The CCC was established as part of the state's tripartite structure to provide postsecondary education for the people of California. In the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education (Master Plan), the vision for the CCC was established as an open access institution, accepting 100% of applicants and providing vocational,

associate degrees, and general education for the purpose of transferring to a four-year university. The governing structure of the CCC was also established within the Master Plan and was mirrored after the governing structure for the K-12 system. The CCC is governed by both a statewide Board of Governors and a locally elected governing board (local governing board) who govern geographical areas known as CCC districts. CCC districts are comprised of at least one community college but can have more than one community college within the geographical boundary of the district. The role of the local governing board is to establish, maintain, operate, and govern each community college within its district boundary. The number of colleges represented in a single district varies throughout the state; some districts represent a single district whereas the largest, Los Angeles Community College District, represents nine colleges.

Compensation for local governing boards. Each community college district is authorized by the Education Code to provide monthly compensation for their trustees. The decision to ascribe monthly compensation lies with the governing board; however, the maximum amount a governing board can initially decide to pay itself is limited by the Education Code. As described in existing law, the maximum monthly amount is determined by the number of full-time equivalent students enrolled in the community college district. The Education Code in addition to the maximum compensation allows a community college district to annually increase the total amount by 5% ending approval by the governing board. Therefore, the maximum amount could be higher than what is limited in the Education Code, if the governing board votes in the affirmative and the voting population of the community college district does not seek to reverse the decision. The compensation as listed in the Education Code does not include the per diem each trustee is provided for travel to and from the board meetings nor does it include the health care benefits some community college districts provide their trustees.

Since local governing boards have been permitted to increase compensation by 5% since 1990, the limits in the Education Code do not accurately depict the actual compensation each trustee is receiving. Each year community college district reports the compensation of elected officials to the California State Controller. In data pulled for the 2024 fiscal year, the total wages provided to trustees was \$1.9 million with an additional \$3.8 million in retirement and health care contributions. The range of actual annual compensation was vast, with some earning no wages and only health care contributions and others earning up to \$37,922. According to data from the California State Controller, 11 community colleges are providing wages above the limits, as described in the Education Code.

According to the Author

As explained by the author, "serving as a trustee is a demanding role that requires a great deal of time, research, training, public engagement, and commitment. AB 2528 will enable community college districts the ability to update trustee compensation thresholds to help retain experienced board members and encourage more community members to consider running for vacant positions on local boards."

The author further contends the need for the increase in the compensation as, "the current compensation not been adjusted in over 40 years. In many districts, outdated compensation levels make it harder for individuals who are supporting themselves and their families to consider serving. AB 2528 will help boards with the required financial capacity to modestly and responsibly increase their compensation to keep pace with inflation, while preserving public process. Importantly, helping to ensure students and their families are represented in key decisions affecting community college districts and that opportunities to serve remain accessible

to those of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. When governing boards better reflect the lived experiences and diversity of the communities they serve, they are more likely to adopt policies that address barriers to educational access and success. Strengthening representation at the governance level ultimately supports more inclusive decision-making and policies that advance equity across the higher education system."

Arguments in Support

As explained by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), "AB 2528 modernizes existing law to better reflect the responsibilities of board service while preserving the principle of local control. The bill authorizes community college governing boards to increase trustee compensation for members who fulfill their duties and attend required meetings. Compensation limits would be adjusted based on district size, increasing the current cap from \$120 to up to \$1,500. Importantly, the bill does not mandate increases; it provides local boards with flexibility to determine appropriate compensation within established limits.

As further explained by LACCD, "The seven elected trustees of LACCD oversee nine colleges and two educational service centers, dedicating significant time each month to district governance. Their responsibilities include budget and facilities oversight, policy development, community engagement, and complex legal and personnel decisions. Statewide, community college trustees oversee institutions that serve more than 2 million students. As governance responsibilities have grown in complexity, so too have the demands placed on these locally elected officials. Updating compensation provisions helps ensure that board service remains accessible to individuals from diverse professional and socioeconomic backgrounds and supports strong, representative leadership. At a time when California is focused on expanding college access, strengthening workforce development, and improving student outcomes, effective local governance is essential. AB 2528 provides a thoughtful and balanced update that supports these goals while maintaining local discretion."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed nonfiscal by Legislative Counsel.

VOTES

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 7-3-0

YES: Fong, Boerner, Jackson, Muratsuchi, Patel, Ramos, Sharp-Collins

NO: DeMaio, Macedo, Tangipa

UPDATED

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