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California Community College Basic Skills

Mission: California Community Colleges (CCCs) offer two principal kinds of basic skills programs:

- For-credit “developmental education” programs that have the goal of addressing basic skills weaknesses of students seeking to enter degree- and/or transfer-applicable college courses; and
- Non-credit basic skills courses, equivalent to those offered by the California Department of Education’s Adult Education Program (AEP), for students with a range of goals.

Funding: Seventeen colleges receive federal Workforce Investment Act Title II funds from the AEP, but most of the CCC funding for basic skills is from state and local monies. Credit basic skills courses receive the highest level of funding (\$4,565 for each FTES in 2009-10); three-fifths of CCC basic skills enrollment is in this category. Non-credit basic skills courses are funded at a rate of \$3,232 in 2009-10.

Beginning in 2007-08, colleges were also eligible to receiving funding from the Basic

Skills Initiative (BSI), a program supported by the General Fund and designed to strengthen basic skills education and improve student achievement. The BSI was cut by 32 percent in 2009-10 to roughly \$20 million and was funded at this same level in 2010-11; the cutbacks to the general CCC budgets reduced available FTE funding for basic skills programs.

Administration, Governance, and Service

Delivery System: Community colleges and their basic skills programs are governed and administered locally. All offer for-credit “developmental education”; some have large non-credit basic skills programs while others offer little or no non-credit basic skills. Two community colleges (San Diego and San Francisco) are the designated AEP provider in their region, that is, for historic reasons they offer the AEP program rather than the K-12 school district.

Population Served: Historically, the community colleges have enrolled approximately two-fifths of California’s basic skills students and CDE’s AEP has enrolled three-fifths. However, the CCC share may be increasing since the 2009 budget agreement allowed local K-12 school

districts to use adult education funds for other educational purposes.

The CCCs serve three types of basic skills students:

- Recent high school graduates who aim to earn a credential or transfer to a four-year institution but need help with specific skills, including ESL. More than half CCC basic skills students are in this group.
- Adults who have been out of school for a few years and want to earn a vocational certificate or associate's degree or transfer to a four-year institution but have weak basic skills. One-fifth of basic skills students are in this group.
- Older adults who have significant skill deficits – often Latino English-language-learners – who may not intend to earn a certificate, degree, or transfer. More than one-fifth of basic skill students are in this group.

Services: Basic skills classes are in English, math, or English as a Second Language (ESL) and are offered at multiple levels of competency. In the AEP, Adult Basic Education (ABE) is roughly equivalent to grades 1 through 8; Adult Secondary Education is roughly equivalent to grades 9 through 12; and preparation for a high school diploma or GED also is offered. In the CCCs, colleges vary widely in the number of basic skill levels offered.

Accountability: Beginning in 2007, the CCCs implemented an annual report called Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARRC) which focuses almost exclusively on credit students and provides an overview of demographics and outcomes. In 2008, the Chancellor's office added a companion Basic Skills Accountability report that includes three kinds of metrics: student demographics; workload metrics; and student progress metric, both short- and long-term.