



FOR MEDIA CONTACT

News Media Contacts:

Maria Luisa Veloz | velozml@laccd.edu | (626) 390-8432

Sophia Kwong Kim | sophia.kwong@asm.ca.gov | (916) 319-2049

Denise Lopez | denise.lopez@mozaicmc.com | (559) 393-3398

Los Angeles Community College District Applauds Governor Newsom Signing Bill Expanding Non-English Language Learning Opportunities

AB 1096 (Mike Fong) allows community colleges to offer non-English-language courses without requiring simultaneous ESL enrollment.

LOS ANGELES (October 19, 2023) — The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) thanks Governor Gavin Newsom for signing AB 1096 (Mike Fong). AB 1096 authorizes community colleges to offer courses taught in languages other than English without requiring students to concurrently enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Previously, students wishing to pursue coursework taught in different languages—both for credit and noncredit—were required to take an ESL class concurrently, often straining resources and adding an extra hurdle to completing their studies or career advancement in a timely basis. Students can still take both courses together if they choose, but it will no longer be required.

“As the Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee and a former trustee of the Los Angeles Community College District, I thank Governor Newsom for recognizing the huge impact that AB 1096 will have on students. Our community colleges should serve and advance opportunities for all people, including our immigrant communities. I also thank LACCD for sponsoring the bill and working hard to advance the bill in the Legislature,” said Assemblymember Mike Fong (D-Alhambra), Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

By removing this requirement, prospective students will see immediate benefits, including not just monolingual students looking to enhance or advance their education but also students who already hold degrees or certifications from other countries and want to advance their careers, as well as English-speaking students who wish to improve their technical skills in their native language.

“Our students have spoken loud and clear about their desire to sign up for more classes taught in languages other than English without having to also spend valuable time, money, and effort taking an ESL class at the same time,” said David Vela, President, LACCD Board of Trustees. “This bill being signed is a win for our students, communities, and workforce here in Los Angeles County.”

The 2020 United States Census results indicate more than one in four California residents were born outside of the United States. In Los Angeles alone, more than 56% of the 10 million residents speak languages other than English at home.

“Today is a great day for students who did not grow up in English-speaking households to be able to pursue all of their dreams,” said LACCD Board Member Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D. “With this bill, students can advance their education and learn new skills without being forced into unnecessary ESL classes.”

The Los Angeles Community College District recently surveyed thousands of students, and the results indicated that 66% of respondents were interested in taking a course taught in a language other than English. Most of these students expressed interest in studies related to Education, Child Development, Family Services, and Business and Finance. One in three students responded that a new, better, or higher-paying job was the reason they would take these courses.

Based on what LACCD learned from the survey, the District launched a pilot program in the Winter 2023 intersession that offered 15 in-person and online noncredit courses at five colleges, and they saw the interest grow.

This past Spring, 2023, LACCD expanded the pilot to 60-course offerings at seven colleges; their experience has been extremely positive. Courses in four languages are offered, including Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, and Korean. There were over 1,000 students enrolled in native language courses with students often enrolling in multiple classes, accounting for over 2,300 separate class enrollments and an average sixty-six (66%) fill rate. More importantly, of the 1040 students, forty-four percent (44%) were first-time community college students. This Fall 2023 Semester, LACCD is offering eighty-eight (88) in-language courses, which accounts for 1,500 students, and nearly 2,000 separate class enrollments.

Community colleges currently offer courses in languages other than English only for noncredit purposes, even with the ESL requirement. AB 1096 not only removes this excess burden but allows students to take classes for credit on advanced, technical subjects they may be more easily able to master in other languages.

LACCD’s advocacy team worked tirelessly to secure this big win, another significant equity-first policy success that gives students the freedom to learn in their native language, given their rich diversity of backgrounds.

“I appreciate the work of our advocates, supporters, legislators, and Governor in getting AB 1096 across the finish line and providing real benefits to our students,” said Nichelle Henderson, First Vice President, LACCD Board of Trustees. “This will help more of our brilliant students pursue their dreams and expand their knowledge in many areas.”

“This bill is a win for language justice and is a welcome sign for scores of current and new students who are eager to learn in their native language and contribute to our economy with enhanced skills,” said LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. “I want to thank the Governor and Assemblymember Mike Fong for their pragmatic decision to forward and sign this bill that expands educational opportunities for students across the state.”

AB 1096 received strong support from several colleges, labor, and affinity groups through the legislative process and was officially signed into law by Governor Newsom in Sacramento on October 9. The bill will take effect on January 1, 2024.

###

About the Los Angeles Community College District

We are the Colleges of Los Angeles! LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation's largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has provided an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California's diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/LACCD>, @LACCD, and on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/laccd> @laccd and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.