

CSU trustees delay formal vote on requiring extra high school class

Third-party analysis on requirement's potential impact will be conducted before vote is held.

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The California State University is delaying a vote to formally approve a plan to require [an fourth year of high school math or another quantitative reasoning class for freshman admissions](#), allowing for more time to study the impact of the change.

CSU's trustees this month will instead vote to begin the process for implementing the proposal, which would require that high school CSU applicants complete a fourth year of high school math or a quantitative reasoning course, such as statistics or computer science.

The decision to put off a vote does not change the plan to have [the requirement go into effect in the fall of 2027](#), impacting students who graduate from high school in 2027 or later. The delay, however, means

the board won't officially authorize the change by amending California's Code of Regulations, a required step before making any admissions changes.

Instead, they will now wait until spring 2022 to hold that vote. In the meantime, CSU plans to conduct an independent analysis of the proposal and its impact — a victory for opponents who have called for such a study before the trustees vote on the proposal. Depending on the results of the analysis, the timeline for implementing the requirement could be extended “or halted,” according to a [copy of the agenda for the Jan. 29 trustee meeting](#).

“If we learn more things with this third-party analysis, we can continue to make alterations and improvements to this proposal, so when it finally comes into play in 2027, it's as strong and as helpful as it can possibly be,” CSU Chancellor Tim White, [who is retiring this year](#), told EdSource.

White and other CSU administrators have said that requiring a fourth year of high school math would better prepare students for college courses and thus improve CSU's graduation rates. They also say it will better prepare students for the workforce, which White said is going to be “more and more influenced by technology and the ability to quantitatively think.”

But opponents — which include lawmakers, several of the state's largest school districts and dozens of civil rights groups — [have said](#) many schools lack the teachers to offer the courses that would be required under the proposal and that those schools disproportionately enroll black, Latino and low-income students. CSU administrators have said they will exempt students who can't access the required courses and have pledged \$10 million to double the number of STEM teachers prepared by CSU, though opponents have called that investment insufficient.

Opponents such as Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for College Opportunity, one of the advocacy groups leading the opposition movement, applauded CSU's decision to move forward with a third-party analysis.

“I think it's absolutely the appropriate path forward that before making any significant change to admissions requirements, which impact hundreds of thousands of California students, they do an independent rigorous analysis that can justify whether the change is actually necessary and whether or not it's going to have a disparate impact for students that may not have access to the courses required,” Siqueiros said.

Under the new timeline, the next chancellor will submit a progress report to the trustees in March 2021 and a final report by January 2022 that includes the results of the independent analysis. The report will also include clarification on the exemption process for students who attend schools without sufficient courses, an update on efforts to double the number of STEM teachers prepared annually by CSU and

more information on the role of a steering committee that will be convened to provide guidance in implementing the requirement.

Comments

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▶ **Dan Plonsey**

5 days ago



I'm a high school math teacher. I was part of a Bay Area group of CSUs, Community Colleges, and high schools, called "Bridging the Gap" which examined the problem of students who end up dropping out of CSUs or CCs because they can't make it through required college math classes. We ended up deciding to encourage students to choose a fourth year of high school math. That fourth year could be a quantitative reasoning class

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Mr. Isaac

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It is dishonest for CSU pretend they want more math for academic reasons when the truth is their reason are economic. CSU needs to reduce the number of freshman it accepts because of budget cuts. Raising the math bar from "4 years *recommended*" to "4 years *required*" is an easy way to lop off thousands of eligible applicants. The trustees need an ethics class.