



Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP) Program Cancellation Update

The San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) first implemented the Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP) in the Fall 2022 semester, with a pilot program starting at San Diego Mesa College. During the Spring 2023 semester, San Diego City and Miramar College joined in onboarding students. The year 2023-24 was the second full year of this ten-year program. Districtwide implementation of LAEP was supported by Educational Services through the Districtwide LAEP Workgroup.

This document provides an update on the Governor's cancellation of the LAEP program, impacts of this cancellation, recommendations for action, and an overview of the most recent 2023-24 accomplishments of the program.

Board Goal Alignment

The 2024-25 Board Goals include a commitment to increasing investment in career services including expansion of learning aligned employment programming. While LAEP has been cancelled, commitment to learning aligned employment initiatives through investing in internship programming, work experience, and job placement is recommended.

Recommendation:

- Review local GFU and Grant investments in Career Services against the recently completed local Career Services assessments and strategic plans.
- Prioritize fundraising and new grant exploration for internship funding. Both direct funds for students and funding for infrastructure development and management of internship support services are needed.

Cancellation of LAEP

Unfortunately, LAEP has been cancelled as part of the [California State Budget for 2024-25](#), recently signed by the governor, effective at the end of the 2023-24 Academic Year. This program cancellation by the governor's office results in a loss of direct student employment funding of \$6,328,024 districtwide, in addition to a loss of \$341,258 in administrative funds (total of \$6,669,282).

Per California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) email "All unused Student Funds and Administrative Cost Allocation Funds (ACA), along with any Interest Earned must be returned to the Commission."

Recommendation: Advocate for the retention of the interest earned. There is no mention of the interest earned within the budget or guidance from the governor's office, yet the CSAC has asked for it to be returned.

A return of the interest earned would result in an additional loss of \$284,409.14 districtwide.

By retaining the interest earned, funds may be utilized as a stopgap measure while new funding options are explored. Without the interest earned funds, placement in internships will be severely impacted if not fully eliminated within at least two of the three colleges.

College LAEP implementation leads are not alone in recommending retention of the interest earned. Through the Statewide LAEP Workgroup, we learned that other institutions have expressed interest in retaining these funds.

Impacts of Closing the LAEP

LAEP is SDCCCD's primary source of funding internship placements across the three credit colleges.

LAEP's student employment funding, Administrative Cost Allowance, and interest earned have been crucial in supporting various educational activities and programs across our credit colleges.

One shining example is San Diego Mesa College's Internship Program (MIP). Programs like MIP, which offer invaluable internship opportunities, career development, and professional growth for students, rely heavily on these financial resources to operate effectively. Returning the interest earnings would place a significant strain on already stretched budgets, potentially hindering the continuation and effectiveness of this program. MIP provides students with practical work experience, skill development workshops, and connections to industry professionals, all of which are vital for their future career success. Losing the financial support from accrued interest could jeopardize the availability and quality of these opportunities, directly impacting students' professional readiness and job placement prospects.

2023-24 Accomplishments

Statewide and National Recognition

SDCCCD's implementation of LAEP has been celebrated at numerous conferences over the past few years and is widely recognized as one of the most successful LAEP implementation models within the CA Community College System.

- District and College-specific LAEP leads are regularly tapped for training, presentations, and coaching sessions by other colleges and practitioners throughout the state.
- San Diego Mesa Impactship Program is a leading best practice model statewide.

Workgroups

The Districtwide LAEP Workgroup provided opportunities to share local updates on implementation efforts and make districtwide commitments for aligned implementation (where appropriate)

- College representation on the workgroup includes Financial Aid, Business Services, Career Education, Career Services, and Job Placement/WBL leads.

- District representation includes District Student Services, District HR, District Business & Finance, District Purchasing & Contracts, District Career Education & Workforce Development.
- Past meeting materials are available on the [District LAEP resource page](#)

Local and Districtwide workgroups continued meeting at both at local and districtwide levels:

- Local
 - City – Every other week
 - Mesa - Monthly
- Districtwide – Once per term

Resources

LAEP implementation was supported through Educational Services. The District team worked closely with the campus LAEP teams, HR, Finance, and Outreach departments to support implementation, establish districtwide procedures, and create shared resources.

- A [District LAEP resource page](#) was developed to document decision making and provide access to districtwide resources.
- A Districtwide LAEP Handbook was created and distributed
- Process flow charts for off campus and on campus placements
- Employer and Student Agreement Templates
- Jira applications for students and potential employers
- [Outreach video for students](#)

Student Placements

During the 2023-24 program year, the LAEP program supported thirty (30) students.

	Research Centers/ Institutions (100%)	Non-Profit (90%)	For-Profit (50%)	TOTAL
City College	2	0	0	2
Mesa College	11	1	1	12
Miramar College	15	0	0	15
Districtwide	28	1	1	30

In comparison to the 2022-23 numbers, that is an 87% increase in the number of students served. *Total placements across both years are available on page 4.*

Reporting

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) has set a deadline of September 30th to report student funds, Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA), and interest earned used for 2023-24. This is to be reported through WebGrants.

- Campus and District Financial Aid support
 - City and Mesa Colleges – Lilibeth Rodriguez, Educational Services
 - Miramar College – Vincent Ngo, Miramar College

Advocacy

The SDCCD has been a statewide leader in advocating for program improvements and the removal of barriers currently tied to statewide LAEP implementation guidance and requirements.

- The five advocacy elements originated by the Districtwide Workgroup were endorsed by SDICCCA, all Community College CEOs in Orange County, RCs from across the state, and over 20 individual institutions.
- Advocacy efforts continued throughout this year with meetings with legislative leadership and CSAC.
- [View June 2023 Advocacy Document here.](#)

LAEP Funds Remaining as of June 30, 2024

The governor's budget includes the return of unspent student funds and administrative funds. CSAC is requesting colleges and universities return the interest earned as well.

Student Funds

Credit College	Allocation	YTD Interest Earned	Allocation + Interest	Spent as of 07/11/2024	Remaining Balance
City College	\$2,536,613	\$111,680.25	\$2,648,293.25	\$(34,859.47)	\$2,613,433.78
Mesa College	\$2,450,276	\$107,202.66	\$2,557,478.66	\$(89,176.78)	\$2,468,301.88
Miramar College	\$1,496,995	\$65,526.23	\$1,562,521.23	\$(31,824.01)	\$1,530,697.22
Total	\$6,483,884	\$284,409.14	\$6,768,293.14	\$(155,860.26)	\$6,612,432.88

Admin Funds

Credit College	Allocation	Spent as of 07/11/2024	Remaining Balance
City College	\$133,506	\$(5,609.29)	\$127,896.71
Mesa College	\$128,962	\$(9,032.77)	\$119,929.23
Miramar College	\$78,790	\$0	\$78,790
Total	\$341,258	\$(14,642.06)	\$326,615.94

Total LAEP Student Placements (2022-23 – 2023-24)

Credit College	Research Centers/ Institutions (100%)	Non-Profit (90%)	For-Profit (50%)	TOTAL
City College	4	0	0	4
Mesa College	19	2	2	23
Miramar College	19	0	0	19
Districtwide	42	2	2	46

Background & Funding

The Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP) is a state work-study program established in the 2021-22 State Budget. This 10-year program offers eligible students at public colleges and universities the opportunity to earn money to help cover their educational costs while gaining education-aligned, career-related employment. LAEP is managed by the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) which provides guidance on eligibility and prioritization, including emphasis on underrepresented student participation. All three SDCCCD credit colleges are participating in the program (currently, noncredit students are not eligible).

LAEP funds allocated to institutions were based on their proportion of Pell Grant recipients and were provided in full.

	Student Funds	Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA)* (5% max)	Total
City College	\$2,536,613.00	\$133,506.00	\$2,670,119.00
Mesa College	\$2,450,276	\$128,962	\$2,579,238.00
Miramar College	\$1,496,995	\$78,790	\$1,575,785.00

**Institutions may use up to 5% of funds it receives for costs related to administering the program and may include: Outreach and marketing, Hiring a NANCE to assist in program administration, Reporting to WebGrants, Program Reconciliation, and Troubleshooting and Campus Support.*