

MAKING FREE COLLEGE PERMANENT IN THE SMCCCD

TIMELINE AND STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

As identified in the new District Strategic Plan: Future Focused, Strategic Initiative #1 includes making Free College permanent in the SMCCCD. This reinvestment in the communities of San Mateo County is one of the top priorities for the District for the 2025-26 year. The original legislation authorizing Free College will sunset on July 1, 2027. This report outlines the timeline, activities, and strategy for adopting new legislation to make Free College permanent in the 2026 legislative cycle.

TIMELINE AND ACTIVITIES

The table below contains important dates, deadlines, and activities that will culminate with the passage of new legislation to make Free College permanent for San Mateo County. The District will work with strategic partners to secure needed support and endorsements for new legislation.

2025	
Date	Activity
July 30, 2025	Board Meeting – Report and discussion of Free College timeline and strategy. Create Ad Hoc Committee for Free College.
August 27, 2025	Board Meeting
September, 2025	Launch Spring 2026 Free College marketing campaign.
September 10, 2025	Board Meeting
September 12, 2025	2025 Legislative Session adjourns.
October 2025	SMCCCD will meet with Senator Becker to propose legislation being introduced in 2026 to make Free College permanent. If Senator Becker agrees, meet with Assembly members Berman & Papan so they can be coauthors.
October 29, 2025	Board Meeting – Present DRAFT SB 893 Report to Board.

November, 2025	Finalize Free College “One-Pager” to share with strategic partners, supporters, and sponsors.
November 19, 2025	Board Meeting
December 10, 2025	Board Meeting
2026	
January 5, 2026	Legislature reconvenes for the 2026 legislative session. Meet with Legislative Leadership and the Chair’s of the Education Committees (Senate and Assembly) to discuss the issue and make sure they’re aware and supportive.
January, 2026	Arrange lobby meetings at the capitol with members of the Senate and Assembly Education/Higher Education Committees to discuss the proposed bill.
January, 2026	Board Meeting – Adopt SB893 Report for Submission to DOF, CCCCO, etc. Adopt a Board resolution in support of new legislation.
February, 2026	Deadline to introduce new legislation for 2026. SMCCCD will release SB 893 Report in early-mid February to coincide with the bill’s introduction. District will arrange a news conference with Becker, Berman, Papan, SMCCCD, students and local groups announcing the bill’s introduction, highlighting the positive data in the SB 893 report, and discussing the student success stories, real world benefits of the program, etc.
February, 2026	Board Meeting
March 1, 2026	SB 893 Report deadline to DOF, CCCCO, and Legislature. Early submission planned for February 1, 2026.
March, 2026	Arrange lobby meetings at the capitol with members of the Education/Higher Education Committees to discuss the bill in advance of the hearing.
March, 2026	Launch Summer/Fall Free College marketing campaign.
March, 2026	Board Meeting
April, 2026	New bill will be heard in the Senate Education Committee.
May, 2026	New bill will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee, voted on by the entire Senate, and advance to the Assembly.



June, 2026	Assembly Higher Education Committee will hear the bill.
August, 2026	Assembly Appropriations Committee will hear the bill and the entire Assembly will vote on the bill.
September, 2026	Governor will sign the bill.
November, 2026	SMCCCD Celebration of Free College.

Table 1

POTENTIAL ENDORSEMENTS AND SUPPORTERS

The District will work to secure endorsements for the new legislation beginning in September 2025. Potential endorsements are included below.

State Legislators	High School Districts
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	County School Board
San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA)	San Mateo County Superintendent
San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce	Public Safety Organizations (Fire, Police, Sheriff)
Student Senate for California Community Colleges	Major Employers and Industry Partners (Genentech, Oracle, San Mateo Credit Union, JobTrain, etc.)
San Mateo City Councils	Others...

Table 2

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions related to this report, please contact Dr. Aaron McVean, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Planning, mcveana@smccd.edu.