

## COVID EW Proposal Summary

The intent of this document is to clarify and summarize requests related to EWs for the Chancellor's Cabinet. This document will forego any discussion about the benefits to both students and the district with respect to refunding student tuition as a function of withdrawals due to COVID as it is assumed that the Chancellor's Cabinet is well versed in these benefits. In short there are two decisions requested of the Chancellor's Cabinet, one of which reached the Cabinet in an unclear manner and one of which is unclear if it made its way to the Cabinet.

### Questions for Consideration:

1. Will the district approve refunding COVID Related EW's for SP21?
2. What should be the deadline for RETROACTIVE COVID EW refunds for SP20, SU20 and FA20?

### Background

Below is a bulleted summary of key related information:

- Executive Order FS 20-02 established that Community College Districts could refund student tuition for COVID related EWs without negative impact to District apportionments. This ability expired at the end of FA20.
- The District is currently allowing for RETROACTIVE requests for a COVID EW for SP20, SU20 and FA 20.
- State Chancellor FAQs as of February 22, 2021 indicated that Districts can continue to refund students due to COVID related EWs. However, this would now negatively impact District apportionments as Districts could no longer adjust their reports for these refunds.

### Requested Decisions

1. Will the district approve refunding COVID related EWs in SP21?

**PROPOSAL: The District will continue to refund students for COVID related EWs in SP21.**

The proposal is for the District to continue to refund COVID EWs in SP21. However, this means that the District has to determine how to fund these refunds in the absence of the state providing funding. There are two fundamental options:

- a. The District funds these refunds out of District funds via a reduction in apportionment.
- b. The District finds alternative funds. CARES/HEERF funds are a potential source of funds. The new regulations associated with HEERF funds allows for the paying of outstanding student balances with student consent. However, it is unclear on the situation where the student does not have an outstanding

balance but qualifies for a COVID EW refund. The nuances of use of CARES/HEERF funds would need confirmation.

It should be noted that a large percentage of District students received the state Promise, which is a tuition waiver. As such, a “refund” to a student whose tuition was waived, may not result in fiscal impact to the district. As the team making this proposal is not familiar with the nuances of accounting with respect to waivers, this would need verification.

2. What should be the deadline for RETROACTIVE COVID EW refunds for SP20, SU20, FA20?

**PROPOSAL: The District establish a deadline of June 30, 2022 by which a student can request a refund for an EW related to COVID for SP20, SU20 and FA20.**

Establishing a deadline by which students must petition for a COVID EW with a refund will limit the timeframe of the potential fiscal liability associated with COVID EW refunds. A deadline set in 2022 allows for the continued diminishment of the COVID pandemic and for many students to recover sufficiently from these impacts to begin to focus again on their education. However, in the interest of providing the most student-centered approach that would give students the broadest range of options, it is recommended that the District consider establishing a June 30, 2023 deadline to allow for those more extremely impacted by the COVID pandemic to have time to recover and refocus on educational related matters.