

Action/Information Item

Programs, Planning and Budget Committee

Consideration of Proposed California Student Opportunity Access Program (Cal-SOAP) Annual Program Plan Process and Criteria to be used to Assess the Cal-SOAP Projects for Funding for the 2008-09 Fiscal Year

If the Governor's proposed 10-percent reduction to Cal-SOAP is enacted in the 2008 Budget Act, Cal-SOAP funding would have been reduced by almost \$3 million, or nearly 34 percent over two years. The Commission's consideration of a methodology for allocating funding thus takes on great significance, especially with respect to basic policy issues, such as whether the proposed \$5.7 million funding level is sufficient to support 16 projects, whether a minimum level of funding is necessary to establish effectiveness in providing services, and if so, the level of that minimum funding, and how to establish effectiveness and compare the effectiveness of projects.

The Commission directed staff to develop a method for allocating funding for the 2008-09 state fiscal year for the California Student Opportunity Access Program (Cal-SOAP). The Commission also requested that staff seek advice and comments from the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee and the Cal-SOAP Project Directors in developing the evaluation process. A Cal-SOAP Advisory Subcommittee joined the Project Directors meeting on March 17, 2008 to discuss the staff's proposed minimum requirements, evaluation criteria, and scoring process. While not necessarily in agreement with staff's proposal, those in attendance did provide constructive suggestions that staff used to develop a proposal.

The Project Directors indicated at the March 17, 2008 meeting, that their recommendation for the allocation of funds for 2008-09 is an across the board 10 percent reduction, which would reduce the minimum allocation from its current year base of \$300,000 to \$270,000. However, the San Diego and Imperial Counties Consortium Project Director offered to take a larger portion of the reduction to maintain the minimum at \$300,000.

Responsible Staff: Janet McDuffie, Acting Chief
Research, Outreach and Public Affairs Division

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Issue Summary

The Commission directed staff to develop a method for allocating funding for the 2008-09 state fiscal year for the California Student Opportunity Access Program (Cal-SOAP). The Commission also requested that staff seek advice and comments from the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee and the Cal-SOAP Project Directors in developing the evaluation process. A Cal-SOAP Advisory Subcommittee joined the Project Directors meeting on March 17, 2008 to discuss the staff's proposed minimum requirements, evaluation criteria, and scoring process. While not necessarily in agreement with staff's proposal, those in attendance did provide constructive suggestions that staff used to develop the proposal being presented today.

The Cal-SOAP program has been in existence since 1978. No system-wide evaluation of the program has been conducted since 1996. The Commission has developed an operational manual and conducted program audits, but has not developed standards for Cal-SOAP. One of the key messages received during the March 17, 2008 meeting, was the need for the Commission to develop standards for the Cal-SOAP program. Staff noted that the Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee's role is to advise the project directors and the Commission on the development and operation of the projects. The development of standards for the Cal-SOAP program is needed and should be addressed by this advisory body during the coming year.

While Cal-SOAP projects must meet statutory requirements, the projects are developed to meet the specific needs existing in their local areas. Due to the Cal-SOAPs historic development and the local governance structure, the implementation of projects have varied regionally depending on the focus of program activities, which have developed in response to local and regional priorities and concerns.

The services provided are also broad and include advising, academic preparation, and financial aid information dissemination. However, consortia approaches to providing these services range from general program information (such as brochures), tutoring, workshops, one-on-one tutoring and advising, and college tours.

Therefore, staff developed an approach to this evaluation and allocation process based on the statutory requirements. The projects should be able to describe their goals, indicate how their services are meeting their goals and how they are measuring their effectiveness. The evaluation and scoring factors are designed to assess each program's quality and effectiveness in meeting the statutory goals.

Evaluation Process

The Cal-SOAP Annual Program Plan (APP) is the project's plan of action for the upcoming fiscal year. The APP document requires program description, data, and narrative on how the program services will be implemented in the project's designated services area. The APP is the primary document supporting the contract between the Commission and the consortium for funding for the Cal-SOAP project.

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Staff has provided extensive instructions in the past to the projects on what to include in the APPs. Staff will revise the instructions, as needed, to ensure that the Project Directors and their Boards are fully informed as to the minimum requirements, the evaluation criteria, and the scoring methodology. In the past, staff found many APPs did not contain all needed information. Staff had to request additional clarification or documentation which led to delays to entering into contracts. Staff stressed to the Projects Directors at the March 17, 2008 meeting, to carefully review the APP instructions to ensure that all required information is included in the submitted APP.

The APP evaluation process is similar to the State Request for Proposal (RFP) process, which includes the following:

1. Minimum Requirements
2. Evaluation Criteria
3. Scoring Process
4. Allocation of Funds
5. Appeal Process

Per the State Contracting Manual, an RFP must be as precise as possible to ensure that all proposals are accomplishing the same goal. An objective evaluation procedure must be used to determine which proposers have complied with the RFP requirements and to whom the contract should be awarded. When an evaluation committee is used, they shall be from the agency soliciting the proposals or awarding the contract. Private consultants may only be used to provide clarification or subject matter expertise to the committee members. If the contract is awarded by a state board or commission, the recommendations of the evaluations committee shall be considered advisory in nature, and the board or commission must make the ultimate decision unless statute expressly permits the board or commission to delegate that responsibility.

Individuals in attendance at the March 17, 2008 meeting suggested that an independent review occur similar to some federal grant programs. However, to be consistent with normal state contracting processes, staff proposes establishing an evaluation committee consisting of a team of Commission staff to review, evaluate, and score the APPs. The staff committee's recommendations will be presented to the Commission at its June 26-27, 2008 meeting

Minimum Requirements

California Education Code Sections 69560-69566 stipulate the following in regards to the Cal-SOAP Program:

1. The minimum configuration of a consortium;
2. The consortium governing board's responsibilities;
3. The students who should be served;
4. The program goals;
5. The direct involvement of secondary school staff;

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6. The allocation of at least 30 percent or the equivalent of the project grant to stipends for peer advisors and tutors;
7. The total resources shall, at a minimum, match the state funding; and,
8. The minimum components of a project proposal.

The statute also requires that projects be located throughout the state in order to provide access to program services in rural, urban, and suburban areas. However, because this is the Commission's responsibility in the allocation of funding, it is not a minimum requirement for the Cal-SOAP projects.

Staff proposes the following minimum requirements a Cal-SOAP consortium must meet to be considered for funding for 2008-09:

- The Consortium must not have any outstanding compliance findings
- The Consortium must not have any outstanding Commission reports
- The completed APP must be postmarked by the deadline date.
- The submitted APP must contain all required documents
- The submitted APP must demonstrate the Consortium is meeting the following statutory requirements:

1. §69561(c)(1):

Increase the availability of information for targeted students on the existence of postsecondary schooling and work opportunities.

§69561(b): Targeted Students are defined as being from low-income families, first in their family to go to college, or students from schools or geographic regions with documented low-eligibility or college participation rates.

2. §69561(c)(2):

Raise the achievement levels of targeted students so as to increase the number of high school graduates eligible to pursue postsecondary learning opportunities.

3. §69561(f):

Each project shall be proposed and operated through a consortium that involves at least:

- one secondary school district office;
- at least one four-year college or university;
- at least one community college; and
- at least one of the following agencies:
 - a nonprofit educational, counseling, or community agency; or
 - a private vocational or technical school accredited by a national, state, or regional accrediting association recognized by the United States Department of Education.

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4. §69561(h):
The governing board of each project, comprising at least one representative from each entity in the consortium, shall establish management policy, provide direction to the project director, set priorities for budgetary decisions that reflect the specific needs of the project, and assume responsibility for maintaining the required level of matching funds, including solicitations from the private sector and corporate sources.

5. §69561(i):
Prior to receiving a project grant, each consortium shall conduct a planning process and submit a comprehensive project proposal to include, but not be limited to, the following information:
 - The agencies participating in the project;
 - The students to be served by the project;
 - The ways in which the project will reduce duplication and related costs; and
 - The methods for assessing the project's impact.

6. §69561(j):
Each project shall include the direct involvement of secondary school staff in the daily operations of the project, with preference in funding to those projects that effectively integrate the objectives of the Student Opportunity and Access Program with those of the school district in providing services that are essential to preparing students for postsecondary education.

7. §69561(k):
Each project shall maintain within the project headquarters a comprehensive student-specific information system on students receiving services through the program in grades 11 and 12 at secondary schools within the participating districts. This information shall be maintained in a manner consistent with the law relating to pupil records.

8. §69561(l):
At least 30 percent or the equivalent of each project grant shall be allocated for stipends to peer advisers and tutors who meet all of the following criteria:
 - Work with secondary school students;
 - Are currently enrolled in a college or other postsecondary school as an undergraduate or graduate student; and
 - Have demonstrated financial need for the stipend.

9. §69564:
Allocation of any funds shall be limited to those consortia meeting requirements of this article that will provide equal matching resources from existing or budgeted increases in federal, state, local and private funds. It shall be the goal of the program that the total resources provided by the Student Opportunity and Access Program shall match state funding on at

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least a 1.5 to 1 ratio. Any new projects approved through expansion of the program shall provide equal matching resources for the first three years of operation and shall be encouraged to increase the matching resources to a 1.5 to 1 ratio with the state grant thereafter.

APPs that meet these minimum requirements and contain all requested documentation will be reviewed, evaluated and scored based on the evaluation criteria below.

Evaluation Criteria

Cal-SOAP projects have implemented their services in a variety of ways. The types of services and levels of services are dependent on many factors, including, but not limited to: where the Cal-SOAP is located, the amount of funding allocated, other outreach efforts provided, consortium board membership and involvement, project director management, fiscal agent considerations, etc.

With so many factors that could be considered, staff concluded that the evaluation of projects should be based on factors reviewed from the statutory requirements of a Cal-SOAP project. Therefore, staff considered each of the statutory requirements and determined which could be used as the basis for the evaluation criteria. Staff discussed the proposed criteria and the information and/or documentation that could be used to assess the Cal-SOAP APP at the March 17, 2008 meeting noted above.

There was considerable discussion at this meeting regarding each of the items and how they would be used. Based on this discussion, staff revised the list of evaluation criteria and the information/documentation being reviewed.

Staff proposes the following seven (7) evaluation criteria:

1. Governing Board Responsibilities
2. Secondary School Involvement
3. Reduction in Duplication of Services and Costs
4. Increasing the Dissemination of Information regarding postsecondary schooling and work opportunities
5. Raising Achievement Levels of Targeted Students
6. Method for Assessing the Project's Impact
7. Match Requirement

For each criterion, staff has defined what is being assessed and how the specific information/documentation will be used in the assessment.

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1. Governing Board Responsibilities

<p>Statutory Requirement: The governing board of each project, comprising at least one representative from each entity in the consortium, shall establish management policy; provide direction to the project director, set priorities for budgetary decisions that reflect the specific needs of the project, and assume responsibility for maintaining the required level of matching funds, including solicitations from the private sector and corporate sources. Section 69561(h)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing board by-laws • Governing board meeting minutes • Written policies • Narrative to explain governing board interaction with project director
<p>Assessment: The governing board of each consortium must assume certain responsibilities as specified in statute. The bulleted information will allow staff to assess how the governing board meets this statutory requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the meeting minutes will confirm that policies adopted by the board support governing board by-laws • A review of the meeting minutes will confirm that the board is in compliance with its by-laws including adhering to established meeting schedules, operating with a quorum of membership, and providing direction to the project director. • Project proponents will be asked to provide a narrative to expand on any communication process not documented in the meeting minutes. The narrative also allows disclosure and explanation of the process of attaining the required matching resources, including the role of governing board members, board chair, and the project director. 	
<p>Weight: 3</p>	

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2. Secondary School Involvement

<p>Statutory requirement: Each project shall include the direct involvement of secondary school staff in the daily operation of the project, [...]. 69561(j)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation: Narrative to provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct involvement of secondary school staff • Information to understand the implementation of direct services to students at the campus level • Explanation of interaction with high school staff, principals, counselors • Involvement of district representatives • Process of establishing and maintaining secondary school involvement • Frequency of meetings with secondary school staff and district representatives <p>Additional documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written agreements with districts or high schools
<p>Assessment: Statute requires each project to work with secondary schools in the implementation of its programs. However, consortia are not currently required to submit data on the daily operation of their projects. Assessment of the narrative will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manner in which secondary school staff is involved on a daily basis, • Any documentation of the project’s relationship with secondary school staff or district staff, and; • The process in place to ensure continued and consistent involvement. 	
<p>Weight: 2</p>	

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3. Reduction in Duplication of Services and Costs

<p>Statutory requirement: [...] (<i>Identify</i>) the ways in which the project will reduce duplication and related costs 69561(i)(3)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other pre-college programs in the projects service area • Project interaction with other programs • Level of collaboration <p>Additional considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional challenges (rural, urban, suburban) • Scope of other programs' services
<p>Assessment: The proposal should include a description of the ways in which the project meets the statutory requirement by collaborating with other pre-college programs in the region and reducing duplicative services. The narrative will allow the review team to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That project administration is aware of and considers other programs operating in the region, • Clear delineation of any collaborative activities that serve to meet the statutory requirement, and; • That project administration has explored collaboration or is aware of regional challenges to collaboration. 	
<p>Weight: 1</p>	

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4. Increasing the Dissemination of Information regarding postsecondary schooling and work opportunities

<p>Statutory requirement: Increase the availability of information for [targeted] students on the existence of postsecondary schooling and work opportunities. Section 69561(1)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Activities/Activity Reports • Methods and types of information delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops ○ Publications • Number of students served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intensive ○ General • Intensive services delivery
<p>Assessment: Statute requires each project disseminate information about access to postsecondary educational opportunities work opportunities. The review team will assess the project's implementation of the advisement component through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation of project objectives, • The methods of information dissemination, • The variety of information sources, and; • The level of community collaboration in information dissemination. 	
<p>Weight: 1</p>	

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5. Raising Achievement Levels of Targeted Students

<p>Statutory requirement: Raise the achievement levels of [targeted] students so as to increase the number of high school graduates eligible to pursue postsecondary learning opportunities. Section 69561(2)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College going rate reports • Intensive services delivery • Cal-Grant application rates* • Activity reports • High School/Cal-SOAP student graduation rates* • Student contracts <p>* Data from public sources such as schools, school districts, county or state may be obtained by the CSAC review team or requested through the APP.</p>
<p>Assessment: Statute requires each project assist in raising students' academic achievement levels. The review team will assess the project's implementation of the academic component through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation of project objectives, • The methods of service delivery, • Cal-SOAP student graduation rates compared to the rates of the schools served, and; <p>Cal-Grant application rates compared to county or school rates.</p>	
<p>Weight: 3</p>	

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6. Method for Assessing the Project's Impact

<p>Statutory requirement: [Provide] the methods for assessing the project's impact. Section 69561(4)</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self reported methods of assessing project's impact • Enrollment data* • Grades • Achievement Gap data* <p>* Data from public sources such as schools, school districts, county or state may be obtained by the CSAC review team or requested through the APP.</p>
<p>Assessment: Statute requires projects to have assessment measures in place. The team will review the measures the project will implement in the coming year to assess the effectiveness of its activities and services. The review team will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment measures currently in place, • That the project has the ability to implement and follow through on assessment measures, • That assessment measures have a quantitative component that reflects the program objectives, and; • That the proposed assessment measures are consistent with other projects' methods. 	
<p>Weight: 3</p>	

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7. Match Requirement

<p>Statutory Requirement: Allocation of any funds shall be limited to those consortia meeting requirements of this article that will provide equal matching resources from existing or budgeted increases in federal, state, local, and private funds. It shall be the goal of the program that the total resources provided by the Student Opportunity and Access Program shall match state funding on at least a 1.5 to 1 ratio. Any new projects approved through expansion of the program shall provide equal matching resources for the first three years of operation and shall be encouraged to increase the matching resources to a 1.5 to 1 ratio with the state grant thereafter. Section 69564</p>	<p>Information/Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual program plan budget • Matching contribution resources report • Amount of matching resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Length of program existence • Sources of match • Historical maintenance of match
<p>Assessment: Statute requires each consortium to maintain local matching funds. The review team will look at the level of matching resources contributions and also assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms in place to ensure matching resources in changing fiscal environments, and • Efforts taken to increase the consortium's matching resources. 	
<p>Weight: 2</p>	

Scoring Process

If the APP passes on all mandatory requirements, the Commission staff evaluation team will evaluate the responses to the evaluation criteria. The evaluation team will assign points to each item of one (1) to one hundred (100) points. The scoring framework for assignment of points to all evaluation criteria is summarized below:

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Assignment of Points to Evaluation Criteria

Points	Point Assignment Framework
100	Significantly exceeds requirements; achievable, applies best practices; clearly and concisely presented, logically organized; well integrated
85	Substantially meets requirements; achievable, applies best practices; clearly and concisely presented; logically organized, well integrated
70	Minimally meets requirements; achievable; suitable, acceptably presented; organized; integrated
Fail	Somewhat less than meeting requirements; somewhat suitable; less than acceptably presented; somewhat unorganized; somewhat integrated
Fail	Significantly less than requirements; not fully suitable or addressed
Fail	Requirement(s) not addressed or no details/explanation provided

When all points have been assigned for each APP, the scores will be averaged and multiplied by the weighting factor to arrive at a final score for each Consortium. A sample score is shown below.

Sample Score for Consortium # 1

Evaluator	Criteria							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
a	95	86	84	80	85	87	82	
b	92	86	83	79	85	90	80	
c	90	85	87	83	82	88	81	
d	91	90	82	84	80	86	83	
e	93	87	82	82	86	85	82	
Total	461	434	418	408	418	436	408	
Average	92.2	86.8	83.6	81.6	83.6	87.2	81.6	
Weight	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	
Score	276.6	173.6	83.6	244.8	250.8	87.2	163.2	1,279.8
Maximum Score	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Weighted Maximum Score	300	200	100	300	300	100	200	1,500.00

Allocation of Funding

The Cal-SOAP program funding was reduced from \$8.6 million to \$6.4 million in 2007-08. Because the funding reduction for fiscal year 2007-08 was proposed and implemented late in the funding cycle, the Commission implemented the \$2.2 million

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reduction by reducing allocations to Cal-SOAP projects by varying percentages with a maximum of 25.7 percent for projects with higher funding levels in order to maintain a minimum funding level of \$300,000 for projects with the lowest funding levels. The project directors agreed to these reductions in lieu of a project-by-project analysis of funding levels.

The Governor's Budget for fiscal year 2008-09, released in January, proposes an additional reduction to the total local assistance funding for Cal-SOAP projects. Pending legislative action and the final budget agreement, funding would be reduced by another 10 percent, or \$637,000, reducing total funding from \$6.4 million to \$5.7 million.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its annual Analysis of the Governor's Budget on February 20, 2008. From conversations with LAO staff, it is our understanding that the LAO is recommending to the Legislature that the Cal-SOAP projects be spared from the 10 percent reduction that was included in the Governor's January 10 proposed budget. The LAO's analysis and recommendations serve as a starting point for the Legislature's budget hearings. While the Legislature and the Governor will finalize the budget later this year, it is clear that the Commission and staff must be in a position to make informed, rational, and potentially very difficult decisions about the funding levels and the number of Cal SOAP projects that will be funded in the future.

If the proposed 10-percent reduction is enacted in the 2008 Budget Act, Cal-SOAP funding would have been reduced by almost \$3 million, or nearly 34 percent over two years. The Commission's consideration of a methodology for allocating funding thus takes on greater significance, especially with respect to basic policy issues, such as whether the proposed \$5.7 million funding level is sufficient to support 16 projects, whether a minimum level of funding is necessary to establish effectiveness in providing services, and if so, the level of that minimum funding, and how to establish effectiveness and compare the effectiveness of projects.

The Project Directors indicated at their March 17, 2008 meeting, that their recommendation for the allocation of funds for 2008-09 is an across the board 10 percent reduction. This approach would reduce the minimum allocation from its current year base of \$300,000 to \$270,000. However, the San Diego and Imperial Counties Consortium Project Director offered to take a larger portion of the reduction to maintain the minimum at \$300,000.

Except for an across the board reduction, the allocation of funding for Cal-SOAP is not a simple task. Staff proposes the following methodology. Staff notes that this methodology was not discussed at the March 17, 2008 meeting.

1. Initial Allocation for Developing the APP

In order to develop an APP, the Project Directors need a base funding amount from which to develop plans to meet the 30 percent allocation for tutoring and peer advising, to meet the minimum match requirement, and to ensure effective management of the project. Staff proposes that each consortium develop its APP with the amount received in 2007-08.

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2. 10 – 20 Percent Change in Allocation

As part of the APP, each consortium will be asked to explain what key changes would occur if the project received 10 or 20 percent increases or decreases in funding. For example:

- If a project were to receive an additional 20 percent in funding, does the project have mechanisms to ensure that the 30 percent tutoring and peer advising and the 1:1 match would be met, or
- If a project were to have funding reduced 20 percent, would it still be enough to administer an effective program.

3. Funding Groups

Consortium funding can be used as the basis for comparing projects. Projects with similar funding are likely to have developed equivalent types of services. Therefore, staff proposes that the projects be group according to their 2007-08 funding levels and then ranked according to their evaluation scores. The ranking will be used to set the 2008-09 funding levels. If this initial allocation does not fully allocate the available funds or over allocates, proportional adjustments can be made. If additional funding is available after the initial allocation, fund can be provided to those consortia with scores higher than 1,425 on a proportional basis. Below is a sample allocation for three consortia with \$300,000 in funding in 2007-08. Staff needs to do further analysis on the appropriate percent change for each rank, but the chart give some indication as to how a ranking system can be applied.

Sample Allocation of Funding by Consortium Group

	Score	Rank	2007-08 Funding	Percent Change	Amount Change	2008-09 Funding	Amount to be Reallocated
Consortium 2	1,452.4	1	\$300,000	10%	30,000	\$330,000	
Consortium 1	1,279.8	2	\$300,000	00%	-	\$300,000	
Consortium 3	1,198.4	3	\$300,000	-20%	(60,000)	\$240,000	
Total Funding			\$ 900,000			\$870,000	\$ 30,000

4. Final Allocation Adjustments

One of the Cal-SOAP statutory requirements [§69561(g)] is that projects be located throughout the state in order to provide access to program services in rural, urban, and suburban areas. Therefore, staff proposes that once the consortia have been allocated funding based on their rank within funding groups, adjustments to funding be made, if needed, to ensure that there is service throughout the state and in rural, urban and suburban areas.

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Appeal Process

Any Cal-SOAP project dissatisfied with the action of the Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee has the right to appeal such action to the California Student Aid Commission by filing written notice of such appeal within five business days of the date of the notice of Cal-SOAP funding award. The appealing Cal-SOAP project must file with the Commission a full and complete written statement specifying the grounds for the appeal. Appeals are limited to the following grounds:

- Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee failed to substantially adhere to the specified procedures.
- Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee failed to follow evaluation and rating methods as specified.
- Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee used a method other than specified to determine the Cal-SOAP funding award.
- The APP submitted by the Cal-SOAP Project should have been scored by the Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee as it met the minimum statutory requirements for scoring.

Appeals claiming the following will be rejected:

- The opinion of the protesting Cal-SOAP project that its scores should have been different or that different scores could have awarded based on the same information
- That the level of funding awarded varies substantially from awards made in previous years

Any Cal-SOAP project appealing the decision of the Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee bears the burden of proof of its charges that the Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee has committed an error sufficiently material to justify invalidation of the proposed awards or that its decisions are lacking a rational basis and are therefore arbitrary and capricious. In view of these parameters, the focus of the Commission on appeal is whether the appellant has met its burden of proof that a material error has been committed in the conduct of the award process.

Appeals of the Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Committee shall be made in writing and delivered to:

Cal-SOAP APP Evaluation Appeal
California Student Aid Commission
10811 International Drive, 2nd Floor
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

The decision of the Commission will be final. Notification of the action of the decision of the Commission on the appeal will be sent within two business days after a decision has been reached.