California Community Colleges

MEMORANDUM
October 16, 2025

ESS 25-71 | Via Email

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Business Officers
Chief Human Resources Officers
Academic Senate Presidents
California School Employees Association
California Community College Council for Professional Development

FROM: James Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: Professional Learning and Flexible Calendar Regulatory Revisions

---

On Aug. 19, 2025, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors' approved regulatory action entitled "Flexible Calendar" was filed with the Office of Administrative Law and the California Secretary of State. The regulation became effective on Sept. 18, 2025; and pursuant to California Code of Regulations (CCR), section 52010, community college districts have up to 180 days from the effective date—until March 17, 2026—to conform their policies and procedures to the new requirements.

Background

In 2024, the Chancellor's Office established a collaborative workgroup that included representatives from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Chief Instructional Officers, California School Employees Association, the California Community College Council for Professional Development, and staff from the Chancellor's Office. The purpose of this workgroup was to review and revise the Flexible Calendar regulations to better align with the Vision 2030 goals and to promote equitable professional development opportunities for all campus staff.

These revisions (§ 55720, § 55724, § 55726, § 55728, § 55729, § 55730, § 55732) represent the most significant modernization of the flexible calendar program in decades. They shift the program from a narrow emphasis on "staff, student, and instructional improvement" toward a broad, inclusive vision of professional learning for all employees—a vision that recognizes professional growth as an essential, systemic driver of equitable student success, institutional innovation, and the effective use of technology across our colleges.

What is Changing and Why it Matters

A systemwide definition of professional learning, for everyone. The revised regulations establish professional learning as a shared responsibility of the entire college community. No longer limited to faculty, flexible calendar time may now be used for full-time and part-time faculty, classified professionals, administrators, and student employees. This change acknowledges that every role contributes to the student experience and that continuous growth across all positions strengthens our collective capacity to help students thrive. The 8.57% limit on flexible time for full-time faculty remains unchanged, ensuring stability while broadening the circle of participants.

Clear agreements that honor time and commitment. Professional learning is now framed as essential work, not optional enrichment. Agreements with employees participating in professional learning should include specifying the duties released, the activities to be undertaken, and the number of hours required—ensuring that time devoted to professional learning is equal to or greater than the time released. This alignment elevates professional learning as a recognized part of the workday, demonstrating to employees and students alike that growth and improvement are integral to our mission.

A refreshed menu of opportunities. The regulations modernize the list of eligible activities, inviting districts to design professional learning that responds directly to today's challenges and opportunities. In addition to course and curriculum redesign, allowable activities include institutional research, governance processes that support student success, improvement of student services, and strengthening partnerships with communities. By legitimizing these areas as professional learning, the regulations affirm that student success is the result of excellence in the classroom and excellence in every service that surrounds the student journey. Improved reporting for clarity and compliance.

Reporting, FTES adjustments and fiscal responsibility. Districts are still required to report faculty professional learning in a way that distinguishes credit and noncredit hours released. Instruction conducted on flexible calendar days that meet attendance accounting standards may still be claimed for apportionment, but those hours may not also be claimed as flexible time. This continues to ensure transparent, consistent reporting and protects the integrity of state apportionment. The familiar FTES multiplier method is also retained, safeguarding against artificial inflation or loss of FTES.

Planning, evaluation, and governance. The regulations establish a continuous improvement cycle for professional learning: a needs assessment every three years with annual updates, a district-wide plan of activities, record-keeping of participation, and an annual evaluation of

effectiveness. An advisory committee comprised of faculty and representatives of other employee groups is tasked with recommending professional learning activities to the college president. This structure ensures professional learning is not only compliant, but purposeful, inclusive, and responsive to evolving student needs.

Advancing Equitable Student Success

These changes are more than regulatory updates—they are an opportunity to reimagine professional learning as a cornerstone of equity, innovation, and student success across California's community colleges. By bringing all employees into the flexible calendar framework, the regulations recognize that the conditions for student success are created collectively: through instruction, advising, enrollment services, technology, research, and governance.

The broader activity list empowers colleges to invest flexible time in addressing equity gaps, experimenting with new technologies, redesigning curriculum and services, and building inclusive governance practices that elevate diverse voices. The new cycle of needs assessment, planning, and evaluation ensures that professional learning responds directly to what students and communities need most.

In short, the revisions create a structure for colleges to seize this moment: to design professional learning that prepares faculty and staff to harness technology responsibly, to innovate boldly, and to serve all Californians equitably.

Next Steps for Colleges and Districts

Districts should use the implementation period to thoughtfully:

- Update local policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements to align with the new terminology and inclusive scope of professional learning;
- Develop or update processes to create agreements regarding professional learning with all participating employees, ensuring clarity of in-lieu duties and hour-for-hour expectations;
- Evaluate the advisory committee to include primary faculty, with adequate representation from other employee groups and other interested persons;
- Submit survey to the Chancellor's Office every three years and needs assessment annually;
- Adjust reporting systems to track credit and noncredit professional learning substitutions; and,
- Integrate professional learning into local equity and student success plans, linking flexible calendar activities directly to institutional priorities.

Conclusion

For questions about implementation, please contact Raul Arambula, Dean of Academic Affairs, at RArambula@CCCCO.edu. Thank you for your leadership and collaboration in implementing these changes. Together, we can ensure that professional learning across our colleges becomes a powerful lever for equity, innovation, and success for all Californians.

cc: Sonya Christian, Chancellor
Rowena Tomaneng, Deputy Chancellor
Chris Ferguson, Executive Vice Chancellor of Finance and Strategic Initiatives
Raul Arambula, Dean, Academic Affairs

Appendix A: Brief Summary of Regulatory Changes

Approved regulatory changes may be found in their entirety here.

Section	Summary
§ 55720. Operating Under Flexible Calendar; Accountability of Employees	• Additional language to include all campus staff: full-time faculty, part-time faculty, classified staff, student employee, and administrators
§ 55724. Request for Approval	• Additional language to include all campus staff: full-time faculty, part-time faculty, classified staff, student employee, and administrators • Language included to specifically address professional learning • Language regarding activities to focus on student success
§ 55726. Activities During Designated Days	• Additional language to include all campus staff: full-time faculty, part-time faculty, classified staff, student employee, and administrators • Removed language of instructional improvement and replaced with professional learning • Language clearer
§ 55728. Flexible Calendar Attendance Reporting	• Additional language to include all campus staff: full-time faculty, part-time faculty, classified staff, student employee, and administrators • Removed language of instructional improvement and replaced with professional learning
§ 55729. Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES) Units; Adjustments to Reflect Activities; Computation by Multiplier Factor	• Removed language of instructional improvement and replaced with professional learning

Section	Summary
§ 55730. Ongoing Responsibilities of Districts	• Reporting changed from once a year to every three years to the Chancellor's Office • Removed language of instructional improvement and replaced with professional learning • Included language that requires adequate representation from other employee groups to the advisory committee • Language added that professional learning activities recommendation will be brought to the college president or chief executive officer