
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 1014
Author: Thurmond
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Lynn Lorber
Hearing Date: June 29, 2016
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Education finance: Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund: Learning Communities for School Success Program

NOTE: This bill has been amended to replace its contents and this is the first time the bill is being heard in its current form.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Learning Communities for School Success Program, which requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to administer grants for local educational agencies to implement programs and services that further the purpose of Proposition 47 to improve outcomes for students by reducing truancy and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or are victims of crime.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, pursuant to Proposition 47, which reduces the penalties for specified drug and property crimes. Savings resulting from reduced inmate population are required to be used for mental health and substance use services, truancy and dropout prevention, and victim services. (Government Code § 7599, et seq.)
- 2) Requires school districts and county offices of education to adopt and annually update a local control and accountability plan, which must include a description of annual goals to meet eight state priorities for all students and for all numerically significant subgroups, including ethnic subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, students with disabilities, and foster youth. (Education Code § 52060 and § 52066)

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the California Department of Education to administer grants for local educational agencies to implement programs and services that further the purpose of Proposition 47 to improve outcomes for students by reducing truancy and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or are victims of crime. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes the Learning Communities for School Success Program to implement the K-12 education portion of the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act (Proposition 47).
- 2) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to administer a grant program and coordinate assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) in identifying and implementing evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices that are aligned with the goals for students contained in each LEA's local control and accountability plan (LCAP).

Application

- 3) Requires a LEA that chooses to apply for funding to submit an application to the CDE, in a format and by a date determined by the CDE. This bill requires the application to include, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - a) Information about the student and school needs within the LEA.
 - b) The activities the LEA will undertake with the grant funding.
 - c) How the activities support the LEA's goals for students contained in its LCAP.
 - d) How the LEA will measure outcomes associated with the proposed activities and metrics reported in the LEA's LCAP.
- 4) Requires the CDE to issue application guidelines that include, at a minimum, information on the outcome metrics the CDE will use to evaluate the program. This bill requires CDE, when determining outcome metrics, to consider metrics currently being collected and used by existing federal, state, or local programs. This bill requires the CDE, consistent with the objective of the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act to reduce crime, including truancy and dropout prevention, to consider using metrics for student truancy and school dropout, among others.
- 5) Requires CDE to consult with stakeholders, including but not limited to, representatives of LEAs, teachers and other school personnel, parents, advocacy organizations with experience working with target vulnerable populations, and parent- and youth-serving community-based organizations. This bill states legislative intent that stakeholders provide input to the CDE on the design of the application and review process, including the size of the grant awards, but not in determining who will be awarded grants.

Grant awards

- 6) Requires the CDE to determine eligibility for grants and the distribution of grant funding based on all of the following factors:
 - a) Student and school needs the LEA will address with the grant funds.

- b) Number of students to be served with the grant funds.
 - c) Number, size, and type of participating schools within the local educational agencies (LEA).
 - d) Any challenges the LEA experiences in building capacity for fulfilling the purposes of this bill.
 - e) The unique characteristics of small school districts, given their challenges with economies of scale and access to services in rural locations.
- 7) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE), before the initial application deadline, to conduct targeted outreach to LEAs that are likely to be given priority for funding and offer the LEAs technical assistance as they develop their grant applications. This bill authorizes the CDE to provide technical assistance with application development, which may include assistance from external entities the CDE may contract with to provide training and technical assistance.
- 8) Provides that an application is to be for three years of funding and authorizes the CDE to establish requirements for grantees to meet at the end of the first and second years of funding in order to receive funding for the remaining grant period.

Use of grant funds

- 9) Requires a LEA that receives a grant to use the grant funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities in support of evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices to keep the state's most vulnerable students in school, consistent with the LEA's goals for the student engagement and school climate state priorities identified in its local control and accountability plan (LCAP). This bill authorizes these activities to include but not be limited to, all of the following:
- a) Establishing a community school, as defined.
 - b) Implementing activities or programs to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to, early warning systems or early intervention programs.
 - c) Implementing restorative practices, restorative justice models, or other programs to improve retention rates, reduce suspensions and other school removals, and reduce the referral of students to law enforcement agencies.
 - d) Implementing activities that advance social-emotional learning, positive behavior interventions and supports, culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed strategies.

- e) Establishing partnerships with community-based organizations or other relevant entities to support the implementation of evidence-based, non-punitive approaches to further the goals of the program.

Priority for funding

- 10) Authorizes the California Department of Education (CDE), in selecting grant recipients, to give priority to a local educational agencies (LEA) that meets any of the following criteria:
 - a) Has a high rate of chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspension, or school dropout for the general student population or for a numerically significant student subgroup, as identified in the local control and accountability plan (LCAP). This bill defines "high rate" as a rate that exceeds the state average.
 - b) Is located in a community with a high crime rate.
 - c) Has a significant representation of foster youth among its student enrollment.

Other requirements

- 11) Requires a LEA that receives a grant to comply with the following:
 - a) Provide a local contribution of matching expenditures equal to at least 20% of the total grant award. This bill authorizes the local contribution to be from cash expenditures or in-kind contributions, and encourages a LEA to exceed the 20% match requirement to enable the LEA to sustain the activities or programs beyond the three-year grant period.
 - b) Use the grant funds to supplement and not supplant existing resources the LEA currently allocates for purposes specified in this bill.
 - c) Not use grant funds to pay for law enforcement activities, including personnel or equipment.

Training and technical assistance

- 12) Requires CDE to establish a structure to deliver training and technical assistance to grantees using regional workshops and technical assistance providers that have expertise on student engagement, school climate, truancy reduction, and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime. This bill authorizes CDE to contract with those providers to assist the grantees as well as to serve as a resource for other LEAs that may use their own funding sources to engage in this community of practice.

Evaluation and report

- 13) Requires a LEA that receives grant funding to evaluate and report to the governing board of the school district, the county board of education, or its chartering authority, and the CDE the results of the activities it undertakes with the grant funds. This bill requires CDE to compile information from grantee reports as part of an overall evaluation of the grant program implementation, assess the benefits of participation in the program, and identify the student and school outcomes associated with the strategies and programs implemented by grantees. This bill requires CDE to submit an interim report of preliminary evaluation findings to the Legislature by January 31, 2019, and a final evaluation report to the Legislature by January 31, 2020.

Miscellaneous

- 14) Authorizes 5% of the funds to be used for the administrative costs of implementing this bill, including but not limited to, administering grant awards, coordinating the training and technical assistance structure, and completing the evaluation.
- 15) Establishes the following definitions:
 - a) “Community school” means a public school that participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships with one or more community partners for the delivery of community services that may be provided at a school site to students, families, and community members.
 - b) “Local educational agency” means a school district, county office of education, or charter school.
- 16) Prohibits the provisions of this bill from becoming operative unless funds are appropriated in the annual Budget Act or another statute to the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund in accordance with the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act for the purposes specified in this bill.
- 17) Provides that this bill is contingent upon the passage of SB 527 (see comment #2).

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** In November 2014, voters approved Proposition 47, establishing the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act. The Proposition reduced penalties for specified non-violent drug and property crimes, resulting in a reduced prison population and thereby reduced state costs. The Proposition requires the Department of Finance to, on or before July 31st of each fiscal year, beginning with July 31, 2016, to calculate the savings derived by the Proposition during the preceding fiscal year. The savings are required to be allocated for

specified purposes, including 25% to the California Department of Education to administer a grant program to public agencies aimed at improving outcomes for public school students in kindergarten through grade 12 by reducing truancy and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or are victims of crime. Proposition 47 provided no guidance for the structure or details of the grant program. This bill provides those details.

- 2) **Package deal.** This bill is the result of an agreement on a framework between both Houses of the Legislature, in collaboration with the California Department of Education, Department of Justice, Department of Finance, and stakeholders. This bill implements the framework, along with SB 527 (Liu), which is identical to this bill. While this Committee does not typically pass two bills on the same topic, these bills represent an agreement between both Houses and enactment of both bills is contingent upon the passage of both bills.
- 3) **Fiscal impact.** The 2016 Budget Act includes \$9.9 million of estimated Proposition 47 savings, with an additional \$18 million in one-time Proposition 98 funds provided for this purpose.
- 4) **Related legislation.** SB 527 (Liu, 2016) is nearly identical to this bill. SB 527 is pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SUPPORT

Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

OPPOSITION

None on the current version of the bill.

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