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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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**Bill No:** AB 189 **Hearing Date:** July 5, 2017  
**Author:** Low  
**Version:** June 15, 2017  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brandon Darnell

**Subject:** School curriculum: model curriculum: service learning

## SUMMARY

This bill requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop, and the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt, reject, or modify, a model curriculum on service-learning for pupils in grades 9th to 12th grade, for voluntary use by educators.

## BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes requirements for graduation from high school, including: three courses in English; two courses in mathematics; two courses in science; three courses in social studies; one course in visual or performing arts, foreign language, or career technical education; and two courses in physical education. (Education Code § 51225.3)
- 2) Requires that, of the three courses in social studies, two must be year-long courses in United States history and geography, and in world history, culture, and geography, and that the remaining two are a one-semester course in American government and civics, and a one-semester course in economics. (EC § 51225.3)
- 3) Establishes the IQC as an advisory body to the SBE on matters related to curriculum, instructional materials, and content standards. (EC § 33530 et seq.)

## ANALYSIS

This bill requires the IQC to develop, and the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt, reject, or modify, a model curriculum on service-learning for pupils in grades 9th to 12th grade, for voluntary use by educators. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Defines “service learning” as a method:
  - a) Through which pupils or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that:
    - (i) Is conducted in, and meets the needs of, a community.
    - (ii) Is coordinated with a secondary school and with the community.

- (iii) Helps foster civic responsibility.
  - b) That is integrated into, and enhances, the standards-based academic curriculum of the pupils and provides structured time for the pupils or participants to reflect on the service experience.
- 2) Requires the model curriculum to:
  - a) Incorporate evidence-based and applied instructional practices for developing service learning skills.
  - b) Identify the ways in which the model curriculum aligns with, and is supportive of, the Common Core State Standards.
  - c) Provide model lessons and activities for each grade level, and identify supporting instructional materials for use in its implementation.
- 3) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in developing the curriculum standards related to the model curriculum, to consult with leaders of community organizations, pupils, parents, classroom teachers, school administrators, postsecondary educators, representatives of business and industry, and other persons with knowledge or experience the SPI deems appropriate to the task of developing these curriculum standards, and requires those persons, as much as feasible, to represent the diverse regions and socioeconomic communities of the state.
- 4) Requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to hold a minimum of two public hearings in order for the public to provide input on the model curriculum, held pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
- 5) Requires, on or before December 31, 2020, the IQC to submit to the State Board of Education (SBE) the model curriculum.
- 6) Requires, on or before March 31, 2021, the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify the model curriculum, at a subsequent public meeting.
- 7) If the SBE modifies the model curriculum:
  - a) Requires the SBE to explain in writing to the Governor and the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature the reasons for the modifications.
  - b) Requires the SBE to provide written reasons at a public meeting for the modifications.
  - c) Prohibits the SBE from adopting the model curriculum at that same hearing.

- d) Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt the modified model curriculum at a subsequent hearing by no later than July 31, 2021.
- 8) Requires, if the SBE rejects the model curriculum, that it transmit to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Governor, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature a specific written explanation of the reasons for the rejection of the model curriculum.
- 9) Requires the SPI, following the adoption of the model curriculum in service learning, to post the curriculum on its Internet website for use on a voluntary basis by educators.
- 10) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE), subject to an appropriation for this purpose in the Budget Act or other statute, to create an online professional development module which instructs educators on the use of the model curriculum, and to make this module available at no cost on its website for voluntary use by educators.
- 11) Encourages local educational agencies and charter schools to use the curriculum to provide instruction in service learning beginning in the school year following the adoption of the model curriculum.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Service learning is a powerful instructional strategy for improving the educational performance of pupils, along with contributing to the development of character, values, self-esteem, civic responsibility, and knowledge of local community issues and concerns. Like community service, service learning requires students to serve their communities. Service learning, however, takes community service one step further by incorporating the service experiences of students directly into their school work.

Recognizing the need for civic and service-learning in our state, Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson formed the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning in 2013 to assess civic education in schools. It found that too often the emphasis in the classroom is on memorization rather than participatory skills and experiential learning. Many classes did not assess whether students are prepared for their roles and responsibilities as citizens or the degree to which schools provide students with learning opportunities that achieve civic outcomes.

Young people who recall their civic learning experiences are more likely to vote, know about the U.S. political system, and continue to be engaged in their community. AB 189 will revitalize quality civic and service-learning experiences in the classroom and shape our students to become active and informed citizens of our state.”

- 2) ***CalServe program eliminated.*** From 1990 to 2012, the CDE operated the CalServe program, using federal funds from the Learn and Serve program of the

Corporation for National and Community Service. CalServe provided funding to California's county offices of education, districts, and schools to support the statewide implementation of service-learning. Federal funding for Learn and Serve America was eliminated from the 2011–12 budget, which eliminated CalServe's partnerships. Some participating school districts have continued to use service-learning as an instructional method.

- 3) ***Some districts have a volunteer or service-learning graduation requirement.*** Nothing in current law prevents school districts from implementing service learning programs. Current law also allows school districts to develop local graduation requirements in addition to those required by the state. While the state does not collect data on service-learning courses or community service graduation requirements, many school districts have local service-learning or community service graduation requirements. These vary in terms of time requirements and integration with coursework. Some districts with such requirements included:
- Los Angeles Unified School District requires a service-learning experience of all high school students, measured by an approved project, not a number of hours served.
  - Culver City Unified School District requires 60 hours of service-learning for graduation.
  - Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District requires 40 hours of community service for graduation.
  - San Jose Unified School District requires certification of a minimum of 40 hours of community service for graduation (10 hours per year of enrollment).
- 4) ***Service-learning vs. community service/volunteering.*** Service-learning is often confused with volunteering or community service. Service-learning is distinguished from volunteering or community service in that it connects service with structured opportunities to learn from the experience. The federal Learn and Serve program of the Corporation for National and Community Service defined service-learning as “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” This bill defines service-learning consistent with the definition used in the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009.
- 5) ***Service-learning supports academic achievement, narrows achievement gap.*** A 2011 meta-analysis of 62 studies involving 11,837 students published in the *Journal of Experiential Education* found that, compared to controls, students who participated in service-learning programs demonstrate significant gains in five outcome areas: attitudes toward self, attitudes toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance. The analysis also found that following certain recommended practices—linking to curriculum, community involvement, and reflection—were associated with better outcomes.

- 6) ***Related and prior legislation.*** AB 24 (Eggman, 2017) would establish a State Seal of Civic Engagement, to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates, based on a demonstration of excellence in civic education and participation. AB 24 is pending on the Senate Floor.

AB 1689 (Low, 2015-16 Regular Session), would have required, beginning with the high school class of 2022-23, that at least one of the courses required for graduation include a service-learning component. The bill would have defined service-learning and also required the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop curriculum standards for courses that incorporate a service-learning component. AB 1689 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 524 (Low, 2015-16 Regular Session), AB 524 would have required, beginning with the high school class of 2020-21, that at least one of the courses required for graduation include a service-learning component. The bill would have defined service-learning and also required the SPI to develop curriculum standards for courses that incorporate a service-learning component. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1911 (Wesson and Hertzberg, 1999-2000) Regular Session, would have required school districts offering grades 9-12 to offer students the opportunity to enroll in courses that include service-learning activities for credit toward graduation. AB 1911 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

## **SUPPORT**

California Catholic Conference  
California Commission on Aging  
California Council for the Social Studies  
California Secretary of State Alex Padilla  
California School Boards Association  
California State PTA  
Santa Clara County Office of Education

## **OPPOSITION**

None Received

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