
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2353
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Lenin DelCastillo
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Teacher professional development: culturally responsive instruction

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to identify professional development programs in culturally responsive instruction and authorizes local educational agencies (LEAs) to include this professional development as a local measure of school climate as part of their local control and accountability plans (LCAPs).

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Local Control Funding Formula which permanently consolidated the vast majority of categorical programs, including the Professional Development Block Grant which supported professional development activities such as teacher recruitment and retention incentives, along with revenue limit apportionments, into a single source of funding. The statutory and programmatic requirements for almost all of these categorical programs were also eliminated, leaving any related activities left to local districts' discretion.
- 2) Requires the governing board of each school district and each county board of education to adopt an LCAP, and to update the plan annually. Existing law requires LCAPs to include both of the following:
 - a) A description of the annual goals, for all students and each subgroup of students, to be achieved for each of the state priorities and for any additional local priorities identified by the governing board.
- 3) A description of the specific actions the school district will take during each year of the LCAP to achieve the goals, including the enumeration of any specific actions necessary for that year to correct any deficiencies in regard to the state priorities. (EC § 52060 and § 52066)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Specifies various legislative findings and declarations, including: culture is essential to learning; culture plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals; and culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including pupils' cultural references in all aspects of learning.
- 2) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to identify professional development programs in culturally responsive instruction and provide links to those programs on its web site.
- 3) Authorizes local education agencies (LEAs) to include the extent to which teachers and other school employees, as appropriate, have received or are receiving this professional development as a local measure of school climate as part of their local control and accountability plans (LCAPs).
- 4) Authorizes LEAs to use \$490 million provided in the 2015-16 Budget Act to provide professional development in culturally responsive instruction.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author's office, the current structure for ensuring that teachers receive appropriate training in cultural competency "does not include strategies for those who seek employment in a school district where racial and cultural makeup of the student body vastly differ from the school district where they were trained in their core competencies. This lack of training is also apparent when teachers pursue teaching opportunities in California who are from other states or other countries. Further, there is a need to address the training needs of teachers and administrators who have been working in the educational system for some time and may not have received the level of cultural competency training appropriate to meet their local district needs."
- 2) ***Existing LCAP process.*** This bill authorizes an LEA to include professional development programs in culturally responsive instruction as a local measure of school climate as part of its LCAP. However, to the extent this is a local priority, an LEA may already include it and therefore, the Committee may wish to consider whether this provision is necessary. Specifically, do local school districts and their governing boards need further guidance on what to include in their LCAPs? Additionally, there have been notable criticisms of the LCAP since its implementation, including the notion that its primary purpose has been to serve primarily as a compliance driven document rather than for strategic planning purposes. There have also been concerns regarding the length and complexity of the LCAPs making them difficult to read and understand. Would it be prudent at this time to prescribe additional statutory provisions for the LCAP prior to making more meaningful reforms to address these issues? **Staff recommends** that the provision authorizing LEAs to include professional

development programs in culturally responsive instruction as a local measure of school climate be removed from the bill.

- 3) **Related budget activity.** The 2015-16 Budget Act included \$490 million for local educational agencies (LEAs) to promote educator effectiveness and were specifically earmarked for a menu of options that included beginning teacher and administrator support and mentoring, professional development, and coaching and support services for teachers identified as needing improvement. Since LEAs have just received these funds and have three years to spend them, the number of districts that have fully spent them or still have funds available is unknown.

As this bill authorizes these funds to be used to provide professional development in culturally responsive instruction, one can argue these funds may already be used for this purpose if a district deems it to be a local priority. On the other hand, the Committee may wish to consider whether the bill's provision is contrary to the budget agreement as it designates an additional purpose for which the funds can be used. For these reasons, **staff recommends** that this provision be removed from the bill.

- 4) **Fiscal impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, the California Department of Education (CDE) estimates one-time General Fund costs of approximately \$150,000 for the department to identify and review existing professional development programs in culturally responsive instruction and to post online. These costs could be ongoing to the extent CDE is expected to review and update the list on a regular basis.

SUPPORT

Alameda County Office of Education
American Civil Liberties Union of California
Association of California School Administrators
California Federation of Teachers
Children Now
Los Angeles Unified School District
San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools

OPPOSITION

None received.

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