
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: SB 585 **Hearing Date:** April 19, 2017
Author: Mendoza
Version: February 17, 2017
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: School employees: awards

SUMMARY

This bill expands the list of employees to which school district governing boards are authorized to make awards, under Education Code § 44015, to include employees who use their own personal resources to meet the classroom material needs of pupils.

BACKGROUND

Existing law, Education Code § 44015:

- 1) Authorizes school district governing boards to make awards to employees who: (1) propose procedures or ideas that thereafter are adopted and effectuated, and that eliminate or reduce district expenditures or improve operations, (2) perform special acts or services in the public interest, or (3) by their superior accomplishments, make exceptional contributions to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement to operations of the school district.
- 2) Authorizes school district governing boards to make awards to pupils for excellence.
- 3) Requires school district governing boards to adopt rules and regulations before making awards, and authorizes the boards to appoint one or more merit award committees made up of district officers, district employees, or private citizens to consider employee proposals, special acts, special services, or superior accomplishments and to provide recommendations thereon.
- 4) Prohibits awards from exceeding two hundred dollars, unless a larger award is expressly approved by a school district governing board.
- 5) Requires school district governing boards establishing award programs to budget funds for its purpose, but authorizes awards from funds under the board's control whether or not budgeted funds have been provided or the funds budgeted have been exhausted.

ANALYSIS

This bill expands the list of employees to which school district governing boards are authorized to make awards, under Education Code § 44015, to include employees who use their own personal resources to meet the classroom material needs of pupils.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author's office, The California Department of Education (CDE) currently sponsors several programs that reward teachers, classified employees, students, and individual schools. This bill seeks to extend the recognition to employees who dedicate their resources to teaching their students. Establishing and maintaining employee recognition programs is important for employee engagement and positive motivation. This practice encourages employees to produce more and better quality work. This bill would provide encouragement for teachers and other school employees who extend their personal resources, and further, enrich the lives of students.

- 2) ***Teacher awards at the state level.*** Several programs at the state level aim to recognize teachers, including:
 - a) California Distinguished Schools, which honor schools that have demonstrated overall academic and programmatic excellence.
 - b) The Academic Achievement Award, which honors Title I schools that have shown progress in closing the achievement gap among students.
 - c) The California Teacher of the Year, which recognizes teachers for their exemplary contributions to student instruction.
 - d) The Classified Employee of the Year, which honors outstanding contributions from school staff.

- 3) ***Teacher awards at the local level.*** School districts are authorized to provide awards and recognition for their teachers as they see fit. The way in which these awards are made can be determined by a school governing board, but less formal awards are often made by school principals or other administrators. While the way in which school districts choose to recognize employees varies considerably, the awards are generally all aimed at recognizing teacher excellence for the purpose of improving the district's school climate, employee satisfaction, teacher performance, and the retaining of high-quality teachers. Further, due to perennial staffing difficulties for schools, particularly in the areas of special education, math, and science, school districts have incentive to ensure their teachers are recognized.

Nothing in current law prevents local educational agencies from making awards to their employees, including those that use their own personal resources to meet the classroom material needs of pupils. Further, it is unclear whether any school districts have made awards to their employees recently under the authority provided under Education Code § 44015.

SUPPORT

California Federation of Teachers

OPPOSITION

None received

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