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California State Senate

EDUCATION



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AGENDA

Wednesday, July 1, 2026
9 a.m. -- 1021 O Street, Room 2100

MEASURES HEARD IN FILE ORDER

1. AB 387 Alanis Nevaeh Youth Sports Safety Act.
2. AB 467 Fong Los Angeles Community College District: California Center for Climate Change Education.
3. AB 664 Alvarez Community colleges: baccalaureate degree program: Southwestern Community College District.
4. AB 2694 Alvarez Public postsecondary education: community colleges: statewide baccalaureate degree program.
5. AB 917 Ávila Farías County offices of education: school districts: average daily attendance of less than 250 pupils: permanent status.
6. AB 1093 Solache Public postsecondary education: academic exchange programs.
7. AB 1636 Solache Cerritos Community College District: data sharing.
- *8. AB 2120 Solache School district employees: merit system.
9. AB 2496 Solache Local educational agencies: reports: school accountability report card: California School Dashboard: local control accountability plan: local control funding formula budget overview.
10. AB 2528 Solache Community colleges: governing board member compensation.

11.	AB 1644	Muratsuchi	Pupils: use of smartphones: prohibition: report.
12.	AJR 19	Muratsuchi	United States Department of Education: proposed closure.
13.	AB 1769	Ramos	Student transfer: tribal colleges.
14.	AB 1851	Gipson	Pupil health: social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports.
15.	AB 1858	Lowenthal	California State University: Joint Associate's Degree Pilot Program.
16.	AB 2017	Haney	State holidays: Eid.
*17.	AB 2071	Hoover	Pupil instruction: digital wellness.
*18.	AB 2158	Hoover	Pupil instruction: outdoor learning.
*19.	AB 2189	Nguyen	Statewide Special Education Parent Advocacy Collaborative.
20.	AB 2301	Soria	Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program.
*21.	AB 2417	Zbur	Community colleges: part-time faculty: retirement.
22.	AB 2460	Celeste Rodriguez	Pupil health: mental health: model referral protocols.
*23.	AB 2468	Patel	School accountability: pupils with disabilities: inclusion.
24.	AB 2540	Stefani	Public health: public postsecondary education: student health centers: abortion by medication techniques.
25.	AB 2551	Elhawary	Public postsecondary education: Equity in Higher Education Act: prohibition on violence, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination: student hearings.
26.	AB 2651	Bonta	Informed Parents, Healthy Schools Act.
27.	AB 2771	Business and Professions	California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009.

***Consent Items**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 387 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Alanis
Version: June 25, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Michelle Nguyen

Subject: Nevaeh Youth Sports Safety Act.

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 allows a public and private local facility with a permanent sports infrastructure to procure and maintain an automated external defibrillator (AED) during an official practice or match permitted by the facility. This bill requires that a facility that has procured and maintained an AED ensure that a youth sports organization has access to the AED.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires a youth sports organization that elects to offer an athletic program, commencing January 1, 2028, to ensure that its athletes have access to an AED during any official practice or match. (Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 124238.5)
- 2) Requires a youth sports organization, commencing January 1, 2027, to ensure that its coaches are certified, and recertified at least every two years, to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and operate an AED, and that there is a written cardiac emergency response plan. (HSC § 124238.5)
- 3) Requires that the written cardiac emergency response plan be reviewed annually with coaches and staff and that the written emergency response plan be consistent with nationally recognized, evidence-based standards. (HSC § 124238.5)
- 4) Requires that the written cardiac emergency response plan detail the following:
 - a) The location of any AEDs and procedures to be followed in the event of sudden cardiac arrest.
 - b) The responsibilities of the coach, administration, and athletes during the event.
 - c) How the coach, administration, and athletes will be notified and trained on the emergency response plan.

- d) An annual electronic communication to the parents or guardians of enrolled participants that includes the cardiac emergency response plan or an internet link to the plan, the location or locations of any AEDs, and identifies the staff members designated to be notified in the event of a sudden cardiac event. (HSC § 124238.5)
- 5) Requires a youth sports organization, commencing January 1, 2028, to ensure that its AED is maintained and tested according to the operation and maintenance guidelines established by the manufacturer of that AED and the applicable rules and regulations of the federal Food and Drug Administration or any other applicable state or federal authority. (HSC § 124238.5)
- 6) Requires buildings used for educational purposes through grade 12 with an occupancy of 200 or more, and constructed on or after January 1, 2017, or renovated as specified on or after January 1, 2020, to have an AED on the premises subject to specified requirements, and requires that a person or entity that acquires an AED for emergency care pursuant to this requirement not be liable for any civil damages resulting from any acts or omissions in the rendering of the emergency care by use of an AED if that person or entity has complied with specified requirements. (HSC § 19300)
- 7) Requires a school district or the charter school, if a school district or the charter school elects to offer any interscholastic athletic program, to acquire at least one AED for each school that participates in the program within the jurisdiction of the school district or the charter school. (Education Code § 35179.6)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Defines “permanent sports infrastructure” as a fixed, nontemporary facility or structure designed and maintained for the purpose of hosting organized sports activities that is regularly permitted, rented, leased, or otherwise granted permission of use for youth sports programs.
- 2) Requires a public or private local facility with a permanent sports infrastructure, commencing January 1, 2028, to procure and maintain an AED during an official practice or match at that facility and ensure that the youth sports organization has access to the AED.
- 3) Requires the youth sports organization, commencing January 1, 2028, if an AED is not available at the public or private local facility where an official practice or match is taking place, to ensure there is access to one that is operational and has it available during the entire practice or match.
- 4) Requires that a public or private local facility—in addition to a youth sports organization—ensure that its AED is maintained and tested according to the operation and maintenance guidelines established by the manufacturer of that

AED and the applicable rules and regulations of the federal Food and Drug Administration or any other applicable state or federal authority.

- 5) Requires a public or private local facility, commencing January 1, 2028, to work in collaboration with the youth sports organization to ensure an AED is installed or accessible at the facility.
- 6) Requires a public or private local facility, commencing January 1, 2028, to work with the youth sports organization to identify means to share the financial costs associated with ensuring an AED is installed or accessible at the facility.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “California took an important step forward with the passage of the Nevaeh Youth Sports Safety Act, but as implementation has progressed, it has become clear that many youth sports organizations, particularly those serving rural and underserved communities, face significant challenges in providing and maintaining access to automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on their own. AB 387 builds upon that foundation by promoting collaboration between youth sports organizations and the public and private facilities where athletic activities occur, helping ensure that lifesaving equipment is available when and where it is needed most. By creating a more practical framework for AED access and emergency preparedness, this bill seeks to improve safety for young athletes while recognizing the operational and financial realities faced by youth sports programs and facility operators throughout California.”
- 2) ***Follow-up to legislation requiring youth sports organizations to ensure access to an AED during an official practice or match.*** To protect young athletes against sudden cardiac arrest, AB 1467 (Alanis, Chapter 24, Statutes of 2023) requires a youth sports organization that elects to offer an athletic program to ensure that by January 1, 2027, its athletes have access to an AED during any official practice or match. Two years later, AB 310 (Alanis, Chapter 254, Statutes of 2025) added a requirement for youth sports organizations to ensure their coaches are certified to perform CPR and operate an AED, and have a written cardiac emergency response plan, beginning January 1, 2027.

This bill aims to provide a collaborative framework between youth sports organizations and facility operators to shift which entities are responsible for AEDs and to share the overall cost.

- 3) ***This bill previously shifted the cost burden from youth sports organizations to local facilities, but recent amendments soften that burden.*** A previous version of this bill required local facilities to procure and maintain an AED and to ensure that youth sports organizations have access to the AED. This effectively shifted the cost burden of ensuring access to an AED from youth sports organizations to public and private local facilities. Public and private local entities include cities, counties, special districts (such as parks and recreation districts), and schools that can host organized sports activities. The cost of a new portable AED can be under \$1,000. However, according to an opposition letter submitted by

multiple organizations, if an AED needs to be installed in an outdoor storage case and needs to be weather-proof and vandalism-proof, estimates can range from \$3,000 to \$15,000 to procure, install, and maintain an AED in an outdoor area.

Recent amendments have softened that requirement as well as the cost pressures for local facilities. This bill now requires that a facility that has procured and maintained an AED must ensure that a youth sports organization has access to the AED, and this bill no longer requires local facilities to procure and maintain AEDs.

- 4) ***Outstanding concerns around ensuring access to AEDs.*** Though the recent amendments alleviated some groups' concerns about cost, other organizations, including several school associations, still have outstanding concerns about what it means to provide access to an AED.

Existing law requires a school district or charter school electing to offer an interscholastic athletic program to acquire at least one AED for use by participants in the program. Nearly all public and private high schools are members of the California Interscholastic Federation and therefore also offer interscholastic athletic programs, so this means that nearly all high schools have an AED, assuming they are complying with existing law. Existing law also requires TK-12 educational buildings with an occupancy of 200 or more, and constructed on or after January 1, 2017, or renovated on or after January 1, 2020, to have an AED on the premises.

Opponents of this bill have expressed concern around what it means to provide access. This includes navigating the logistics and rules of providing a youth sports organization access to an AED if it is located in a different part of the school and if these organizations should be allowed access to other parts of a school campus if staff are not present. There are also fiscal concerns about schools potentially needing to pay for additional staff time to ensure access to an AED, especially because youth sports organizations are more likely to be using school facilities when school is out (after school or in the summer), which is when there are fewer staff on campus.

- 5) ***Committee amendments.*** To provide greater clarity on what it means to coordinate access to an AED on a school campus, Committee staff recommends, and the author accepts, the following amendments:
- *State that an LEA is not deemed to have procured or maintained an AED, for purposes of this bill, unless the AED is in the same common area of the building where the official practice or match has taken place, or unless the AED is in the same outdoor field, or is attached externally to a building and is reasonably accessible, where the official practice or match has taken place.*
 - *Provide clarification that the cost sharing between a local facility and a youth sports organization includes identifying sharing financial costs of installing an AED at a facility.*

6) *Related and Prior Legislation.*

AB 310 (Alanis, Chapter 254, Statutes of 2025) (1) delays the implementation of a requirement, by one year to January 1, 2028, that youth sports organizations ensure their athletes have access to an AED during any official practice or match, and (2) requires youth sports organizations to ensure their coaches are certified to perform CPR and operate an AED, and have a written cardiac emergency response plan, beginning January 1, 2027.

AB 1467 (Alanis, Chapter 24, Statutes of 2023) requires a youth sports organization that elects to offer an athletic program to ensure that by January 1, 2027, its athletes have access to an AED during any official practice or match.

AB 2009 (Maienschein, Chapter 646, Statutes of 2018) requires a school district or charter school elects to offer any interscholastic athletic program to ensure that there is a written emergency action plan in place and, commencing July 1, 2019, to acquire at least one AED for each school within the school district or the charter school.

SUPPORT

Eric Paredes Save a Life Foundation

OPPOSITION

Association of California School Administrators
California Association of Joint Powers Authorities
California Association of School Business Officials
California State Association of Counties
City of Belmont
City of Buena Park
City of Corona
City of Rancho Cucamonga
City of Santa Rosa
Los Angeles Unified School District
Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management
Rural County Representatives of California
Urban Counties of California

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 467 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Fong
Version: June 9, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Michelle Nguyen

Subject: Los Angeles Community College District: California Center for Climate Change Education

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Appropriations*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Appropriations*.

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 codifies the existing California Center for Climate Change (Center) at West Los Angeles College in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), including the Center’s mission and responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCCs), a postsecondary education system in this state, under the administration of the Board of Governors (BOG), and specifies that the CCC system consists of community college districts (CCDs). (Education Code (EC) § 70900)
- 2) Requires that a CCD be under the control of a governing board; requires the governing board of a CCD to establish, maintain, operate, and govern one or more CCCs. (EC § 70902)
- 3) Authorizes the Regents of the University of California (UC) to establish the California-China Climate Institute, which operates in partnership with the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University and other entities and institutions in China and California. (EC § 92687)
- 4) Appropriates \$5 million on a one-time basis to the BOG to allocate to LACCD for the development and initial operations of the Center, and states that it is the mission of the Center to promote climate change education at the CCCs and to establish opportunities for students to engage in hands-on internships and other learning opportunities. (Uncodified Section 61 of Chapter 54, Statutes of 2022)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Center at the West Los Angeles College within LACCD.
- 2) States that it is the mission of the Center to promote climate change education at the CCCs and establish opportunities for students to engage in hands-on internships and other learning opportunities.
- 3) Requires the Center to do all of the following:
 - a) Serve as a resource for CCCs on climate change education with the understanding that, at its core, climate change is a global issue of equity and social justice.
 - b) Build a clear climate change pathway that leads to appropriate certificates, degrees, and employment opportunities.
 - c) Enhance partnerships with nonprofit organizations that encourage the development of student internships and work-based learning opportunities.
 - d) Explore and expand internships, preapprenticeships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities in the equity, environmental justice, and green jobs sectors.
 - e) Partner with local and regional entities to support the workforce training needed in the greening of the energy grid and other industries.
 - f) Develop and sustain an annual urban climate change and sustainability conference.
- 4) Requires, when developing a clear climate change pathway, the Center to consult with relevant faculty and administrative groups of the CCCs, the California State University (CSU), and the UC, including, but not limited to, the Academic Senates of the CCC, the CSU, and the UC, and the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates.
- 5) Specifies that the unique circumstances of the LACCD condition the need for a special statute.
- 6) Makes findings and declarations pertaining to climate change.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 467 establishes the California Center for Climate Change Education at West Los Angeles College in the Los Angeles Community College District. The bill specifies the mission and responsibilities of the center, including commitments to educating students about climate change, exploring environmentally focused career fields, and partnering

with local and regional non-profits to develop student internships and job opportunities. By formalizing the Center's status in state law, California would safeguard the long-term viability of climate education through educational and work-based learning opportunities for students interested in environmental career fields, in addition to establishing an authentic blueprint of climate awareness that can be scaled across the California Community Colleges system."

- 2) **Research at CCCs.** The CCCs are designated to bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Its three primary areas of mission include education leading to associate degrees and university transfer, career technical education, and basic skills. As a secondary function, the community colleges may conduct institutional research concerning student learning and retention as is needed to facilitate their educational missions. The Center focuses on workforce training and building pathways to certificates and degrees, which appropriately work within the core strengths of CCCs. Additionally, the Center is charged with exploring and expanding internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities in equity, environmental justice, and green job sectors.
- 3) **Why West Los Angeles College?** AB 1913 (Bryan, 2022), which was similar to this bill, would have established the Center, but its contents were eventually adopted into the 2022 Budget Act. At that time, LACCD argued that the West Los Angeles College campus is the only CCC that offers a Climate Change and Environmental Studies Associate of Arts Degree. The degree is designed as a pathway for student transfer into environmental studies programs at four-year universities, or for pursuing environmental-related careers. The LACCD's Board of Trustees adopted the Clean Energy and Sustainability Resolution, which directs the district's staff to develop and implement a sustainability plan for the district to achieve 100% carbon-free energy goals by 2040.

Proponents of the measure argue that changing workforce needs within Los Angeles call for solutions in retraining and upskilling workers and that California's clean energy transition is set to have a large impact on workers in Los Angeles County. The county is one of three counties (Kern, Contra Costa, and Los Angeles) that, combined, account for roughly 50% of all employment in the fossil fuel and ancillary industries in California. As such, worker training programs are needed to ensure that a wide range of workers, including displaced fossil fuel industry workers, have access to the jobs created by clean energy investments.

The 2022 Budget Act included an appropriation of \$5 million in one-time funding to support the creation of the Center on the West Los Angeles College campus. The funding may be used to develop curricula related to climate change education for CCCs, establish opportunities for students to engage in hands-on internships and other learning opportunities, and hire staff to develop the Center. This bill codifies the mission and activities of the Center.

- 4) **Related and Prior Legislation.**

AB 3142 (Jones-Sawyer, 2024) would have codified the existing Center at West Los Angeles College in LACCD and would have created the California Mobile Unit

for Climate Change Education to assist the Center in promoting hands-on learning opportunities throughout the region. AB 3142 was vetoed by the Governor.

AB 1913 (Bryan, 2022) would have established the Center for the purpose of promoting climate change education at LACCD and to establish hands-on learning opportunities for CCC students. The contents of AB 1913 were subsequently adopted in the 2022 Budget Act, and AB 1913 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 183 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 54, Statutes of 2022) provided an appropriation of \$5 million in one-time funding to support the creation of the Center on the West Los Angeles College campus.

SUPPORT

Los Angeles Community College District (sponsor)

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 664	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Alvarez		
Version:	May 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Community colleges: baccalaureate degree program: Southwestern Community College District.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor to allow Southwestern Community College District to offer four workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs, outside of the existing CCC baccalaureate degree approval process. It further requires an interim and final report from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), and sunsets the provisions of the bill on January 1, 2037.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Differentiates the missions and functions of public and independent institutions of higher education. Under these provisions:
 - a) The primary mission of the California State University (CSU) is to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education, including teacher education. The CSU is authorized to establish two-year programs only when mutually agreed upon by the Trustees and the CCC Board of Governors. The CSU is also authorized to jointly award the doctoral degree with the University of California (UC) and with one or more independent institutions of higher education.
 - b) The UC provides undergraduate and graduate instruction and has exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education over graduate instruction in the professions of law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. The UC is also the primary state-supported academic agency for research.
 - c) The independent institutions of higher education provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and research in accordance with its respective mission.
 - d) The mission and function of the CCC are to offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level, and the CCC is authorized to grant the associate degrees. The CCCs are also required to offer learning

supports to close learning gaps, English as a Second Language instruction, and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4)

- 2) Authorizes the CCC Board of Governors, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish baccalaureate degree programs that do not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program offered by the CSU or UC. Allows for the approval of 30 CCC baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Current law further requires the CCC Chancellor to consult with and seek feedback from the CSU Chancellor, the UC President, and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities on proposed baccalaureate degree programs, as specified, and establishes a mechanism for the assessment, consultation, and approval of programs where duplication is identified, as specified. (EC § 78040 et seq.)
- 3) Requires the CSU Trustees to ensure that any changes in the admission criteria for campus admission comply with specified consultation, public meeting, notification, and disclosure requirements, and prohibits any change from becoming effective until one year has elapsed, or six months, if the change is based upon the resources of the local service area of the affected campus. Applies these requirements to all changes in the admission criteria that affect eligibility of local service area applicants, including changes to transfer requirements and determinations regarding impaction of majors. (EC § 89030.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes the CCC Chancellor to authorize the Southwestern Community College District to offer no more than four workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs, one in each of the following fields:
 - a) Forensic Studies.
 - b) Allied Health Education and Leadership.
 - c) Interaction Design.
 - d) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
- 2) Requires that the CCC Chancellor ensure that the application and review procedures and requirements related to the application period and timelines are met for any authorized program.
- 3) Requires the Southwestern Community College District to submit proposals for baccalaureate degree programs to be authorized pursuant to the bill's provisions to the CCC Chancellor and requires that the proposals include all of the following:

- a) Data supporting the regional labor market demand for the proposed degree program.
 - b) Data demonstrating the lack of availability of the proposed degree program at the regional public universities or the inability of a degree program offered at a regional public university to meet the demand for the skilled degree workforce in the region.
 - c) Evidence of collaboration that prioritizes structured partnerships between the Southwestern Community College District and regional public universities to avoid unnecessary duplication and to expand access to baccalaureate degrees. The structure of partnerships may include, but not be limited to, any of the following:
 - i) Guaranteed transfer agreements.
 - ii) 2 + 2 articulation agreements.
 - iii) Dual enrollment pathways with high school and public university partners such as 1+1+2 models.
 - iv) Credit for prior learning.
 - v) Shared use of facilities to support co-location or cross-location delivery models.
 - d) Evidence of program approval through the appropriate accreditation body, if necessary.
- 4) Specifies that full-time equivalent students enrolled in a baccalaureate program authorized by the bill's provisions will be included in the existing funding model developed and adopted consistent with the fee provisions for community college baccalaureate degree programs, as specified.
 - 5) Requires the LAO to conduct and present to the Legislature and to the Governor, an interim evaluation by July 1, 2031, and a final evaluation by July 1, 2035, of any baccalaureate degree programs offered under the bill that includes information about completion rates and program impact on underserved and underprepared students, among other things.
 - 6) Requires the Southwestern Community College District to provide the information necessary to conduct the evaluations, as determined by the LAO, to the CCC Chancellor and requires the chancellor to provide that information to the LAO upon request.
 - 7) Sunsets the bill's provisions on January 1, 2037.
 - 8) States that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable because of the unique position of the Southwestern Community College service area, being in an underserved college desert area.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, “South County San Diego is one of the largest regions in California without a public university offering bachelor’s degrees, leaving many residents, particularly working adults, place bound students, and transit dependent families, without realistic access to the credentials required by today’s regional economy. While Southwestern College has long standing partnerships with UC San Diego, San Diego State University, CSU San Marcos, and the City of Chula Vista, existing public university capacity and proximity are not sufficient to meet local bachelor’s level workforce demand.

“AB 664 is a targeted, place based pilot grounded in years of faculty led, regionally driven research and intersegmental collaboration. The workforce aligned bachelor’s degree programs contemplated by the bill were identified through sustained academic planning, labor market analysis, and program mapping conducted by faculty in coordination with regional UC and CSU partners. These efforts were undertaken to ensure that any proposed programs respond to documented workforce needs while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

“The bill authorizes Southwestern College to offer a limited number of bachelor’s degree programs in fields not adequately served by regional universities, requires collaboration with UC, CSU, and local partners, and includes evaluation and sunset provisions to ensure accountability. AB 664 is not intended to predetermine future university governance or siting decisions. Instead, it serves as a near term, collaborative step within the broader intersegmental strategy already endorsed by the Legislature and Governor to expand higher education access in South County.

“By allowing the region to address immediate access and workforce gaps while generating data on demand, program viability, and intersegmental coordination, AB 664 supports informed, evidence based planning for the future of higher education in South County San Diego.”

- 2) **Mission differentiation.** The state has four segments of higher education: three public and one private. Each plays a vital and unique role for the state and its students. Their mission statements are outlined in state statute. The CCCs are to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Its primary area of mission includes academic and vocational instruction leading to associate degrees and university transfer, career technical education, and remedial education. The primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree. The UC was granted the sole authority to offer doctoral degree programs and is the state’s primary research institution. Despite the differentiation of mission, the Legislature has authorized the CSU and CCCs to go beyond their original mission to offer doctoral degrees and baccalaureate degree programs, respectively, so long as programs do not duplicate those offered by the other segments with primary jurisdiction. Further expansion of CCC baccalaureate degree authority, as proposed in this bill, would signal the Legislature’s willingness to allow CCCs to potentially deviate further from their

core mission, duplicate programs offered by a segment with primary jurisdiction, and bypass the existing CCC baccalaureate approval process.

- 3) **Existing CCC Baccalaureate degree program.** SB 850 (Block, Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014) authorized the Board of Governors, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a CCC baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program included 15 participating CCC Districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs, as long as it did not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC. The original pilot led to the statewide authorization established by AB 927 (Medina, Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021), which allows the CCC Board of Governors to approve qualifying programs twice a year on an ongoing basis. Today, as reported on the CCC Chancellor's website, there are more than 50 approved CCC baccalaureate programs statewide, primarily in applied and workforce-related fields such as health care, industrial technology, and public safety. Specific degree offerings include respiratory care, mortuary science, industrial automation, and public safety management. These programs are intended to address unmet regional workforce needs rather than broad expansion into traditional academic fields of study. Since 2017, approximately 1,893 students have attained a CCC bachelor's degree, with 293 completed in the 2023-2024 academic year. Rather than expanding access through that existing statewide process, this bill establishes a separate statutory pathway applicable only to Southwestern Community College District.
- 4) **District specific authorizations could result in a patchwork of district specific statutes.** As mentioned, existing law establishes a uniform process for approving community college baccalaureate degree programs that applies equally to all community college districts. This bill instead creates a district-specific exception authorizing Southwestern Community College District to seek approval from the CCC Chancellor for four specified programs under separate statutory authority. The District would be required to demonstrate regional workforce demand, show that existing public universities cannot adequately meet that demand, and provide evidence of collaboration with regional public universities before programs could be authorized. The bill also requires interim and final evaluation by the LAO before the authority sunsets in 2037. While the bill attempts to address the higher education needs of South San Diego County, creating regional exceptions based on the circumstances of a single community college district could encourage similar requests from other regions and result in a patchwork of district-specific statutes rather than a consistent statewide policy. *If it is the desire of the Committee that underserved regions, workforce shortages, or limited access to nearby public university programs warrant additional flexibility for community college baccalaureate degrees, those policy questions may be better addressed through statewide changes that establish objective criteria applicable to all community college districts, rather than through legislation tailored to a single community college district.*
- 5) **Clarifying purpose of the TESOL degree.** Under this measure, Southwestern Community College District may seek approval to offer baccalaureate degree programs in Forensic Studies, Allied Health Education and Leadership, Interaction Design, and TESOL. According to the District, the proposed

bachelor's degree in TESOL is intended to prepare graduates for careers in adult education, workforce English training, instructional coordination, and other settings that do not require a California teaching credential. The District further states that the program is not intended to serve as a K-12 teacher preparation program or satisfy California's credentialing requirements. Rather, graduates interested in becoming K-12 teachers would pursue a post-baccalaureate credential program offered through the applicable four-year university. While this explanation provides helpful context, the bill does not specify the intended scope or purpose of the proposed TESOL degree. Because "Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages" could reasonably be interpreted by prospective students as preparation to teach in California public schools, the absence of clarifying language may create uncertainty regarding the careers for which the degree is designed. *The Committee may wish to consider whether the bill should more clearly describe the intended workforce focus of the TESOL degree or expressly clarify that the program does not constitute an approved educator preparation program or satisfy California teaching credential requirements.*

- 6) **Alternative solutions include intersegmental collaboration.** This bill requires the District to demonstrate that it has explored partnership opportunities with the CSU and the UC before seeking approval to offer a baccalaureate degree program. This requirement recognizes the state's goals for intersegmental collaboration where feasible. If it is the desire of the Legislature to expand access to baccalaureate degree programs, arguably, more effective and efficient alternatives do not require a departure from the CCC's mission but instead could focus on expanding and streamlining bachelor's degree pathways between CCCs and public or nonprofit universities. There are numerous examples of successful CCC/CSU pathway partnerships across the state, including Sonoma State University's (SSU) liberal studies bachelor's degree completion program, which provides upper-division instruction to transfer students taught by SSU faculty on the Mendocino Community College campus. This model brings the university to CCC students, building on the strengths of each segment. Further, in its recommendation for alternatives to the original CCC baccalaureate degree pilot program, the LAO's evaluation of the original pilot notes that improving alignment between CCC and the universities could increase the number of CCC students who ultimately obtain a bachelor's degree and reduce the amount of time students take to obtain a bachelor's degree. The LAO report asserts that CCCs and university pathways could not only be more cost-effective but also benefit more students (including place-bound students), thereby having a more widespread impact. *The Committee may wish to consider whether additional state efforts to strengthen intersegmental partnerships could provide another pathway for expanding bachelor's degree access before authorizing more independent CCC programs.*

- 7) **Related legislation.**

AB 2302 (Soria, 2026) requires the California Community College (CCC) Chancellor's Office to establish a Community College Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. AB 2301 is scheduled to be heard in this Committee on July 1, 2026.

AB 2053 (Ta, 2026) authorizes the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the Coast Community College District to offer a workforce-aligned cybersecurity baccalaureate degree program at Coastline College, as provided. Require the LAO to, on or before July 1, 2030, conduct and present to the Legislature and the Governor an interim evaluation of the baccalaureate degree program that is offered pursuant to that authorization and, on or before July 1, 2034, a final evaluation of that degree program, as provided. AB 2053 (Ta) was heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21, 2026 and failed passage.

AB 2136 (Pacheco, 2026) authorizes the BOG of the CCC to authorize the Cerritos Community College District to offer up to three applied baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of public safety management, paralegal studies, and automotive technology. AB 2136 was held in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

AB 2694 (Alvarez, 2026) changes the standard governing when community college districts may offer baccalaureate degree programs, replacing a hard prohibition on duplicating CSU or UC programs with a more flexible "substantially similar within the geographic region" test that includes exceptions for unmet workforce need and lack of CSU or UC enrollment from that region. The bill also modifies the objection and consultation process, narrowing the required consultation to programs that may be substantially similar to nearby CSU or UC offerings and streamlining the written agreement process when an objection is filed. AB 2694 is scheduled to be heard in this Committee on July 1, 2026.

SB 960 (Cabaldon, 2026) limits the prohibition on CCC duplication of CSU baccalaureate degree programs to instances where a CSU's campus local admission area includes or overlaps with the CCC district's territory, except when the CSU program has been impacted for at least three consecutive years. SB 960 is currently pending hearing in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SUPPORT

Southwestern Community College District (sponsor)
Associated Student Organization - Southwestern College
Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce
City of Chula Vista
HomeFed Corporation
Los Angeles Regional Consortium
National University
San Bernardino Community College District
San Diego 's Building and Construction Trades
South County Economic Development Council
Southwestern College Academic Senate

OPPOSITION

California Faculty Association

California State University, Office of the Chancellor

-- END --

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2694	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Alvarez		
Version:	April 23, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Public postsecondary education: community colleges: statewide baccalaureate degree program.

SUMMARY

This bill modifies the existing community college district baccalaureate degree program by authorizing program duplication if there is no substantially similar program offered at the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) within the geographic region. Additionally, this bill makes several technical changes, increasing required demonstration by an applicant of specified academic performance benchmarks, decreasing the percentage of baccalaureate programs that may be offered by a community college district, and requiring annual reporting to the Legislature.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Differentiates the missions and functions of public and independent institutions of higher education. Under these provisions:
 - a) The primary mission of the CSU is to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education, including teacher education. The CSU is authorized to establish two-year programs only when mutually agreed upon by the Trustees and the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors (BOG). The CSU is also authorized to jointly award the doctoral degree with the UC and with one or more independent institutions of higher education.
 - b) The UC provides undergraduate and graduate instruction and has exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education over graduate instruction in the professions of law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. The UC is also the primary state-supported academic agency for research.
 - c) The independent institution of higher education requires undergraduate and graduate instruction and research in accordance with their respective missions.

- d) The mission and function of the CCC are to offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level, and the CCC is authorized to grant the associate degrees. The CCCs are also required to offer learning supports to close learning gaps, English as a Second Language instruction, and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4)
- 2) Authorizes the CCC BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish baccalaureate degree programs that do not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program offered by the CSU or UC. Allows for the approval of 30 CCC baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Current law further requires the CCC Chancellor to consult with and seek feedback from the CSU Chancellor, the UC President, and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities on proposed baccalaureate degree programs, as specified, and establishes a mechanism for the assessment, consultation, and approval of programs where duplication is identified, as specified. (EC § 78040 et seq.)
 - 3) Requires the CSU Trustees to ensure that any changes in the admission criteria for campus admission comply with specified consultation, public meeting, notification and disclosure requirements, and prohibits any change from becoming effective until one year has elapsed, or six months, if the change is based upon the resources of the local service area of the affected campus. Applies these requirements to all changes in the admission criteria that affect eligibility of local service area applicants, including changes to transfer requirements and determinations regarding impact of majors. (EC § 89030.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill modifies the eligibility and approval process for a community college district participating in the statewide CCC baccalaureate degree program. Specifically, it:

- 1) Adds conditions for eligibility for a district participating in the CCC baccalaureate degree program to additionally satisfy either of the following:
 - a) Demonstrate, in its application, that it meets or exceeds performance benchmarks and goals for associate degree and certificate completion, as established by the CCC BOG.
 - b) If the district has not yet met the required benchmarks and goals for associate degree programs, submit a board-adopted improvement plan with measurable milestones consistent with the district's obligations under the strategic plan of the CCCs.
- 2) Prohibits a district from offering a baccalaureate degree program or program curricula *substantially similar*, instead of *already* offered, to a program offered by the CSU or the UC.

- 3) Allows the offering of a CCC baccalaureate degree program that is substantially similar where the CSU or UC does not enroll students from that geographic region in the same degree pathway or where documented unmet regional workforce needs justify the program.
- 4) When seeking authorization, includes in the list of information required for submission for review by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and CCC BOG, documentation demonstrating that the district meets the attainment eligibility requirements including the performance benchmarks and goals for associate degree and certificate completion for the community college district, or where applicable, the board-adopted improvement plan.
- 5) Reduces the total number of baccalaureate degree programs that may be offered by a district, at any time, from less than 25 percent to 15 percent of the total number of associate degree programs offered by the district.
- 6) Removes the requirement that the CCCCCO notify and send materials to the CSU Chancellor, UC President and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities about the proposed baccalaureate degree program.
- 7) Removes the current process by which CSU or UC may assess and object to a program that they believe duplicates a UC or CSU existing degree program and instead requires that the CCC Chancellor consult with and seek feedback from the CSU Chancellor and UC President regarding proposed baccalaureate degree programs that may be substantially similar to CSU or UC programs offered within the geographic region of the proposing district. If the CSU or UC believe there is substantial similarity within the geographic region, they may submit a written objection with supporting evidence. Upon receipt of an objection, the CCCCCO is required to convene the applicant and the objector to establish a written agreement before the program is approved.
- 8) Requires the CCCCCO to annually report to the Legislature, no later than March 1, on the status of all approved baccalaureate degree programs, the approved information for each approved program, including student outcome data and evidence of achieving the specified attainment goals.
- 9) Defines all of the following terms for purposes of the bill:
 - a) "Documented unmet regional workforce need" means evidence, as defined by the CCCCCO, showing demand for graduates in the field that is not met by existing baccalaureate degree programs within the geographic region.
 - b) "Geographic region" means the primary service area of the community college district as defined by Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations or as otherwise defined by the CCCCCO.
 - c) "Substantially similar" means that the proposed baccalaureate degree

program's curriculum, learning outcomes, and program objectives are materially overlapping with those of an existing CSU or UC baccalaureate degree program offered within the geographic region of the community college district such that the programs serve indistinguishable academic and workforce purposes.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "California's economic future depends on our ability to meet regional workforce demands while expanding equitable access to higher education. AB 2694 ensures that community college bachelor's degree programs remain responsive, affordable, and aligned with local labor market needs. By clarifying outdated statutory barriers, this bill helps students—especially those who are place-bound or underserved—access high-quality, four-year degree opportunities in their communities."
- 2) **Differentiation of mission.** The state has four segments of higher education: three public and one private. Each plays a vital and unique role for the state and its students. Their mission statements are outlined in state statute. The CCCs are to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Its primary area of mission includes academic and vocational instruction leading to associate degrees and university transfer, career technical education, and remedial education. The primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree. The UC was granted the sole authority to offer doctoral degrees and is the state's primary research institution. Despite the differentiation of mission, the Legislature has authorized the CSU and CCCs to go beyond their original mission to offer doctoral degrees and baccalaureate degree programs, respectively, so long as programs do not duplicate those offered by the other segments with primary jurisdiction. This bill would narrow the prohibition on duplication by permitting substantially similar programs under specified circumstances, raising the broader policy question of how much flexibility should be afforded before the distinction between segment missions begin to erode. *Further expansion of CCC baccalaureate degree authority, as proposed in this bill, would signal the Legislature's willingness to allow CCCs to potentially deviate further from their core mission and duplicate programs offered by a segment with primary jurisdiction.*
- 3) **Existing CCC Bachelor's program.** SB 850 (Block, Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014) authorized the BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a CCC baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program included 15 participating CCC districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs, as long as it did not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC. The original pilot led to the statewide authorization established by AB 927 (Medina, Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021), which allows the CCC BOG to approve qualifying programs twice a year. Today, as reported on the CCCCO website, there are more than 50 approved CCC baccalaureate programs statewide, primarily in applied and workforce-related fields such as health care, industrial technology, and public safety. Specific degree offerings include respiratory care, mortuary science,

industrial automation, and public safety management. These programs are intended to address unmet regional workforce needs rather than broad expansion into traditional academic fields of study. Since 2017, approximately 1,893 students have attained a CCC bachelor's degree, with 293 completed in the 2023-24 academic year. This bill broadens the circumstances under which community colleges may offer programs that overlap with CSU or UC offerings.

- 4) **Growing tension over duplication.** This bill modifies the existing consultation process by eliminating the requirement that the CCCCCO provide application materials to the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities and replacing the current duplication review process with one requiring the CCCCCO to consult with the CSU and UC and convene the parties to reach a written agreement when an objection is raised. These changes shift the process from a formal review of potential duplication to one that places greater emphasis on consultation and negotiated resolution across the public higher education segments.

The debate surrounding CCC baccalaureate degrees has increasingly moved away from the administrative approval process established in statute to the legislative process. Existing law establishes an administrative process intended to evaluate proposed CCC baccalaureate degree programs based on objective criteria, including workforce need and program duplication. Since enactment of the statewide program, disagreements regarding program duplication have resulted not only in formal objections during the Chancellor's review process, but also in district-specific legislation seeking authority to establish individual baccalaureate degree programs. In addition, community college districts have increasingly sought letters of support from Members of the Legislature as part of their applications, reflecting the growing role legislative advocacy has played in what was originally intended to be an evidence based administrative review process. The issue is not whether CCCs should continue offering bachelor's degrees, but rather how duplication, workforce need, and student access should be evaluated. Recognizing the statewide implications of this issue, committee staff understands that the Chair of this Committee has called on the CCCs, CSU and UC to work collaboratively toward a statewide approach rather than addressing these issues through individual program approvals or district-specific legislation.

- 5) **Two bills, similar goals.** Earlier this year, this Committee also heard SB 960 (Cabaldon, 2026), which, similar to this bill, seeks to address the community college baccalaureate degree approval process through a similar statewide framework. As both measures seek to address the statewide baccalaureate degree approval process, staff understands that the authors continue working toward a unified approach that reflects broad agreement among the affected stakeholders.
- 6) **Changes to program duplication standard.** As mentioned, existing law generally prohibits a CCC from offering a baccalaureate degree that duplicates one already offered by CSU or UC. That prohibition serves two purposes. First, it preserves the differentiated missions established within California's higher education system. Second, it encourages public institutions to coordinate

program offerings instead of competing for the same students. This bill would replace the current statewide duplication standard with one based largely on geographic region, allowing substantially similar programs where the CSU or UC does not enroll students from that region or where documented regional workforce need exists. The bill defines “substantially similar” to mean programs whose curriculum, learning outcomes, and objectives are materially overlapping such that they serve indistinguishable academic and workforce purposes. Under current law, “already offered” is undefined, establishing a statutory definition for substantially similar provides greater clarity regarding the standard applied during implementation. As a result, a CCC could be authorized to offer a degree that is already available elsewhere in the state so long as the statutory conditions are satisfied. The Committee may wish to consider whether geographic proximity is the appropriate standard for determining unnecessary duplication, particularly as more CCC baccalaureate programs are approved over time.

- 7) **Workforce evidence.** This bill would allow a community college district to offer a baccalaureate degree program that is substantially similar to a CSU or UC program where documented unmet regional workforce needs justify the program. As drafted, however, the bill defines documented unmet regional workforce need as evidence determined by the CCCCCO. Given that this determination may be used to justify approval of a program that is substantially similar to one offered by the CSU or UC, those determinations should be based on objective workforce information. The Committee may wish to consider whether determinations regarding unmet regional workforce need should rely more heavily on labor market information produced by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency or another neutral workforce entity, rather than solely by the CCCCCO. As such, ***Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended*** to require that documented unmet regional workforce need be supported by labor market information and analyses published by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency rather than a determination of sufficient evidence that is left to administrative discretion as follows:

(1) “Documented unmet regional workforce need” means evidence, ***as defined by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, showing demand for graduates in the field that is not met by existing baccalaureate degree programs within the geographic region, as demonstrated through labor market analyses prepared by the California Community Colleges Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research using labor market information and analyses published by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency. Such analyses shall consider projected employment demand, annual job openings, workforce supply, employer demand, wage data, and other indicators relevant to the proposed baccalaureate degree program.***

- 8) **Defining “geographic region.”** The bill replaces the existing statewide duplication standard with one based on whether a substantially similar CSU or UC program exists within the “geographic region” served by the proposing CCC district. The bill defines geographic region as the primary service area of the CCC district, as defined in Title 5 in the California Code of Regulations or as otherwise defined by the CCCCCO. CSU and UC campuses often serve students

from multiple CCC districts and throughout the state. Given that duplication analysis depends on how a geographic region is defined, the Committee may wish to consider whether the proposed definition provides sufficiently clear parameters for defining that region.

- 9) **Conditions eligibility on student attainment.** Existing law focuses primarily on whether a proposed baccalaureate degree program addresses an unmet workforce need while avoiding duplication. This bill adds a new CCC district eligibility requirement by conditioning participation in the statewide baccalaureate degree program on a CCC district demonstrating that it meets specified associate degree and certificate completion benchmarks or alternatively, adopting a board approved improvement plan with measurable milestones. In doing so, the bill links expansion of baccalaureate degree authority to a district's performance in carrying out its existing community college mission. The inclusion of an alternative improvement plan recognizes that districts may be at different stages of improving student outcomes while still seeking to expand bachelor's degree opportunities. It ensures that CCC districts demonstrate success in serving students through their existing associate degree and certificate programs before expanding into upper-division instruction. The practical effect of the eligibility requirement will depend largely on how board adopted improvement plans are evaluated during the approval process.
- 10) **Impact on CCCs core mission.** In previous discussions around authorizing the offering of CCC baccalaureate degrees, concerns were raised that broadening the CCC mission would diminish attention to transfer, associate degree completion, remedial education goals, and career technical education. In an effort to address this concern and limit potential impacts on the CCCs' core mission of the CCC, as well as on existing associate degree programs at local campuses, existing law established by AB 927 limits the number of programs a CCC may offer to no more than 25 percent of the number of associate degree programs offered at the college. This bill reduces that cap from 25 percent to 15 percent of a district's associate degree programs, reflecting an effort to balance additional bachelor's degree authority with preservation of the CCCs critical mission.
- 11) **Alternative solutions to expand access.** If it is the desire of the Legislature to expand access to baccalaureate degree programs, more effective and efficient alternatives do not require a departure from the CCC's mission to expand and streamline bachelor's degree pathways between CCCs and public or nonprofit universities. There are numerous examples of successful CCC/CSU pathway partnerships across the state, including Sonoma State University's (SSU) liberal studies bachelor's degree completion program, which provides upper-division instruction to transfer students taught by SSU faculty on the Mendocino Community College campus. This model brings the university to CCC students, building on the strengths of each segment. Further, in its recommendation for alternatives to the original CCC baccalaureate degree pilot program, the LAO's analysis notes that improving alignment between CCC and the universities could increase the number of CCC students who ultimately obtain a bachelor's degree and reduce the amount of time students take to obtain their degree. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) report asserts that CCC and university

pathways could not only be more cost-effective but also benefit more students (including place-bound students), thereby having a more widespread impact. Such models may address geographic access concerns without requiring CCCs to independently replicate university programs. *The Committee may wish to consider all of the following:*

- *Can the process for developing CCC/CSU collaborative efforts address access issues be modified to facilitate greater proliferation of these programs?*
- *Should a CCC be required to demonstrate that existing avenues for partnership with CSU are not possible or viable before seeking an expanded authorization to offer an independent baccalaureate degree?*

12) **Higher education coordination.** All of California's public education institutions share a commitment to work together to ensure that the various parts of the system work for all Californians. The assignment of distinct missions is important as it helps to justify allocation of state resources for three separate public university systems (CCC, CSU, and UC), contain growth in costs, and facilitate college access for all eligible California students. Although the Legislature recently established the California Education Interagency Council to improve coordination across California's education systems, California no longer has an entity charged with statewide higher education planning and coordination of institutional missions, academic program development, and long-range postsecondary policy following the elimination of the California Postsecondary Education Commission in 2011. As a result, significant changes to California's higher education framework are increasingly considered through individual legislative proposals rather than through a comprehensive statewide planning process, which could result in an uncoordinated and fragmented system. As the Legislature considers changes to the statewide approval process, continued coordination among the segments will remain important to ensuring that expansion of CCC baccalaureate programs complements, rather than fragments, California's broader system of higher education.

13) **Arguments in support.** The CCCCO states in their letter of support submitted to this Committee, in part, "AB 2694 recognizes that many community college students are place-bound learners, including working adults, caregivers, and first-generation students who cannot relocate or commute long distances to pursue a bachelor's degree. For these students, the existence of a program elsewhere in the state does not necessarily translate into meaningful access. Current transfer pathways remain critically important, but they alone have not been sufficient to address persistent workforce shortages. AB 2694 expands opportunities for students who may otherwise stop out, delay completion, or leave the state altogether, allowing them to advance their education while remaining connected to their communities.

"By expanding affordable and accessible baccalaureate degree opportunities, AB 2694 also helps address the financial barriers that prevent many students from pursuing a bachelor's degree. Community college baccalaureate degree programs provide one of the most affordable pathways to a four-year degree in

California, helping reduce tuition costs and student borrowing while addressing access barriers for low-income students. Expanding lower-cost bachelor's degree pathways through community colleges can help increase statewide degree attainment and economic mobility without imposing the same level of financial burden often associated with traditional university pathways.”

- 14) **Arguments in Opposition.** In their letter in opposition submitted to this Committee the CSU, argues, in part, “CSU believes that any proposal that significantly expands the Community Colleges’ baccalaureate degree authority should include, at minimum, statewide duplication standards to ensure the efficient use of state resources, demonstration of meeting a clear workforce need, and a prohibition on substantially similar programs where CSU or UC programs are already accessible and effectively serving the region. Community colleges should demonstrate that they are meeting performance benchmarks for their core mission, including associate degree completion and transfer to four-year institutions, before offering new baccalaureate degree programs. We should also require annual reporting on the status and completion rates of these programs. Finally, proposals should include a full fiscal analysis across higher education segments and K-12 to understand how these degree expansions will impact Prop. 98 funding distributions and each segment’s core mission. Legislators should consider whether Prop. 98 funding should be used for bachelor’s degree programs, and if so, whether the CSU should also be able to access Prop. 98 funding for its own baccalaureate degree program. The state should support the expansion of baccalaureate degree programs through partnership programs, including clear limits and written agreement when programs are substantially similar, while continuing to bolster each segment’s core mission.”

- 15) ***Related and prior legislation.***

AB 664 (Alvarez, 2026) authorizes the CCCCO to allow the Southwestern Community College District to offer no more than four workforce- aligned baccalaureate degree programs, as provided. Requires interim and final reports from the LAO, and sunsets the provisions on January 1, 2035. AB 664 is set to be heard by this Committee on July 1, 2026.

AB 2301 (Soria, 2026) requires the CCCCO to develop a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (BSN) Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The bill would limit the pilot program to 10 community college districts statewide and would require the CCCCO to identify and select eligible community college districts based on specified criteria. AB 2301 is scheduled to be heard by this Committee on July 1, 2026.

AB 2053 (Ta, 2026) authorizes the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the Coast Community College District to offer a workforce-aligned cybersecurity baccalaureate degree program at Coastline College, as provided. Require the LAO to, on or before July 1, 2030, conduct and present to the Legislature and the Governor an interim evaluation of the baccalaureate degree program that is offered pursuant to that authorization and, on or before July 1, 2034, a final

evaluation of that degree program, as provided. AB 2053 was heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21, 2026, and failed passage.

AB 2136 (Pacheco, 2026) authorizes the BOG of the CCC to authorize the Cerritos Community College District to offer up to three applied baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of public safety management, paralegal studies, and automotive technology. AB 2136 was held in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

SB 960 (Cabaldon, 2026) limits the prohibition on CCC duplication of CSU baccalaureate degree programs to instances where a CSU's campus local admission area includes or overlaps with the CCC district's territory, except when the CSU program has been impacted for at least three consecutive years. SB 960 is currently pending hearing in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

AB 1400 (Soria, 2025) would have required the Chancellor of the CCC to develop a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. AB 1400 was vetoed by the Governor, whose message read in part:

“Last year, I vetoed a nearly identical bill, citing two primary reasons that continue to persist.

“First, the 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand BSN partnerships with UC, CSU, and independent nonprofit higher education institutions. These partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education must continue to collaborate on building these programs, and returning this bill will ensure those collaborative efforts are not undermined.

“Second, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been authorized to offer independent programs outside of their traditional roles, provided they do not duplicate degree offerings of other public segments. I encourage the CCC system to focus on implementing this expanded authority and to ensure that it can continue to make progress on the unique and vital role the CCC plays in serving its students and the state. Given these significant changes, a pause should be maintained to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted”.

AB 2104 (Soria, 2024) would have required the Chancellor of the CCC to develop a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that authorizes select CCC districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. AB 2104 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, whose veto message read in part:

***“I support the author’s intent to expand access to baccalaureate nursing degree programs in underserved communities. The 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) partnerships with higher education institutions. These types of partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration.*”**

***“Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.”*”**

SB 895 (Roth, 2024) would have required the CCCCO to establish a Community College Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 CCC districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. SB 895 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, whose veto message read in part:

***“I appreciate the author’s commitment to expanding access to baccalaureate nursing degree programs for community college students. The 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) partnerships with higher education institutions. These types of partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration.*”**

***“Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.”*”**

AB 1311 (Soria, Chapter 126, Statutes of 2023) required the LAO to conduct an assessment, on or before January 1, 2025, evaluating the efficacy of existing programs in allied health jointly offered between campuses of the CCCs, the CSU, and the UC. Required the final assessment to be reported, in writing, to the Legislature and the Governor on or before January 1, 2025, as specified.

SUPPORT

Allan Hancock College

Antelope Valley Community College District
Association of California Community College Administrators
Barstow Community College
Cabrillo Community College
Calbright College
California Community College Baccalaureate Association
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Cerritos College
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District
Chaffey College
Citrus College
Clovis Community College
Coalinga College
Coast Community College District
College of Marin
College of the Canyons
College of the Desert
College of the Redwoods
College of the Sequoias
College of the Siskiyous
Columbia College
Community College League of California
Contra Costa Community College District
Copper Mountain College
Cuesta College
De Anza College
El Camino College
Evergreen Valley College
Feather River College
Foothill College
Foothill-De Anza Community College District
Fresno City College
Gavilan College
Glendale Community College
Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
Hartnell College
Imperial Valley College
Kern Community College District
Lake Tahoe Community College
Lassen Community College
Lemoore College
Long Beach City College
Long Beach Community College District
Los Angeles Community College District
Los Angeles Pierce College
Madera Community College
Mendocino College
Merced College
Miracosta College
Modesto Junior College

Mt. San Antonio College
Mt. San Jacinto Community College
North Orange Community College District
North Orange County Community College District
Ohlone College
Palo Verde College
Palomar Community College District
Pasadena Area Community College District
Peralta Community College District
Rancho Santiago Community College District
Reedley College
Rio Hondo College
Riverside Community College
Riverside Community College District
San Bernardino Community College District
San Diego City College
San Diego Community College District
San Diego Continuing Education
San Diego Mesa College
San Diego Miramar College
San Francisco Community College District
San Jose City College
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District
San Mateo County Community College District
Santa Monica College
Santa Rosa Junior College
Shasta College
Sierra College
Solano Community College
South Orange County Community College District
Southwestern College
Southwestern Community College District
State Center Community College District
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Taft College
Ventura County Community College District
Victor Valley College
Victor Valley Community College District
West Hills Community College District
West Valley-Mission Community College District
Yosemite Community College District
Yuba College
Yuba Community College District

OPPOSITION

California Faculty Association
California State University, Office of the Chancellor
University of California

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 917 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Ávila Farías
Version: February 19, 2025
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: County offices of education: school districts: average daily attendance of less than 250 pupils: permanent status.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Appropriations*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Appropriations*.

SUMMARY

This bill changes when some certificated employees earn permanent status by eliminating distinctions based on a district’s size and allowing service in any regional occupational center or program (ROCP), not just those operated by a single school district, to count toward permanent status.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires most certificated employees in school districts with an average daily attendance (ADA) of 250 or more to be classified as permanent after two years of satisfactory service and reelection for a third year. (Education Code (EC) § 44929.21)
- 2) Permits, but does not require, school districts with fewer than 250 ADA to grant permanent status after three years of service and reelection for a fourth year. (EC § 44929.23)
- 3) Applies a two-year probationary period for permanent status to county office of education (COE) teachers only if the COE has ADA of 250 or more. (EC § 1296)
- 4) Prohibits service as an instructor in classes conducted at a ROCP from counting toward permanent status in a school district, but provides an exception allowing such service to count if the ROCP is operated by a single school district. (EC § 44910)
- 5) Includes a number of employment and dismissal provisions that apply differently to certificated employees whose probationary period began before the 1983–84 fiscal year or to those employed in small school districts or COEs. (EC § 44948)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires certificated employees in school districts and COEs with fewer than 250 ADA to be granted permanent status after two years of employment and reelection for a third year, consistent with the probationary period applicable to larger local educational agencies (LEAs).
- 2) Repeals Education Code Section 44910, which currently prohibits service as an instructor in an ROCP from counting toward permanent status in a school district, except when the ROCP is operated by a single school district.
- 3) Adds a new version of Section 44910 that affirms service in any ROCP counts toward permanent status in a school district, without distinguishing the ROCP's operator.
- 4) Repeals or amends various Education Code sections that apply only to employees whose probationary period began before the 1983–84 fiscal year, including provisions that establish alternative dismissal procedures or longer probationary timelines in small school districts.
- 5) Makes conforming changes to provisions governing dismissal, suspension, reassignment, and employment contracts to align with the bill's permanent status requirements and apply due process protections uniformly across all LEAs.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “California is a diverse state with a diverse student body. Having a teaching staff that reflects the diversity of its students is essential for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

“When students see teachers who share their cultural, racial, or linguistic backgrounds, it fosters a sense of belonging and shows them that their identities are valued. Diverse teachers bring varied perspectives and experiences, enriching classroom discussions and helping address biases or gaps in traditional curricula. Representation also encourages greater understanding and connection, as teachers can draw on their own experiences to build meaningful relationships with students. A diverse teaching body not only promotes inclusivity, but also prepares all students to thrive in a multicultural society by modeling empathy, understanding, and respect for differences.

“AB 917 will ensure that deserving educators and school employees in all school districts and county offices of education have an opportunity to achieve permanent employment status— providing career stability, workforce retention, and increasing the diversity of California’s education workforce.”

- 2) ***What does permanent status mean?*** Permanent status provides certificated employees with due process protections against dismissal or non-reelection. A

permanent employee may only be dismissed for statutorily defined causes and is entitled to a hearing before a Commission on Professional Competence if dismissal is challenged. Permanent status also affects how employees are treated during reductions in force, including rights related to seniority, bumping, and notice. These protections are intended to promote stability in the workforce, discourage arbitrary employment decisions, and support the retention of qualified staff. At the same time, they can limit an employer's flexibility to reassign or reduce staff based on shifting programmatic needs.

- 3) ***Why have certain employees historically been excluded from permanent status?*** California law has long varied permanent status eligibility based on school size, probationary start date, and program type. For example, until recently, adult education teachers were excluded from attaining permanent status. AB 897 (McCarty, Chapter 548, Statutes of 2023) removed this exclusion for adult education teachers employed by school districts, provided they serve at least 75% of full-time equivalent hours. Legislative discussion around AB 897 noted that adult education programs have historically been categorically funded and often operated outside traditional TK–12 staffing and accountability structures, contributing to their exclusion from permanent status provisions.

Similarly, instructors in ROCPs have long been excluded from the permanent status pathway unless the ROCP was operated by a single school district. AB 2245 (Juan Carrillo, Chapter 956, Statutes of 2024) amended this framework by requiring, commencing July 1, 2025, that service as an instructor in classes conducted at an ROCP operated by a single school district be included in computing the service required to attain permanent employee status at that school district, ensuring that employment relationships are recognized when the operator and employer are the same.

The ongoing expansion—first via AB 897 for adult education and then AB 2245 for single-district ROCP instructors—suggests a broader legislative interest in eliminating carve-outs that were historically justified by funding instability, part-time staffing patterns, or the specialized governance of certain programs. This bill continues this trend by eliminating distinctions based on district size and removing operator-based limitations on which ROCP instructors may accrue service credit toward permanent status.

- 4) ***Arguments for expanding permanent status eligibility.*** Proponents of expanding eligibility argue that permanent status offers basic job protections that should apply to all certificated employees, regardless of the size of their employing agency or the structure of the program in which they teach. They note that temporary or probationary employment can discourage retention, particularly in hard-to-staff positions. Supporters also contend that distinctions based on ADA thresholds or employment start dates are outdated and arbitrary, and that funding instability should be addressed through budget and program reforms rather than limiting employee rights. In the context of ROCPs, they argue that as funding has shifted into the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), instructors should be treated like other high school educators.

- 5) **Arguments for maintaining some exclusions.** Opponents of expanding permanent status argue that in small districts and specialized programs like ROCPs, staffing needs are more variable and sensitive to funding changes, making rigid employment protections harder to manage. In the case of ROCPs, industry alignment is critical, and course offerings may need to change rapidly in response to labor market trends. Critics argue that permanent status can reduce a program’s ability to phase out outdated courses and replace instructors whose skillsets are no longer aligned with evolving needs. Additionally, some joint powers authority (JPA) operated ROCPs do not receive direct state funding, relying instead on competitive grants like the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) and the K–12 Strong Workforce Program, which can vary significantly year to year.
- 6) **Should district size or program type matter?** This bill raises the broader question of whether distinctions in permanent status eligibility based on district size or program type remain appropriate. On one hand, applying uniform tenure rules across all LEAs promotes fairness and predictability for certificated employees performing similar work. On the other hand, the operational realities of small school districts, COEs, and ROCPs may justify different approaches to probation and tenure.

There are approximately 200 school districts and 22 COEs with fewer than 250 units of ADA. Under current law, these small LEAs are exempt from the standard two-year probationary timeline and are not required to grant permanent status at all—though they may do so after three years, at their discretion. Removing that exemption would require these LEAs to make tenure decisions earlier, which could be challenging given limited administrative capacity, small applicant pools, and enrollment volatility.

For COEs in particular, ADA tends to be low even when they operate many programs and employ sizable certificated workforces, because COEs only receive ADA—and generate LCFF funding—for specific high-need student populations, such as those in juvenile court schools or county community programs. As a result, the 250-ADA threshold may exclude COEs that serve many students through specialized programs. Requiring earlier tenure decisions for COEs with technically “low” ADA could create obligations that are not well-aligned with their program structure or funding streams.

- 7) **Potential implementation issues: Who grants permanent status when service is in an ROCP?** This bill replaces the current exclusion in Education Code Section 44910 with an affirmative provision stating that service in any ROCP counts toward permanent status in a school district. However, the bill does not specify how that service is to be credited—or by whom—when the ROCP is operated by an entity other than a single school district or when the instructor is not employed by a school district.

ROCPs in California are operated under different governance models. Some are run by a single school district, others by a COE, and others by a JPA composed of multiple school districts. Instructor employment arrangements vary

accordingly—some are employees of a school district, others of a COE, and others of the JPA itself.

These governance and employment structures create ambiguity under the bill's current framework. For example:

- a) If the instructor is employed by a JPA, which school district—if any—is responsible for granting permanent status? Is it a member district of the JPA? A designated lead agency? The student's district of residence?
- b) If the instructor is employed by a COE, is the COE required to grant permanent status, or must a school district do so based on service outside its direct employment structure?

As currently drafted, the bill could be interpreted to require a school district to grant permanent status to an individual with whom it has no employment relationship. This could create legal and administrative conflicts, particularly if districts are required to confer status on instructors over whom they have no employment relationship or direct oversight.

To address this ambiguity, **staff recommends amending the bill** to clarify that permanent status may only accrue to instructors employed by a school district or COE. This approach aligns with the existing structure of certificated employment law and avoids extending tenure obligations to JPAs, which are not currently subject to Education Code provisions governing teacher tenure, evaluation, or dismissal.

SUPPORT

California Teachers Association (sponsor)
 California Federation of Teachers
 California School Employees Association
 California State Council of Service Employees International Union

OPPOSITION

Association of California School Administrators
 Baldy View Regional Occupational Program
 California Association of School Business Officials
 California Association of Suburban School Districts
 California County Superintendents
 California School Boards Association
 Career Technical Education Joint Powers Authority Coalition
 CAROCP: the Association of Career and College Readiness Organizations
 Central Valley Education Association
 Central Valley Education Coalition
 Chino Valley Unified School District
 Claremont Unified School District
 Coastline ROP
 College and Career Advantage

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District
Dinuba Unified School District
Eden Area ROP
Kings Canyon Unified School District
Kingsburg Joint Union High School District
Mission Valley ROP
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Orange County Department of Education
Parlier Unified School District
Riverside County Office of Education
San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools
Sanger Unified School District
School Employers Association of California
Selma Unified School District
Small School Districts' Association
Tri-Cities Regional Occupational Program
Tri-Valley Regional Occupational Program
Upland Unified School District
Valley Regional Occupational Program

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1093	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Solache		
Version:	June 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Public postsecondary education: academic exchange programs.

SUMMARY

This bill requires, commencing with the 2027-28 school year and upon an appropriation of funds, the California State University (CSU) and each community college district and requests the University of California (UC) to adopt a plan for increasing participation in exchange programs with universities in México. The bill further encourages California Community Colleges (CCC) and UCs to establish exchange programs and requires CSU to have an exchange program at least 10 of its campuses. Lastly, it authorizes the UC, CSU, and community college districts to enter into a tuition reciprocity agreement with universities participating in an exchange program and authorizes receipt of private contributions for this purpose.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CSU, under the administration of the Trustees of the CSU, the UC, under the administration of the Regents of the UC, and the CCC, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as the state's three public segments of postsecondary education. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4, et seq.)
- 2) Exempts, until January 1, 2028, no more than 150 full-time equivalent students (FTES) from paying all or part of nonresident tuition fees if they are low-income students who are residents of Mexico who register for lower division courses at specified community colleges near the California-Mexico border and who reside within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border. (EC § 76140)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires, commencing with the 2027-28 school year and upon an appropriation of funds, California State University and each community college district, and requests UC to do both of the following:
 - a) Adopt a plan to increase the number of students participating in exchange

programs with universities in Mexico and identify existing exchange programs at CSU, UC, and community college districts.

- b) Make every effort to increase the number of students attending Mexican universities who participate in exchange programs with UC, CSU and CCCs.
- 2) Requires the CSU to have an exchange program with at least one Mexican public university at a minimum of 10 CSU campuses by January 31, 2027, and to make every effort to ensure that exchange programs with at least one Mexican public university are available to students at all CSUs by January 1, 2029.
- 3) Requires the CSU Chancellor to facilitate the distribution of sample educational materials for exchange programs and coordinate outreach that includes outreach with student services programs.
- 4) Requires each community college district to make every effort to have an exchange program with at least one Mexican public university at a minimum of one of the community college district's campuses by January 1, 2029.
- 5) States that it is the intent of the Legislature that the UC have an exchange program with at least one Mexican public university at each UC.
- 6) Authorizes UC, CSU and community college districts to enter into a tuition reciprocity agreement with universities participating in an exchange program.
- 7) Authorizes UC, CSU and community college districts to accept contributions from private sources, including private for-profit and nonprofit organizations, for the purposes of supporting exchange programs.
- 8) Prohibits CSU and community college districts from imposing a funding match required by México as a condition of implementing an exchange program and requests UC not to impose such a requirement.
- 9) Makes various findings and declarations related to the California-México region.
- 10) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to strengthen educational exchanges between students from California and México.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "The California-Mexico bilateral relationship directly impacts the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions of people. Strengthening, our bi-national relationship in the higher education sector is necessary to achieve multiple co-benefits. This measure would formally institutionalize cross-border education partnerships and build out the infrastructure for consistent, robust academic exchange. These programs are crucial to identifying the emerging needs of shared workforce and economic drivers."

- 2) **Existing California-Mexico higher education partnerships.** California public higher education segments already maintain academic, research, and student exchange partnerships with universities in México. The CSU operates a Systemwide Student Exchange Program with more than 60 international partner institutions and maintains exchange agreements with several Mexican universities, including Tecnológico de Monterrey, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, and CETYS Universidad. The UC has maintained academic partnerships with Mexico for decades through programs such as UC MEXUS, Casa de la Universidad de California en México, the UC-México Initiative, and Alianza MX, which support student and faculty exchanges, collaborative research, and public policy initiatives. Additionally, existing law authorizes a California-México border tuition reciprocity pilot involving community colleges near the California-México border and institutions in Baja California. Given these existing activities, the Committee may wish to consider how the proposed California-México student exchange initiative would coordinate with or differ from current efforts already underway across the state's public higher education segments.
- 3) **Strengthening the planning process.** The CSU, and UC already maintain exchange programs with Mexican institutions. Existing law separately governs CCC participation in California-México student exchange partnerships. The bill requires the adoption of a plan to increase participation in exchange programs with universities in México and to identify existing exchange opportunities. However, the bill also establishes separate directives regarding the availability of exchange programs at CSU campuses and community college districts, including requiring CSU to have exchange programs with at least one Mexican public university at a minimum of 10 campuses by January 31, 2027 and directing community college districts to make every effort to establish exchange programs by January 2029, and requesting UC to make every effort to have exchanges programs available at each campus. Additionally, if the purpose of the bill's planning requirements is to assess existing partnerships, and develop strategies for increasing student participation, it is unclear why the bill also prescribes specific campus level exchange program requirements before the planning process occurs, or if it's needed given existing efforts. The Committee may wish to consider whether the bill should place greater emphasis on developing a comprehensive plan before establishing additional expectations for exchange programs across the public higher education segments.

As such, **Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to** limit its scope to requiring the CSU and requesting the UC to adopt a plan for increasing participation in exchange programs with Mexican public universities and to delete the bill's remaining provisions relating to campus specific exchange program requirements, tuition reciprocity agreements, private contributions, and matching fund requirements. The **amendments would** instead require the plan to identify existing partnerships, establish goals and strategies for expanding participation, and strengthen outreach and coordination among campuses as follows:

Commencing with the 2027–28 academic year, the California State University shall, and the University of California is requested to adopt a plan to increase the number of students participating in exchange

programs with Mexican public universities. The plan shall include all of the following:

- *A description of existing exchange programs and institutional partnerships with Mexican public universities.*
- *Strategies to increase student participation in exchange opportunities, including expanding student access to or establishing exchange programs.*
- *Goals for expanding institutional partnerships with Mexican public universities.*
- *Outreach and student support activities designed to promote participation.*
- *Strategies to facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration among campuses within their respective systems, including the sharing of resources, grant funding opportunities, best practices, and knowledge on exchange programs.*

SUPPORT

CFT — A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Faculty Association of California's Community Colleges

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1636	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Solache		
Version:	June 8, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: Cerritos Community College District: data sharing.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), in collaboration with Cerritos Community College District (CCD), by September 1, 2027, to develop a method for Cerritos CCD to compile and transmit personally identifiable student information to the CCCCCO for the limited and express purpose of creating a student record for enrollment in credit coursework at the California Community Colleges (CCCs).

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CCCs, a postsecondary education system in this state, under the administration of the Board of Governors (BOG), and specifies that the CCC system consists of CCDs. (Education Code (EC) § 70900)
- 2) Requires the governing board of a CCD to admit to the CCC any California resident, and may admit any nonresident, possessing a high school diploma or its equivalent. (EC § 76000)
- 3) Requires the BOG to adopt regulations that permit the governing board of a CCD to allow applications for admission, student residency determination forms, and other documents to be submitted electronically, and requires that applicants and students be informed of the relative security of the information they submit electronically. (EC § 70901.1)
- 4) Requires every CCD be under the control of a governing board, and requires the governing board of a CCD to establish, maintain, operate, and govern each CCC within their district in accordance with law. (EC § 70902)
- 5) Establishes the Information Practices Act and declares that the right to privacy is a personal and fundamental right protected by Section 1 of Article I of the Constitution of California and by the United States Constitution and that all individuals have a right of privacy in information pertaining to them. (Civil Code § 1798 and 1798.1)

- 6) Establishes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. (20 United States Code § 1232g; 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 99)
- 7) Provides, pursuant to the California Constitution, that all people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights. Among these is the fundamental right to privacy. (California Constitution Article I, § 1)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CCCCO, in collaboration with Cerritos CCD, by September 1, 2027, to develop a method for Cerritos CCD to compile and transmit personally identifiable student information to the CCCCO for the limited and express purpose of creating a student record for course enrollment at the CCCs.
- 2) Requires Cerritos CCD to compile and transmit the personally identifiable student information to the CCCCO in a manner that complies with all applicable state and federal privacy laws, for the specified method, and permits the specified method to use existing system capabilities used to create a student record at the CCCs.
- 3) Requires the CCCCO (1) to identify the minimum amount of personally identifiable student information required to be compiled and transmitted by Cerritos CCD to create a student record for course enrollment at the CCCs, and (2) to make recommendations on how the data should be collected, transmitted, and stored to best protect student data and adhere to data privacy standards.
- 4) Requires the CCCCO, in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE), by September 1, 2027, to develop a form to be used to obtain informed consent from participating students, and requires the specified form to contain, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a) A description of the program, including its status as a pilot and its purpose as an application process specifically for CCCs.
 - b) How the pilot application process differs from CCCApply.
 - c) How student data will be handled at all stages of the process, including acquisition, transmission, and storage.
- 5) Permits the governing board of Cerritos CCD, upon implementation of #1 above, to enter into a data sharing agreement with the governing board of a partnering local educational agency (LEA) to exchange personally identifiable student information, as specified, for the limited and express purpose of creating a student record for course enrollment at the CCCs.

- 6) Requires the personally identifiable student information exchanged under a data sharing agreement (1) to be compiled and transmitted by Cerritos CCD to the CCCCO using the specified method and (2) to only be used by Cerritos CCD and the CCCCO for the limited and express purpose of creating a student record for course enrollment at the CCCs.
- 7) Requires the data sharing agreement to include a requirement for an LEA to obtain the express written consent of a student who is at least 18 years old or a student's parent or guardian to exchange the personally identifiable information pursuant to the data sharing agreement.
- 8) Requires, by January 1, 2031, Cerritos CCD, in collaboration with the CCCCO, to submit a report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of these provisions in accomplishing the purpose of providing seamless enrollment of participating students of a partnering LEA in courses offered by Cerritos CCD.
- 9) Defines "partnering local educational agency" as a school district, county office of education, or charter school that meets both of the following: a) has a partnership with Cerritos CCD as authorized through a College and Career Access Pathways partnership or the California College Promise, and b) is geographically located within the service area of Cerritos CCD.
- 10) Repeals these provisions on January 1, 2032.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "For high school students within the Cerritos Community College District service area, the existing CCCApply process can add unnecessary friction. Students may be required to re-enter information already captured in K–12 systems, and the application process can delay the point at which Cerritos College is able to provide advising, financial aid support, orientation, and enrollment preparation. AB 1636 authorizes Cerritos College to enter into seamless access to community college data-sharing agreements with eligible local educational agencies in its service area. These agreements must be approved by both governing boards in public meetings and must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws."
- 2) ***The current CCC application process through CCCApply and commonly held concerns.*** CCCApply was launched in 2011-12, and it allowed potential students to apply for admission to any CCC through a common online application. A prospective CCC student must undergo a two-step process:
 - First, create an online profile to apply through OpenCCC, which includes providing personally identifying information, such as your name, email address, home address, phone number, and Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number. Once the profile is established, a student receives a statewide student record called a CCCID.
 - Second, after receiving a CCCID, a student can apply to a CCC through CCCApply, and they are prompted to fill out a maximum of 203 data

points—and not all of which are required for every student—to help determine a student’s overall education status, if a student is eligible for financial aid, if a student requires basic needs services, and/or the type of program the student is applying to attend.

The entire application can take an hour to complete, on average. After applying and registering for the CCC, the student is then able to enroll in coursework and begin the process of orienting themselves as a CCC student.

A February 2021 web post from the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) highlighted several commonly held concerns with CCCApply at the time, including: a) the length of time it takes to complete the application (an average of 45 minutes per application as of 2018), b) inconsistencies in the application across colleges because each college can set its own application requirements, and c) requiring a dual enrollment student to complete a CCCApply application a second time if they want to register and enroll at a CCC. This bill intends to allow Cerritos CCD to work with certain K-12 students to bypass the CCCApply process to register for credit courses, and the author indicates that the length of the application was a key factor in putting forward this bill.

AB 3101 (Carrillo, Chapter 553, Statutes of 2018) sought to address concerns about an overly lengthy CCCApply process. AB 3101 required the CCCCO to revise CCCApply such that only data required by the federal and state law, or that is otherwise deemed necessary by the Chancellor, is collected during the process. AB 3101 also exempted a student seeking to enroll exclusively in noncredit courses from CCC residency classification requirements, which was anecdotally reported to have significantly shortened the noncredit application.

- 3) ***The CCC system is now replacing CCCApply with CCCStart.*** The CCCCO currently is leading an initiative called “Reimagine Apply”, which is a statewide effort to create a new application system, called CCCStart, largely to address fraud prevention. The new system is intended to be a clearer, single application with fewer, smarter questions and meant to create less confusion as logic-driven paths in the application will adjust to a student’s situation. According to the CCCCO, students should be able to get through CCCStart more quickly than CCCApply, and there should be a 20% to 60% reduction in the number of questions, depending on the student’s journey type (i.e., noncredit, credit, international, or dual enrollment) and a student’s answers to questions.

The plan is for CCCStart to go live for the first wave of 11 districts in June 2026, and will be rolled out with three additional waves, with all districts to have at least begun to adopt the new application system by January 2027. The current timeline for CCCApply to be phased out is by the end of June 30, 2027. The timing of this bill is such that it seeks a technological solution through CCCApply, even as that system is expected to be phased out by the middle of 2027.

- 4) ***This bill seeks to automate CCC admission and registration for credit courses for certain K-12 students, but some answers will still need to be provided by students.*** This bill requires the CCCCO to create a tool to allow certain K-12 students in Cerritos CCD’s service area to bypass the current

CCCApply process to expedite their registration for credit courses. According to Cerritos CCD, they aim to replicate a process that they use to create a batch of student records for noncredit students—effectively bypassing CCCApply—and this process is operated through a collaborative partnership between Cerritos CCD, participating LEAs, and the CCCCO. This process leverages existing technology known as the Multi Account Creation Tool, which was released statewide in 2024 and was originally intended to register incarcerated students who did not otherwise have access to OpenCCC to create a CCCID.

Though LEAs would have access to the majority of the student information needed to complete CCCApply, an LEA may not have every required data point, and certain information—such as residency-related information and major—may need to be provided directly by the student or parent/guardian to Cerritos CCD. According to Cerritos CCD, in these situations, the LEA would provide the student data to Cerritos CCD that it has authority to share through a data-sharing agreement, and Cerritos CCD would then securely collect any remaining required information directly from the student through a consent-based process.

According to Cerritos CCD, once the LEA-provided data and any necessary student-provided information are complete, Cerritos CCD would transmit the information to the CCCCO as part of the secure batch upload process.

- 5) **Questions about the batch upload process.** According to Cerritos CCD, using the noncredit batch upload process, they have been able to generate CCCIDs and bypass the CCCApply process for students registering for noncredit coursework, and through this bill, Cerritos CCD seeks to create a comparable credit batch upload process tool to register K-12 students at the CCCs. However, it is unclear if a credit batch upload process tool would be able to bypass CCCApply as expeditiously because the credit application can be significantly longer and more involved than the noncredit application. This is largely attributable to questions on residency and educational goals on the credit application. Because of underlying differences between the credit and noncredit application, it is unclear if the additional resources needed to create this tool would be marginal or substantial.
- 6) **Committee amendments.** There have been ongoing discussions between Cerritos CCD and the CCCCO to better align the language with the intent of the bill, including making changes so that the majority of the bill's requirements apply to Cerritos CCD, instead of the CCCCO; describing the "method" as a "prototype" to more accurately reflect that this pilot could inform future local and statewide efforts; and making further clarifying amendments on process. *Committee staff recommends, and the author accepts, the following amendments:*
 - *Changing the main product of this bill to be a prototype, instead of a "method".*
 - *Revising the majority of requirements to apply to Cerritos CCD, and requiring the CCCCO to instead serve in a consultation role to Cerritos CCD.*

- *Revising the timeline of the work to reflect that Cerritos CCD will be leading on the majority of the requirements of the bill.*
- *Establishing a process by which Cerritos CCD develops a prototype and the CCCCCO reviews and approves of the prototype.*
- *Establishing a process if the CCCCCO disapproves of the prototype and next steps for Cerritos CCD to re-submit a revised prototype.*

7) Related and Prior Legislation.

AB 731 (Fong, 2025) would have made various changes to the College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) program, including the authorization of a single application for student participation, permitting the use of an online platform, and modifying CCAP reporting requirements to include additional outcome measures. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 3101 (Carrillo, Chapter 553, Statutes of 2018) requires the CCCCCO, by July 31, 2019, to revise the CCC online application process, known as CCCApply, so that only data that is required by the federal government, state law, or that is otherwise necessary, as determined by the CCCCCO, is collected during the process. AB 3101 also exempted a student seeking to enroll exclusively in noncredit courses at a CCC from CCC residency classification requirements.

SUPPORT

Cerritos College (sponsor)
ABC Unified School District
City of Norwalk
Downey Unified School District
Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District
Western Association for College Admission Counseling

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2120 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Solache
Version: June 22, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: School district employees: merit system.

SUMMARY

This bill extends until January 1, 2031, the authority for Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to use an alternative merit hiring process for specified classified positions requiring specialized skills, authorizes the district to retain certain employees hired through that process during layoffs without regard to seniority when necessary to preserve those specialized qualifications, and requires LAUSD to report to the Legislature on its use of these exemptions.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires vacancies in the classified service of a merit system school district to be filled from eligible applicants within the first three ranks on the applicable eligibility list.
- 2) Authorizes LAUSD, until January 1, 2027, to appoint employees to specified classified positions from outside the first three ranks when specialized skills or qualifications are required for successful job performance.
- 3) Requires classified employee layoffs and reemployment to occur in seniority order.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Extends LAUSD's authority to use its selective certification hiring process for specified classified positions from January 1, 2027, until January 1, 2031.
- 2) Removes the Information Technology Electronic Communications Technician classification from the list of positions eligible for selective certification.
- 3) Authorizes LAUSD, during a reduction in force, to retain an employee hired through the selective certification process without regard to seniority if laying off that employee would deprive the district of the specialized qualifications for which the employee was hired.

- 4) Requires LAUSD to submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2030, detailing its use of the selective certification authority, including positions filled, the specialized qualifications relied upon, certification that no candidate within the first three ranks possessed those qualifications, layoffs resulting from the exemption, employee demographic data, and other implementation information.
- 5) Repeals these provisions on January 1, 2031.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Without selective certification, if the first three ranks do not possess the necessary knowledge or certification, the hiring division faces significant operational risks. The division is compelled to onboard individuals who require immediate, intensive remedial training. This results in a prolonged skills and productivity gap of up to two years, increased turnover, and the additional cost of restarting the recruitment cycle should the candidate fail to achieve the necessary competencies. Selective certification allows the district to most efficiently utilize taxpayer dollars by hiring candidates who are able to effectively perform the job on day one.

“Additionally, in the event of a reduction in force, the District may be compelled to lay off a recently-hired employee who was hired specifically due to possessing a certain skill set or qualification. This bill would allow the district to skip over these employees during reductions in force, if following the typical layoff pattern would deprive the district of the special skill for which the employee was hired.”

- 2) ***This bill continues a longstanding, narrowly tailored exception to LAUSD’s merit hiring process.*** Since 2003, the Legislature has periodically authorized LAUSD to bypass the traditional “rule of three ranks” for a limited number of specialized classified positions where particular skills are necessary on day one, such as language proficiency or other technical qualifications. Rather than creating a new hiring framework, this bill extends an existing authority that has been repeatedly revisited and refined by the Legislature over the past two decades.
- 3) ***The bill expands the exception beyond hiring decisions by allowing selective retention during layoffs.*** Current law only provides flexibility during hiring. This bill also allows LAUSD to retain an employee hired through selective certification during a reduction in force, notwithstanding normal seniority rules, when the employee possesses specialized qualifications that the district would otherwise lose. While this may help preserve critical operational expertise, it also represents a departure from longstanding merit system protections that generally prioritize seniority during layoffs.
- 4) ***Recent amendments strengthen legislative oversight and preserve the temporary nature of the exemption.*** As introduced, the bill would have made LAUSD’s selective certification authority permanent. Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee amendments instead restored a January 1, 2031, sunset and require LAUSD to report to the Legislature before the

authority expires. The report will provide information about how frequently the exemption is used, the qualifications justifying its use, whether qualified candidates existed within the top three ranks, the effect on layoffs, and demographic information. These amendments provide the Legislature with an opportunity to evaluate whether the authority is being exercised as intended before considering any future extension.

- 5) ***The bill reflects the balance between merit system principles and operational flexibility.*** California's merit system is designed to promote objective hiring and protect against favoritism by relying on competitive examinations and seniority-based personnel decisions. At the same time, LAUSD has argued that certain highly specialized positions cannot always be filled efficiently under the traditional process and that preserving employees with unique qualifications may be necessary to maintain district operations. The bill continues this limited exception while incorporating additional transparency intended to allow future legislative review of whether the flexibility remains justified.

SUPPORT

Los Angeles Unified School District (sponsor)

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2496	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Solache		
Version:	June 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Local educational agencies: reports: school accountability report card: California School Dashboard: local control accountability plan: local control funding formula budget overview

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Governor, and the Legislature that identifies duplication between the data contained in the school accountability report card (SARC) and other publicly available data sources.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires any school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be prepared an annual audit accounting for such funds and to adopt a SARC for each school. Requires every local school board to prepare a SARC to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent. (California Constitution, Article XVI, § 8.5)
- 2) Requires the governing board of each school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be implemented for each school in the school district a SARC. Requires the governing board of each school district annually to issue a SARC for each school in the school district, publicize those reports, and notify parents or guardians of pupils that a hard copy will be provided upon request. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district to make hard copies of its annually updated report card available, upon request, on or before February 1 of each year. (Education Code (EC) § 35256)
- 3) Requires the SARC provide data by which a parent can make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable him or her to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll his or her children. (EC § 33126)
- 4) Requires the SARC to include, but be limited to, assessment of the following school conditions:
 - a) Pupil achievement by grade level, as measured by the standardized testing and reporting programs;

- b) Progress toward reducing dropout rates;
- c) Estimated expenditures per pupil and types of services funded;
- d) Progress toward reducing class sizes and teaching loads, including the distribution of class sizes at the schoolsite by grade level and the average class size for the most recent three-year period;
- e) The total number of the school's fully credentialed teachers, the number of teachers relying upon emergency credentials, the number of teachers working without credentials, any assignment of teachers outside their subject areas of competence, misassignments, including misassignments of teachers of ELs, and the number of vacant teacher positions for the most recent three-year period;
- f) Quality and currency of textbooks and other instructional materials, including whether textbooks and other materials meet state standards and are adopted by the SBE for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and adopted by the governing boards of school districts for grades 9 to 12, inclusive, and the ratio of textbooks per pupil and the year the textbooks were adopted;
- g) The availability of sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials for each pupil, including English learners (ELs);
- h) The availability of qualified personnel to provide counseling and other pupil support services, including the ratio of academic counselors per pupil;
- i) Safety, cleanliness, and adequacy of school facilities, including any needed maintenance to ensure good repair;
- j) The annual number of schooldays dedicated to staff development for the most recent three-year period;
- k) Suspension and expulsion rates for the most recent three-year period;
- l) For secondary schools, the percentage of graduates who have passed course requirements for entrance to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU), including the course requirements for high school graduation, and the percentage of pupils enrolled in those courses;
- m) The number of advanced placement (AP) courses offered, by subject;
- n) The Academic Performance Index (API);
- o) Contact information pertaining to organized opportunities for parental involvement; and

- p) Career technical education data measures for secondary schools. (EC § 33126)
- 5) Requires, commencing in July 2000, and every July thereafter, each school to report on the status of its school safety plan, including a description of its key elements in the annual SARC. (EC § 32286)
- 6) Requires the CDE to develop and recommend for adoption by the State Board of Education (SBE) a standardized template intended to simplify the process for completing the SARC and make the SARC more meaningful to the public by July 1, 2006. (EC § 33216.1 and 33216.15)
- 7) Requires the results of the physical fitness testing of students to be included in the SARC. (EC § 33352)
- 8) Requires each school district that is connected to the internet to make the information contained in the SARC accessible on the internet. Requires the SARC information to be updated annually. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district connected to the internet to make its annually updated report card available on the internet on or before February 1 of each year. Requires each school district not connected to the Internet to make hard copies of its annually updated SARC available on or before February 1 of each year. (EC § 35258)
- 9) Requires a superintendent of a school district, county superintendent, or charter school, as applicable, to present a report on the annual update to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) budget overview for parents on or before February 28 of each year as part of a nonconsent item at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board of the school district, county governing board, or governing body of the charter school, as applicable. Requires the report to include both of the following:
- a) All available midyear outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP; and
- b) All available midyear expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP. (EC §§ 47606.5, 52062, and 52068)
- 10) Requires a school district to take all reasonable steps to ensure that parents and guardians of pupils who speak a language other than English are properly notified in English and their home language of the rights and opportunities available to them, including information on the SARC. (EC § 51101.1)
- 11) Requires the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing administered on its SARC. (EC § 60800)
- 12) Requires LCAPs to address how the district will address and improve in eight state priority areas, including pupil achievement as measured by, among other things, the percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that

satisfy the requirements for entrance to the UC and the CSU, or the completion of career pathways. (EC § 52060)

- 13) Requires LEAs to adopt and annually revise LCAPs. (EC §§ 47604.33, 52060, and 52066)
- 14) Requires, notwithstanding any other law, as a condition of receiving federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding, an LEA to ensure that each school of the LEA consolidates any plans that are required by those programs into a single plan, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Requires that plan to be known as the single plan for student achievement (SPSA). (EC § 64001)
- 15) Requires in federal law, LEAs to ensure that each school within the LEA that operates a Schoolwide Program (SWP) develops and implements a comprehensive SWP plan. (Title 20, United States Code, § 1111 et seq. (2015))

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Removes the existing requirement for a school to report on the status of its comprehensive school safety plan (CSSP) in its annual SARC.
- 2) Requires the CDE, on or before March 1, 2027, to provide a report to the SPI, the Governor, and the Legislature that identifies duplication between the data contained in the SARC and other publicly available data sources.
- 3) Requires the CDE, in complying with the report above, to do the following for each table in the most recent SARC template adopted by the SBE:
 - a) Identify the statutory requirement that requires the data to be submitted by school districts and note each instance where the template exceeds statutory requirement.
 - b) Identify the other publicly available data sources that provide substantially similar information. Specified that sources of other data include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - i) The California School Dashboard, as specified.
 - ii) The CDE's DataQuest internet website.
 - iii) Any other internet webpage or system managed by the CDE.
 - iv) Any other internet webpage or system managed by other state entities
 - v) Any data that a school district is required to post on its internet website

- vi) Any data that a school district is required to present at a governing board meeting.
 - vii) Any data element that is required to be included in another plan or report, including but not limited to, a LCAP or the School Plan for Student Achievement.
- c) Analyze how closely the data identified in b) above aligns with or differs from the current data available in the SARC. This may include, but is not limited to, an indication that the data is identical, that the information is similar but not identical with a notation of the differences, or that the information addresses the same topic but is available at a different level, such as at a school district level when the SARC requires schoolsite-level information.
- 4) Requires the CDE, in complying with the report requirement above, to also identify any instance where data provided by school districts in SARC is used to satisfy other state or federal requirements, and what other alternatives may exist to satisfy those same requirements.
 - 5) States the Legislature's intent that the CDE makes a broad interpretation of the similarity of other publicly available data sources so as to promote a robust analysis of the degree of duplication. However, differences should be thoroughly described.
 - 6) Specifies that the reporting requirement above shall only remain in effect until January 1, 2028, and as of that date is repealed.
 - 7) Removes the existing requirement that each school within the jurisdiction, if a school district or COE, include the results of physical fitness testing of pupils in the SARC.
 - 8) Removes the existing requirement for the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing in its SARC.
 - 9) Removes the existing requirement for a governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or a governing body of a charter school to present a midyear update report on the LCAP and the LCFF budget overview, and instead provides an authorization to do so.
 - 10) Makes a series of findings and declarations related to the utility of the SARC in light of newer accountability systems.
 - 11) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to consolidate, truncate, or replace duplicative or obsolete reports that increase the reporting burden of local educational agencies (LEAs) and do not benefit accountability, transparency, and pupil achievement.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, “By streamlining duplicative reporting requirements, AB 2496 would alleviate the increased reporting burden schools face while maximizing our educational resources. Designating the California School Dashboard as the state’s definitive tool for school accountability and public transparency would refine duplicative and outdated statutory requirements placed upon our education agencies. Because it is important that we use our educational resources efficiently to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

“Much of the information historically reported through SARC is now reported through the Dashboard and related LCFF tools. As a result, the SARC largely duplicates existing reporting systems, creating unnecessary administrative workload for districts. In addition, separate requirements such as the mid-year LCAP update further contribute to reporting demands beyond the annual LCAP adoption process. Collectively, these overlapping requirements divert time and resources away from student-focused efforts and underscore the need to consolidate duplicative reporting statutes while preserving public access to essential information.”

- 2) **California School Dashboard.** The Dashboard is an online tool that shares school and LEA performance and progress on both state and local measures that are drawn from the eight priority areas of the LCFF. State measures apply to LEAs, charter schools, and student groups, and are based on data that is collected annually across the state. The state measures are as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| a) Academic Performance
(reported separately for English language arts and Math assessments) | d) English Learner Progress |
| b) Chronic Absenteeism | e) Graduation Rate |
| c) College/Career | f) Suspension Rate |
| | g) Science |

LEAs receive one of five color-coded performance levels on the state indicators. From highest to lowest, the five performance levels are: Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red.

Local measures apply at the LEA and charter school level and are based on data collected at the local level. The local indicators are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) Basic Services and Conditions | e) Access to a Broad Course of Study; |
| b) Implementation of State Academic Standards; | f) Coordination of Services for Expelled Students (for COEs only); and |
| c) Parent and Family Engagement; | g) Coordination of Services for Foster Youth (for COEs only). |
| d) School Climate; | |

Provided an LEA satisfies the performance standards for each local measure, the Dashboard will automatically assign a performance level of *Met*. If an LEA does not meet the performance standards, the Dashboard will automatically assign a performance level of *Not Met* or *Not Met for Two or More Years*, as applicable.

The Dashboard is updated annually. For LEAs and schools in need of additional assistance or intervention, the Dashboard helps identify specific areas in need of targeted assistance.

- 3) **DataQuest.** DataQuest is the CDE's web-based data reporting system for publicly reporting information about California students, teachers, and schools. DataQuest provides access to a wide variety of reports, including school performance, test results, student enrollment, EL, graduation and dropout, school staffing, course enrollment, and student misconduct data.
- 4) **School Accountability Report Card.** Since the passage of Proposition 98 in 1988, state law has required that schools receiving state funding prepare and distribute a SARC. A similar requirement is also contained in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The purpose of the SARC is to provide parents and guardians with important information about each school and its progress in achieving its goals. Parents can also use this information to make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable them to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll their children. SARCs are required to be annually updated, approved by the governing board of a school district, and issued by February 1st.

While there may be variations with each school's design of its SARC, each generally begins with a profile that provides background information about the school and its students. The profile usually summarizes the school's mission, goals, and accomplishments. State law requires that the SARC contain the following:

- Demographic data
- School safety and climate for learning information
- Academic data
- School completion rates
- Class sizes
- Teacher and staff information
- Curriculum and instruction descriptions
- Postsecondary preparation information
- Fiscal and expenditure data

State law requires schools to notify all parents about the availability of the SARC and provide parents with instructions about how the SARC can be obtained through the internet and on paper upon request. The CDE maintains a web page that allows parents and the public to view the current and two prior years of SARC reports that have been submitted to the Department by the schools and LEAs.

- 5) ***LCAPs and mid-year updates.*** In 2013, California's education funding system was fundamentally changed with the enactment of the LCFF. The LCFF is designed to improve student outcomes by providing more resources to meet the educational needs of low-income students, ELs, and foster youth. The reforms to the funding system were accompanied by changes to the state accountability system, including LCAPs. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities. The LCAP provides an opportunity for LEAs (school districts, COEs, and charter schools) to share their stories of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs.

Current law requires that, before the governing board of a school district considers the adoption of an LCAP, numerous and specific steps be taken to ensure public input in the development of the LCAP. This includes consulting with teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local bargaining units of the school district, parents, and pupils.

Existing law also requires all LEAs to present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and the LCFF Budget Overview for Parents on or before February 28 of each year at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board or body of the LEA. These reports must include both of the following: (1) all available mid-year outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP, and (2) all available mid-year expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP.

This bill would shift the requirement for LEAs to provide those updates into an authorization. Proponents of this bill argue that the current timeline and requirements conflict with other reporting timelines, such as the SARC deadline, and divert time and resources away from student-focused efforts.

- 6) ***This bill no longer replaces the SARC outright.*** This bill helps facilitate the conversation for an eventual phase out of the SARC by requiring the CDE to compile a report identifying areas where reporting requirements for the SARC overlap with the Dashboard and other CDE data platforms.

When the bill was first introduced, and heard in the Assembly Education Committee, it called for the wholesale elimination and formal replacement of the SARC with the CA Schools Dashboard. Recognizing the fact that there are some data points that are exclusively found in the SARC, the bill transitioned through several iterations to instead provide the SPI, the Governor, and the Legislature with the information necessary to make more informed decisions about how to streamline the data in the future.

While it no longer eliminates the SARC outright, it does remove the statutory requirement for LEAs to report the following within the SARC:

- a) The results of physical fitness testing of pupils;
- b) The aggregate results of performance testing students in grades 5, 7, and 9; and

c) The status of its CSSP adoption.

- 7) **Arguments in support.** In a letter of support submitted to the Committee, the bill's co-sponsors, the Association of California School Administrators, California Association of School Business Officials, and the California School Boards Association note the following:

“When Proposition 98 established the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) in 1988, it was a groundbreaking tool for transparency. Supporters of the ballot initiative said, “Proposition 98 makes schools accountable by requiring that each school make public a progress report on test scores, dropout rates, classroom discipline, class size, instructional materials, the quality of instruction and school leadership.” Since then, the educational landscape shifted in 2013 with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the subsequent launch of the California School Dashboard and the Local Control and Accountability Plan. These two systems form the basis of our current accountability system and provide the same information that the supporters of Proposition 98 envisioned with the SARC. As a result, California districts are maintaining two separate, largely duplicative accountability systems. This “compliance overlap” increases administrative workload without a commensurate increase in transparency.

“AB 2496 seeks to remedy this by beginning a process to identify the duplication in our educational data reporting structures. Specifically, AB 2496 would require the California Department of Education to issue a report that identifies similarities and differences between each SARC data element and data contained in other education reporting systems, such as the California School Dashboard. This would provide the first comprehensive analysis of where the duplication exists for future conversations. In addition, AB 2496 would remove two elements of the SARC that were added following the passage of Proposition 98, the Physical Fitness Test results and the status update on the school safety plan. These two elements are input into the SARC by LEAs, despite the state no longer reporting on the former, and the latter being a poor substitute for providing parents with the full school safety plan each year.”

- 8) **Committee amendments.**

a) *Reinstate the mid-year LCAP and LCFF Budget Overview for Parents update requirement but eliminate the February 28th deadline to provide LEAs with flexibility as to when that update is provided.*

- 9) **Prior and related legislation.**

AB 2008 (Patel, 2026) would require that if a bill introduced or amended by the Legislature would require a school district, COE, or charter school to complete a plan or report with an undefined end date to either 1) include a provision that repeals the reporting requirement, or 2) makes the requirement inoperative, no

later than a date four years following the date upon which the bill, as enacted, becomes operative or four years after the due date of any report required every four or more years. *AB 2008 has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

SB 374 (Archuleta, Chapter 580, Statutes of 2025) extends by one year the date by which the CDE must provide a report to the Legislature regarding the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit annually, and removes the requirement for the SBE to adopt an Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA) Addendum to the LCAP relating to service improvements for students with disabilities.

SB 1315 (Archuleta, Chapter 486, Statutes of 2024) requires the CDE to conduct a report on the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit on an annual basis.

AB 716 (O'Donnell, Chapter 471, Statutes of 2018) revises and recasts provisions relating to the consolidated application, the School Plans for Student Achievement, and schoolsite councils, and repeals the School-Based Program Coordination Act, to account for implementation of the LCFF and the ESSA.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators (co-sponsor)
California Association of School Business Officials (co-sponsor)
California School Boards Association (co-sponsor)
California Association of Suburban School Districts
Fresno County Office of Education
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
San Joaquin County Office of Education
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Small School Districts Association

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2528 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Solache
Version: June 22, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Michelle Nguyen

Subject: Community colleges: governing board member compensation.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Appropriations*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Appropriations*.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a governing board of a community college district (CCD) to increase the maximum monthly compensation, by three to five times the current maximum, for the services of each member of a board who attends all meetings held by the board, as specified. This bill also requires a governing board of a CCD to provide public notice at least 30 days before a public meeting at which the governing board proposes to increase the compensation for the services of each member of the governing board.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCCs), a postsecondary education system in this state, under the administration of the Board of Governors (BOG), and specifies that the CCC system consists of CCDs. (Education Code (EC) § 70900)
- 2) Requires that a CCD be under the control of a governing board; requires the governing board of a CCD to establish, maintain, operate, and govern one or more CCCs; and requires CCDs to establish policies for and approve courses of instruction and educational programs. (EC § 70902)
- 3) Requires the governing board of each CCD to include in their membership one or more nonvoting students, and for the term of a student member to be one year. Allows a student member selected to serve on the governing board of a CCD to receive compensation, at the discretion of the governing board, up to a specified amount. (EC § 72023.5)
- 4) Authorizes the governing board of a CCD to provide up to a maximum monthly compensation for the members of the governing board who attend all meetings held by the board, and determines the maximum monthly compensation for governing board members based on the full-time equivalent students (FTES) for the prior year, as follows:

- a) An amount of \$1,500 for a CCD not located in a city and county, in which the FTES was more than 60,000.
 - b) An amount of \$750 for a CCD, in which the FTES was more than 25,000, but equal to or less than 60,000.
 - c) An amount of \$400 for a CCD, in which the FTES was more than 10,000, but equal to or less than 25,000.
 - d) An amount of \$240 for a CCD, in which the FTES was more than 1,000, but equal to or less than 10,000.
 - e) An amount of \$120 for a CCD, in which the FTES was more than 150, but equal to or less than 1,000. (EC § 72024)
- 5) Allows a governing board member who does not attend all meetings of the governing board to receive pro-rated monthly compensation based on the number of meetings the member attended. (EC § 72024)
 - 6) Allows a governing board member to be paid for any meeting when absent if the board, by resolution duly adopted and included in its minutes, finds that, at the time of the meeting, they are performing services outside the meeting for the community college district, they were ill or on jury duty, or the absence was due to a hardship deemed acceptable by the board. (EC § 72024)
 - 7) Permits a governing board, on an annual basis, to increase the compensation for the members of a local governing board beyond the statutory maximum monthly limit, in an amount not to exceed 5% based on the present monthly rate of compensation, and authorizes that a majority of voters in the district to reject this action by voting in a referendum established for this purpose. (EC § 72024)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Allows a governing board of a CCD to increase the maximum monthly compensation for the services of each member of a board who attends all meetings held by the board, and determines the maximum monthly compensation for governing board members based on the FTES for the prior year, as follows:
 - a) An amount of \$4,500, instead of \$1,500, for a CCD not located in a city and county, and in which the FTES was more than 60,000.
 - b) An amount of \$3,000, instead of \$750, for a CCD in which the FTES was more than 25,000, but equal to or less than 60,000.
 - c) An amount of \$2,000, instead of \$400, for a CCD in which the FTES was more than 10,000, but equal to or less than 25,000.

- d) An amount of \$1,200, instead of \$240, for a CCD in which the FTES was more than 1,000, but equal to or less than 10,000.
 - e) An amount of \$600, instead of \$120, for a CCD in which the FTES was more than 150, but equal to or less than 1,000.
- 2) Requires a governing board of a CCD to provide public notice at least 30 days before a public meeting at which the governing board proposes to increase the compensation for the services of each member of the governing board.
 - 3) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage a governing board of a CCD to consider, at the time that the governing board considers increasing governing board member compensation, providing compensation to student members of the governing board in an amount to be determined by the governing board, not to exceed the compensation received by other governing board members.
 - 4) States that it is the intent of the Legislature that compensation provided to a student member of the governing board while fulfilling their duties not count towards meeting the maximum household income and asset levels, for purposes of determining the student member's eligibility for student financial aid.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Serving as a trustee is a demanding role that requires a great deal of time, research, training, public engagement, and commitment. AB 2528 will enable community college districts the ability to update trustee compensation thresholds to help retain experienced board members and encourage more community members to consider running for vacant positions on local boards."

The author continues, "The current compensation not been adjusted in over 40 years. In many districts, outdated compensation levels make it harder for individuals who are supporting themselves and their families to consider serving. AB 2528 will help boards with the required financial capacity to modestly and responsibly increase their compensation to keep pace with inflation, while preserving public process. Importantly, helping to ensure students and their families are represented in key decisions affecting community college districts and that opportunities to serve remain accessible to those of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. When governing boards better reflect the lived experiences and diversity of the communities they serve, they are more likely to adopt policies that address barriers to educational access and success. Strengthening representation at the governance level ultimately supports more inclusive decision-making and policies that advance equity across the higher education system."

- 2) ***Compensation for local governing boards of CCDs.*** Existing law allows a governing board of a CCD to provide monthly compensation for members of their board, provided the compensation is within the limits set by statute, and the monthly limits are based on various thresholds of district size. The following table shows the existing and proposed maximum monthly compensation, by district size:

CCD Size Based on FTES	Number of CCDs in 2024-25	Current Maximum Monthly / Annual Compensation	Proposed Maximum Monthly / Annual Compensation
> 60,000 (not located in a city and county)	0	\$1,500 / \$18,000	\$4,500 / \$54,000 (300% higher)
25,001 - 60,000	14	\$750 / \$9,000	\$3,000 / \$36,000 (400% higher)
10,001 - 25,000	31	\$400 / \$4,800	\$2,000 / \$24,000 (500% higher)
1,001 - 10,000	28	\$240 / \$2,880	\$1,200 / \$14,400 (500% higher)
150 - 1,000	0	\$120 / \$1,440	\$600 / \$7,200 (500% higher)

- 3) **Seeking parity with K-12 governing board compensation increases.** AB 1390 (Solache, Chapter 639, Statutes of 2025) increases the maximum monthly compensation, by three to five times, that may be provided to the members of governing board of school districts and county boards of education. Given that recent legislation, the author seeks parity for compensation limits between CCC governing boards and K-12 governing boards, by similarly increasing maximum monthly compensation for CCC governing boards. Though this bill raises these monthly limits, a governing board of a CCD is still required to take a vote to approve and increase their own compensation.

The author indicates that these limits have not been adjusted in over 40 years, and that increasing compensation makes becoming a trustee for a CCC governing board more attractive for prospective candidates. The author also indicates that the current compensation may make membership for governing boards less representative of the communities they serve because individuals may find it difficult to serve unless they have flexible schedules, independent wealth, or employer support to participate, while working professionals, small business owners, and younger community leaders may find it financially impractical. Committee staff notes that though higher compensation could make it easier to bring in more diverse board membership, it should also be considered how raising pay may change incentives of those seeking to sit on a governing board.

- 4) **How have K-12 governing boards responded to AB 1390?** At a time of declining enrollment and shrinking school budgets in K-12 schools, some governing boards have increased their pay while also authorizing layoffs. A March 2026 article by KQED indicated that though the South Bay Union School District is preparing to close schools amid declining enrollment and planned to send layoff notices to more than 50 teachers and other staff later that month, the governing board of the district also unanimously approved a pay increase for board members to align with the maximum compensation for its size.

Though there is no statewide data on how many K-12 governing boards have elected to increase their pay as a result of AB 1390, a March 2026 article by a San Diego-area outlet reports that 7 out of 43 public school boards in San Diego County have increased their pay in the first three months of the bill's implementation. indicates that Other K-12 governing boards across the state face similar decisions on how to address declining enrollment and layoffs, amid considering increasing their board compensation.

- 5) ***This bill requires providing a 30-day public notice on increasing board pay.*** Recent author's amendments on this bill include a requirement for a governing board of a CCD to provide public notice at least 30 days before a public meeting at which the governing board proposes to increase the compensation for the services of each member of the governing board, including the current and proposed dollar amounts of compensation for board members. A January 2026 article by the Chino Valley Champion, a community newspaper covering the Chino Valley area in Southern California, stated that the Chino Valley School Board provided a raise to its board members to align with the maximum compensation for its size, and the article indicated the audience did not know the compensation amounts because no figures were provided on the staff report. The recent author's amendments aim to provide transparency on when, and how much, a governing board of a CCD decides to vote on specified board compensation increases.
- 6) ***Recent legislation requires governance and ethics training for K-12 school boards.*** AB 640 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 618, Statutes of 2025) requires each local educational agency (LEA) governing board member to receive training in K-12 school finance laws, including laws related to the creation and approval of an LEA budget and laws related to fiscal penalties for noncompliance. Additionally, AB 2158 (Mike Fong, Chapter 279, Statutes of 2022) requires each LEA governing board member to receive ethics training. Though no similar statutory training requirements exist for CCC governing board members, many governing board members voluntarily elect to take onboarding and effective trustee trainings.
- 7) ***Committee amendments.*** This bill seeks parity for compensation limits between CCC governing boards and K-12 governing boards, by increasing maximum monthly compensation for CCC governing boards, but the K-12 system also requires governance trainings for their board members, including ethics trainings. *Committee staff recommends, and the author accepts, the following amendments:*
- *Requires the members of a governing board to receive an ethics training if the governing board of a CCD elects to increase its board compensation pursuant to the provisions of this bill.*
 - *Requires that the ethics training would include 2 hours of training in general ethics principles and ethics laws relevant to the member's public service within 6 months of increasing the board's compensation, and every two years thereafter.*
 - *Encourages an entity developing curricula to satisfy the requirements of this section to consult with the Fair Political Practices Commission and the*

Attorney General regarding the sufficiency and accuracy of the proposed course content.

- *Permits that a local CCD or an association of CCDs may offer one or more training courses, or sets of self-study materials with tests, and that the courses may be taken at home, in-person, or online.*
- *Requires that a CCD keep a record of trustees who have completed ethics training.*
- *Defines ethics laws, as laws relating to personal financial gain by public servants; laws relating to claiming perquisites of office; government transparency laws; and laws relating to fair processes.*

8) ***Related and Prior Legislation.***

AB 1831 (Ahrens, 2026) revises the California State University's (CSU's) executive compensation framework by requiring the CSU Board of Trustees to adopt a new policy governing presidential compensation, prohibiting compensation increases for certain executive positions during years in which tuition increases are approved, and prohibiting executive and management compensation increases when represented employees do not receive salary increases. AB 1831 is currently pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1390 (Solache, Chapter 639, Statutes of 2025) increases the maximum monthly compensation, by three to five times, that may be provided to the members of governing board of school districts and county boards of education.

SB 827 (Gonzalez, Chapter 661, Statutes of 2025) modifies existing ethics training requirements and adds a new ethical, fiscal, and financial training requirement for local officials.

AB 640 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 618, Statutes of 2025) (1) requires each LEA governing board member to receive training in specified K-12 school finance laws by April 1, 2028, and at least once during their tenure; (2) requires the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) to develop the training curriculum; and, (3) requires the FCMAT curriculum to be used for the training of LEA board members.

AB 2158 (Mike Fong, Chapter 279, Statutes of 2022) requires each member of a governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school, in service as of January 1, 2025, to receive ethics training before January 1, 2026, and at least once every two years thereafter.

AB 1969 (Negrete McLeod, Chapter 264, Statutes of 2004) requires the CSU Trustees, and urges the University of California Regents, to offer semiannual orientation courses on the ethics statutes and regulations that govern official employee conduct to specified employees.

SUPPORT

Long Beach Community College District (co-sponsor)
Los Angeles Community College District (co-sponsor)
California Community College Trustees Board
Pasadena City College

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1644	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Muratsuchi, et al.		
Version:	June 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Pupils: use of smartphones: prohibition: report.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the governing board or body of a local educational agency (LEA) to adopt a policy to prohibit pupil smartphone use for pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct a statewide study and report on LEA smartphone policies.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires, no later than July 1, 2026, an LEA to adopt a policy to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones while the pupils are at a schoolsite or while the pupils are under the supervision and control of an employee or employees of that school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school. Requires this policy to be updated every 5 years. Requires a pupil to not be prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone under any of the following circumstances:
 - a) Unless explicitly addressed in a comprehensive school safety plan, in the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger;
 - b) When a teacher or administrator of the school district, COE, or charter school grants permission to a pupil to possess or use a smartphone, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator;
 - c) When a licensed physician and surgeon determines that the possession or use of a smartphone is necessary for the health or well-being of the pupil; and
 - d) When the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a pupil's individualized education program (IEP). (Education Code (EC) § 48901.7)
- 2) Authorizes the governing board of each school district, or its designee, to regulate the possession or use of any electronic signaling device that operates through the transmission or receipt of radio waves, including, but not limited to, paging and signaling equipment, by pupils of the school district while the pupils

are on campus, while attending school-sponsored activities, or while under the supervision and control of school district employees. (EC § 48901.5)

- 3) Requires that no pupil may be prohibited from possessing or using an electronic signaling device that is determined by a licensed physician and surgeon to be essential for the health of the pupil and use of which is limited to purposes related to the health of the pupil. (EC § 48901.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

Smartphone use policy:

- 1) Recasts the existing requirement for the governing board of a school district, county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school to adopt and update its policy to prohibit or limit the use of smartphones, to require that the adopted policy apply only to pupils in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, commencing July 1, 2028.
- 2) Amends the existing requirement for the governing board of a school district, county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school to update its smartphone use policy every five years to instead require that it be updated at least every five years.
- 3) Strongly encourages governing boards and bodies, in the creating and updating of their smartphone use policies, to adopt a bell-to-bell ban on smartphones for all pupils, including the time from the start of the schoolday until final dismissal, including class, time between classes, lunch, and recess.
- 4) Requires governing board of a school district, county board of education, or the governing body of a charter school that serves pupils in transitional kindergarten (TK), kindergarten, or grades 1 to 8 inclusive, no later than July 1, 2028, to develop and adopt a policy that prohibits the use of smartphones by pupils in TK, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8 inclusive, while those pupils are at a schoolsite or under the supervision and control of an employee or employees of that school district, COE, or charter school.
 - a) Specifies that the policy shall apply to time from the start of the schoolday until final dismissal, including class, time between class, lunch, and recess.
 - b) Requires that the goal of the policy be to create a bell-to-bell ban of smartphone use for those pupils to support pupil learning and well-being.
 - c) Authorizes the developed and adopted policies to include enforcement mechanisms that restrict access to smartphones.

- 5) Requires that the policy adopted or updated pursuant to #4 above includes at least one method for parents and guardians to contact their pupils while smartphones are prohibited during the school day. Authorizes such methods to include, but not be limited to, contacting the pupil through employees of the LEA.
- 6) Prohibits instruction provided to pupils in TK, kindergarten, and any of grades 1 to 8 inclusive from requiring the use of a smartphone by a pupil, commencing July 1, 2028.
- 7) Clarifies that the existing circumstances under which a pupil shall not be prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone include when the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a pupil's education plan developed pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (United States Code (USC) Title 29 § 794).
- 8) Requires that the smartphone use policy adopted or updated pursuant to this bill be included in the pupil handbook, if one is provided.

Report on smartphone use policies:

- 9) Requires the CDE to examine the adopted pupil smartphone policies of at least 30 selected LEAs that have provided consent to participate. Requires the CDE to ensure that selected LEAs are representative of the demographic and geographic diversity of the state, including but not limited to all of the following:
 - a) LEAs with schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings.
 - b) LEAs that are large- and small-sized school districts.
 - c) LEAs that are school districts or COEs with traditional public schools.
 - d) LEAs that are charter schools.
 - e) LEAs with schools that serve pupils in elementary, middle, and high schools.
- 10) Requires the CDE to survey each selected LEA and obtain the following information related to the LEA's pupil smartphone policy:
 - a) The way that stakeholder input occurred when the LEAs developed or updated the policy.
 - b) The enforcement methods that the policy includes and the effectiveness of those methods.
 - c) Initial challenges or successes that have arisen since the policy was enacted.
- 11) Requires the CDE to consult with relevant stakeholder groups of the selected LEAs, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Currently credentialed public school teachers and classified staff.
 - b) School district, COE, or schoolsite administrators.
 - c) Pupils enrolled in the LEA.
 - d) Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the LEA.
- 12) Requires CDE, on or before January 1, 2029, to submit to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, and post on their website, a report with all of the following information:
- a) A description of the pupil smartphone use policies of selected LEAs, including a copy of each LEA's policy language where possible.
 - b) The results of the surveys conducted pursuant to #10 above.
 - c) The CDE's recommended best practices for future LEA pupil smartphone use policies.
- 13) Authorizes the CDE, in preparing its report, to collaborate with organizations that have relevant expertise, including but not limited to, survey design, data collection and analysis, and educational or technology policies.
- 14) Defines "local educational agency" as a school district, COE, or charter school.
- 15) Sunsets the provisions of this bill pertaining to the CDE examination and report on January 1, 2033.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "AB 1644 is a bipartisan bill to enact a school bell-to-bell smartphone ban for California schools. Research clearly shows that excessive smartphone use leads to negative academic and mental health outcomes, including reduced focus, increased depression and anxiety, and lower overall social and emotional well-being. Schools that have adopted bell-to-bell smartphone bans report improved academic outcomes, especially in disadvantaged communities, as well as a reduction in cyberbullying and other disciplinary problems."
- 2) ***Bell-to-bell smartphone use bans.*** This bill requires the governing board of an LEA that serves students in TK, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, to adopt a policy that prohibits the use of smartphones by students in those grade levels while they are at a schoolsite or under the supervision or control of an LEA employee. The bill also specifies that this prohibition must apply to the start of the schoolday until final dismissal, including class, time between classes, lunch, and recess— aligning with the bill's stated goal of a "bell-to-bell ban."

In recent years, 35 states have enacted legislation or policies to limit or outright ban the use of smartphones or cellphones during school hours, with some variations based on what grade spans or applicable time periods. For instance:

Florida: In May 2023, the Florida State Legislature passed HB 379—the nation’s first statewide student cell phone or wireless communications device ban. The law prohibits students from using a wireless communications device during instructional time, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes. It also required district school boards to adopt rules governing the use of a wireless communications device by a student while the student is on school property or in attendance at a school function.

Alaska: In March 2025, the Alaska State Legislature passed HB 57, requiring school districts to establish a policy that regulates the possession and use of non-school-issued wireless telecommunications devices during regular school hours, including lunch and passing periods.

Hawaii: In February 2026, the Hawaii State Department of Education adopted a policy prohibiting elementary and middle school students from using their cellphones during the school day. For high school students, the prohibition policy applies to cellphone use during instructional time but allows schools to exercise discretion regarding the use of cell phones outside of instructional time, including before and after school hours, designated breaks, recesses, lunch, and free periods.

In February 2025, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the United States Department of Education reported that 77% US public schools surveyed as part of the School Pulse Panel (SPP) had policies prohibiting students from using cell phones during any class, with a higher percentage of elementary schools (86%) implementing such a policy compared to high/secondary schools (55%).

- 3) ***California’s student smartphone use policies.*** In 2019, California authorized the governing boards of LEAs to adopt policies to limit or prohibit student use of smartphones while a student is on a schoolsite or is under the supervision of an LEA employee (AB 272 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 42, Statutes of 2019)). In 2024, that authorization became a requirement, thus requiring LEAs, to develop and adopt a smartphone use policy by July 1, 2026, and update that policy every five years thereafter (AB 3216 (Hoover; Chapter 500, Statutes of 2024)). In accordance with the statute, LEAs solicited significant stakeholder engagement in the years that followed to ensure that the adopted policies were responsive to the unique needs and desires of students, parents, and educators in each community. The adopted smartphone use policies ranged from limiting student smartphone use during instructional time, depending on grade level, to policies that ostensibly served as bell-to-bell bans.

This bill would maintain the applicability of these adopted policies for students in grades 9 through 12, inclusive, but would require the governing boards and

bodies of LEAs to adopt a separate policy that explicitly prohibits smartphone use for students in TK, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive.

The Committee may wish to consider whether establishing an outright “bell-to-bell ban” for students in kindergarten and grades 1 through 8 after an extensive stakeholder engagement process that allowed schools to set a policy that worked best for their community may lead the public to perceive an LEA’s or the state’s view of community input as a perfunctory exercise rather than a substantive action.

- 4) **Arguments in support.** In a letter of support submitted to this Committee, Common Sense Media notes the following:

“A growing body of research shows that unrestricted smartphone access undermines academic engagement, increases anxiety, and fuels cyberbullying and social comparison. New national data reinforces these findings. Recent educator surveys on school phone policies, researchers have found that as bell-to-bell bans expand, educators are seeing meaningful improvements in student behavior and social interaction. Bell-to-bell policies are rapidly becoming the national norm, rising from 60% to 74% of schools in just one year—one of the fastest shifts in school policy nationwide [...]

“California’s educators and families deserve a clear, statewide framework that supports learning and well-being. AB 1644 delivers that clarity while aligning the state with national best practices and emerging research.”

- 5) **Arguments in opposition.** In a letter of opposition submitted to this Committee, the California School Boards Association notes the following:

“Although we appreciate and understand the intent behind this effort, this bill effectively eliminates local control and the ability of local school district and county boards of education to determine the best policy that meets the needs of their students, their families and the greater school community. These decisions are best made at the local level by people who understand, reside, are invested in, and accountable to the communities they serve. This legislation is counter to the precepts of local control by taking the decision-making process out of the hands of duly elected local governing boards.”

- 6) **Prior and related legislation.**

SB 1128 (Stern, 2026) prohibits LEAs from requiring a pupil in kindergarten to take home a school issued electronic device. The bill also requires the CDE to develop and post on its internet website, model policies for the age-appropriate use of school-issued electronic devices in schools, as specified. *SB 1128 is pending a hearing in the Assembly Education Committee.*

AB 3216 (Hoover, Chapter 500, Statutes of 2024) requires the governing body of a school district, COE, or a charter school to adopt a policy to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones, except in specified circumstances.

AB 272 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 42, Statutes of 2019) provides that a student shall not be prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone under specified circumstances, and authorizes governing bodies to adopt a policy to limit or prohibit the use of smartphones by students while at school.

SB 1253 (Figueroa, Chapter 253, Statutes of 2002) allows school district governing boards to regulate the possession and use of electronic signaling devices (cell phones, pagers, etc.) by pupils while on campus or attending school functions.

SUPPORT

Bright Light Strategies
CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Common Sense Media
Distraction-Free Schools California
End Chronic Disease
TechNet

OPPOSITION

California School Boards Association

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AJR 19	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Muratsuchi		
Version:	July 2, 2025		
Urgency:		Fiscal:	No
Consultant:	Ian Johnson		

Subject: United States Department of Education: proposed closure.

SUMMARY

This resolution urges California's congressional delegation to oppose efforts to eliminate or significantly reduce the role of the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and calls on the President of the United States to preserve and strengthen the USDOE and its mission to serve all students.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the USDOE as a cabinet-level department of the federal government and charges it with administering federal education programs and enforcing applicable federal education laws.
- 2) Authorizes the USDOE to administer federal financial assistance programs for elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, including, but not limited to, programs authorized under the:
 - a) Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including Title I;
 - b) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
 - c) Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), including Pell Grants and federal student aid programs; and
 - d) Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.
- 3) Requires states and local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving federal education funds to comply with applicable federal requirements and accountability provisions established under federal law.
- 4) Authorizes the USDOE's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to investigate complaints and enforce federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in federally funded educational programs and activities.

- 5) Requires the USDOE to collect, analyze, and disseminate education data and research through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
- 6) Provides federal funding to California schools, colleges, universities, and students through programs administered by the USDOE, including support for low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, educator preparation programs, career technical education, and postsecondary financial aid.

ANALYSIS

This resolution:

- 1) States that the USDOE plays a vital role in advancing educational equity and excellence for students across the nation.
- 2) States that the USDOE provides critical oversight and funding for programs that support public schools, special education, student financial aid, and civil rights enforcement, and that support underserved and disadvantaged communities.
- 3) States that California is home to more than 6 million public school students and over 280 institutions of higher education, many of which depend on federal resources, guidance, and enforcement to operate effectively and equitably.
- 4) States that Title I grants, Pell Grants, IDEA funding, and other federal initiatives administered by the USDOE support students from low income families, students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), and others who have been historically underserved.
- 5) States that eliminating the USDOE would disrupt critical funding streams, undermine accountability, and jeopardize the educational rights of millions of students.
- 6) States that on March 20, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order No. 14242, directing the USDOE to take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the USDOE, as part of a broader effort to dismantle federal oversight of public education.
- 7) States that the proposed closure would create chaos and confusion across the country's education systems, threaten the quality and accessibility of education, and reverse decades of progress in civil rights and educational equity.
- 8) States that education is a cornerstone of democracy and economic opportunity, and federal leadership is essential to ensuring that every student, regardless of income, race, ZIP Code, or ability, has access to a quality education.
- 9) Resolves by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, that the Legislature urges California's Members of Congress to reject any proposal to dismantle the USDOE or strip it of its core functions.

- 10) Resolves, that the Legislature calls on the President of the United States to preserve, protect, and strengthen the USDOE and its mission to serve all students.
- 11) Resolves, that the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “The United States Department of Education plays a vital role for students across California by providing oversight and funding for programs that support public education, special education, student financial aid, and civil rights enforcement. The California Department of Education estimates that the Trump administration has already blocked \$1 billion to California, which is typically distributed as grants for afterschool programs, migrant student education, and more. This resolution urges California’s Members of Congress and the President to preserve and protect the Department of Education and affirms the state’s commitment to ensuring that every student can access a quality education.”
- 2) ***Federal efforts to reduce the role of the Department of Education.*** The USDOE was established by Congress in 1979 and is responsible for administering numerous federal education programs, including Title I grants for disadvantaged pupils, IDEA funding, federal student aid programs, career technical education funding, and federal civil rights enforcement in educational institutions. Although education is primarily a state and local responsibility, the federal government has historically played a significant role in funding targeted programs and enforcing federal education laws.

For decades, proposals to eliminate the USDOE have periodically been advanced by policymakers who argue that education policy should be controlled primarily by states and LEAs. However, because the Department was established by federal statute, Congress would need to enact legislation to formally abolish the agency.

On March 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14242 directing the Secretary of Education to take all necessary steps, consistent with applicable law, to facilitate the closure of the USDOE and return authority over education to states and local communities. The executive order stated that programs and services receiving federal funding should continue to operate during any transition and acknowledged that many of the Department’s responsibilities are established in federal law.

Following the issuance of the executive order, the administration announced significant reductions in force affecting the Department’s workforce and initiated efforts to reorganize agency operations. The administration has also proposed shifting certain federal responsibilities to other agencies and reducing the federal

government's role in education oversight. These actions have generated ongoing legal and policy disputes regarding the scope of executive authority to substantially reduce the operations of a federal agency that continues to exist in statute.

- 3) ***Ongoing legal and congressional questions.*** While the President may direct the administration of executive branch agencies, significant questions remain regarding the extent to which an administration may substantially reduce the operations of an agency created by Congress without congressional approval.

Several legal challenges have been filed regarding workforce reductions and other administrative actions affecting the USDOE. These lawsuits generally argue that Congress created the Department, assigned specific responsibilities to it, and appropriated funding for those purposes, and that the Executive Branch cannot effectively eliminate or disable the agency without legislative action. Supporters of the administration's actions contend that the President possesses broad authority to manage executive branch agencies and personnel.

At the same time, Congress continues to debate the future role of the federal government in education. While some members of Congress have introduced proposals to abolish the USDOE or transfer its responsibilities elsewhere in the federal government, others have argued that the Department remains necessary to administer federal education programs, distribute federal funding, and enforce federal education laws. To date, Congress has not enacted legislation eliminating the USDOE.

AJR 19 reflects one side of that ongoing federal policy debate by urging California's congressional delegation to oppose efforts to dismantle the Department and by urging the President to preserve and strengthen the agency.

- 4) ***Federal education programs administered by the USDOE.*** The USDOE administers numerous federal programs that affect California students and educational institutions.

At the K-12 level, the Department administers Title I funding for schools serving concentrations of low-income pupils, IDEA funding for special education services, English learner programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, teacher quality programs, and career technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

At the postsecondary level, the Department administers Pell Grants, federal student loans, work-study programs, and other forms of federal financial assistance that support students attending colleges and universities throughout the nation.

The Department also houses the Office for Civil Rights, which investigates complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in educational programs receiving federal financial assistance. In addition, the Department oversees education research and data collection

activities through the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Center for Education Statistics.

As a result, changes to the structure, staffing, or responsibilities of the Department could affect a broad range of federal programs relied upon by states, LEAs, institutions of higher education, and students.

- 5) ***California's reliance on federal education funding.*** California receives substantial federal funding through programs administered by the USDOE. Federal funds support services for students with disabilities, low-income students, English learners, foster youth, homeless youth, and students pursuing postsecondary education.

Because many federal programs are administered through state educational agencies before being distributed to LEAs and educational institutions, significant changes to federal administrative structures may require corresponding changes at the state and local level. The extent of any impacts would depend upon the specific federal actions ultimately implemented, whether Congress authorizes those changes, and whether federal funding levels are maintained.

Supporters of this resolution argue that preserving the USDOE is necessary to protect federal investments in education, maintain civil rights protections, and ensure continued federal support for vulnerable student populations. Opponents and proponents of federal restructuring efforts generally contend that educational decisions are best made by states and local communities and that federal programs could continue to operate through other agencies or administrative structures.

- 6) ***This resolution expresses the Legislatures position.*** This resolution does not alter federal law, state law, federal funding allocations, or the responsibilities of any educational agency. Instead, AJR 19 expresses the Legislature's position regarding recent federal efforts to reduce or eliminate the USDOE and urges federal policymakers to preserve the agency and the programs it administers.

SUPPORT

California Teachers Association

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1769	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Ramos		
Version:	May 18, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Student transfer: tribal colleges.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC) that offer a baccalaureate degree, and requests the University of California (UC), to develop and implement transfer and articulation pathways for students attending California tribal colleges and universities (TCUs).

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

Federal

- 1) Defines “Indian tribal government” as the governing body of any tribe, band, community, or group of Indians, or (if applicable) Alaska Natives, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior, to exercise governmental functions. (Title 26, United States Code § 7701 (a)(40))

State

- 1) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC, the CSU, and the CCC; and defines “independent institutions of higher education” as nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in California and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. For purposes of any code or statute, a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education as of January 1, 2025, shall retain that recognition until July 1, 2029, provided that the accrediting agency continues to operate in substantially the same manner as it did on January 1, 2025. (Education Code (EC) § 66010, et seq.)
- 2) Includes TCUs in the definition of “public institution of higher education.” (EC Section 94858.5(b))

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CSU Trustees and the CCC Board of Governors, and requests the UC Regents, to develop and implement transfer agreements and articulation programs that include general education and transfer curricula to support and enhance the transfer of students attending TCUs to UC, CSU, and CCCs.
- 2) Requires that a transfer agreement and articulation program include all of the following:
 - a) Enrollment and resource planning.
 - b) Intersegmental faculty curricular efforts.
 - c) Coordinated counseling.
 - d) Financial aid and transfer services.
 - e) Specific efforts to improve diversity.
 - f) Early outreach activities.
 - g) Concurrent enrollment opportunities.
 - h) Support centers.
- 3) Requires the CSU Trustees, the CCC Board of Governors, and requests UC Regents to develop and implement, to the extent capacity is available, concurrent enrollment programs that allow students attending TCUs to enroll in courses offered at UC, CSU or CCC for purposes of expanding opportunities for students attending TCUs to potentially transfer to UC, CSU or CCC.
- 4) Requires the CSU and CCCs and requests UC in consultation with other involved entities as appropriate, assess tools, systems, or curricula designed to facilitate student transfer for purposes of building upon those that are most effective in communicating articulation for students attending TCUs that must include the California Articulation Number system, the Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum, the General Education Transfer Curriculum, and the Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer.
- 5) Defines "TCU" to mean tribal colleges and universities geographically located in California that are operated by an Indian tribal government, as defined in Section 7701(a)(40) of Title 26 of the United States Code. "TCU" includes, but is not limited to, California Indian Nations College, California Tribal College, and Kumeyaay Community College.
- 6) States Legislative findings and declarations related to the benefits of articulation agreements and effective transfer pathways.
- 7) States that it is the Legislature's intent to facilitate articulation and seamless transfer pathways for students attending TCUs to public postsecondary

educational institutions. The goal of developing and implementing transfer agreements and articulation programs is to ensure that students attending TCUs can earn certificates and degrees that allow them greater job-earning potential in the workforce, and to ensure the effective and efficient progression of students attending TCUs when they transfer to UC, CSU, or CCCs, in order to minimize duplication of coursework.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, “Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) offer culturally relevant education and serves to bridge the gap in postsecondary education for Native American students. When students who are enrolled at a TCU decide to transfer to one of California’s higher education institutions, they may be met with the challenge of ensuring courses they have taken are accepted at their new university. To ensure these students are not burdened by duplicative courses if they decide to transfer, we must work to establish transfer agreements. This would offer a helpful tool when it comes to transferring and aim to ensure effective and efficient progression for these students as they continue their pursuit in higher education.”
- 2) **Accreditation and transferability of coursework.** The bill requires the CSU and CCCs and requests the UC to develop transfer agreements, articulation programs, and concurrent enrollment opportunities for students attending TCUs. However, the bill does not establish any minimum standards regarding the accreditation status of participating TCUs. Of the three TCUs specifically identified in the bill, California Indian Nations College is institutionally accredited, while the remaining institutions are not currently accredited or pursuing accreditation. Given that transfer credit determinations and articulation agreements are generally informed by institutional accreditation and academic review processes, the absence of an accreditation standard may create uncertainty regarding the transferability of coursework and implementation of transfer goals. For this reason, **Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to clarify that nothing in the bill requires the UC, CSU, or CCC to articulate coursework completed at a TCU that is not institutionally accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.**
- 3) **Development of transfer pathways.** According to the California Indian Nations College, students transferring from a TCU often do not know how their coursework will be applied toward degree requirements until after admission because formal articulation pathways generally do not exist. As a result, students may receive elective credit for completed coursework rather than credit that satisfies lower-division general education or major preparation requirements. This bill requires the CSU, CCCs, and requests the UC, in consultation with other involved entities as appropriate, to assess existing tools, systems, and curricula designed to facilitate student transfer. Given that articulation agreements are typically developed through faculty review and ongoing curriculum alignment between institutions, **Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to clarify that consultation includes faculty and other appropriate institutional representatives, as appropriate.**

- 4) **Concurrent enrollment.** The bill also requires the public segments to develop concurrent enrollment opportunities for students attending TCUs to simultaneously enroll in courses offered by CSU, UC, and CCCs to the extent capacity is available. The extent to which concurrent enrollment programs are implemented would largely be left to the discretion of the participating institutions.
- 5) **Existing transfer systems.** Public higher education institutions currently have authority to evaluate coursework, establish articulation agreements, and develop transfer pathways with other institutions. The bill requires the CSU, CCCs, and requests the UC to assess existing transfer tools and systems, including the Cal-GETC, as part of developing transfer pathways for students attending TCUs. Ensuring eligible TCUs are able to not only participate in transfer pathways, but are integrated into the Cal-GETC (which is the singular general education pathway for CCC students to fulfill lower-division general education requirements necessary for transfer and admission to both the CSU and the UC), and Assist.org (the official course transfer and articulation system for California colleges and universities) could ease the transfer process for TCU students. While the bill identifies these existing resources, it does not specifically establish expectations for participation. For this reason, ***Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to*** encourage participating institutions to identify opportunities to align coursework, where appropriate, with Cal-GETC and lower-division major preparation requirements to further the bill's goal of creating seamless transfer pathways for students attending TCUs.
- 6) **Related legislation.**
- AB 1641 (Jackson and Ramos, 2026) expands the definition of California's public higher education system to formally include TCUs located in California and operated by a federally recognized tribal government.

SUPPORT

California Indian Nations College (co-sponsor)
 Table Mountain Rancheria (co-sponsor)
 California Teachers Association
 Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake
 Morongo Band of Mission Indians
 NextGen California
 Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
 Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation
 Yurok Tribe

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1851	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Gipson		
Version:	April 27, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Pupil health: social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to select one or more lead local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide support for the implementation of integrated social-emotional learning (SEL), behavioral health, and restorative practices for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Appropriates \$50 million in 2021-22 to the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to award grants to LEAs to fund schoolwide and districtwide implementation of services or practices aligned to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework developed under the “Scale Up MTSS Statewide” (SUMS) project. Requires the grants awarded to LEAs to support the implementation of high-quality integrated academic, behavioral, and SEL practices in an integrated MTSS at the schoolwide level. (Education Code (EC) § 41490)
- 2) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish a process, in consultation with and subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education (SBE), to select an LEA or another entity, as specified, to partner with the OCDE and the Butte County Office of Education (COE) to expand the state’s capacity to support LEA’s implementation of SEL, trauma screening, trauma-informed practices, and culturally relevant, affirming, and sustaining practices. Requires the entity chosen to have demonstrated expertise in developing and delivering high quality professional learning to educators in SEL, trauma-informed practices, and culturally relevant, affirming, and sustaining practices in a manner that aligns with local MTSS. (EC § 41490)
- 3) Requires the CDE, by June 1, 2024, to develop evidence-based best practices for restorative justice practice implementation on a school campus and make these available on the department website for use by LEAs to implement restorative justice practices as part of efforts to improve campus culture and climate. Requires the CDE to consult with school-based restorative justice practitioners, public school educators, students, community partners, and nonprofit and public entities in developing the best practices, and to the extent

feasible, take into account other programs and resources, including, but not limited to, the SUMS Initiative, the California Community Schools Partnership Program, and resources developed by the department in support of SEL. (EC § 49055)

- 4) Expresses the intent of the Legislature to support LEAs in conducting evidence-based activities to address chronic absenteeism and loss of attendance due to emergency events, including but not limited to:
 - a) Establishing a community school model;
 - 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 pupils to law enforcement agencies;
 - d) Implementing activities that advance SEL, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), 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, nonpunitive approaches to further the goals of the program; and
 - f) Adding or increasing staff within an LEA whose primary purpose is to address ongoing chronic attendance problems, including, but not necessarily limited to, conducting outreach to families and children currently, or at risk of becoming, chronically truant. (EC § 46210)

- 5) Appropriates \$1.5 billion for the Educator Effectiveness Block Grant to be distributed by the SPI to school districts, COEs, charter schools, and state special schools in the 2020-21 fiscal year for expenditure through the 2025-26 fiscal year. Authorizes these funds to be used to provide professional learning to school staff who work with students in any of the following areas, among others:
 - a) Strategies to implement SEL, trauma-informed practices, suicide prevention, access to mental health services, and other approaches that improve pupil well-being; and
 - b) Practices to create a positive school climate, including, but not limited to, restorative justice, training around implicit bias, providing positive behavioral supports, MTSS, transforming a schoolsite's culture to one that values diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and preventing discrimination, harassment, bullying, and intimidation based on actual or perceived characteristics. (EC § 41480)

- 6) Establishes the California Community Schools Partnership Act, to provide integrated pupil supports, community partnerships, and expanded learning opportunities, which will help address the trauma and loss of learning that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Statewide investment in community schools, supported by local networks designed to coordinate services and resources, are critical to realize whole-child education. (EC § 8900 et seq.)
- 7) Requires the CDE to develop model referral protocols for addressing student mental health concerns, in consultation with specified agencies and stakeholders, and authorizes these protocols to be used on a voluntary basis by schools. (EC § 49428.1)
- 8) Requires the governing boards or bodies of LEAs, by January 31, 2026, to adopt at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns of students in grades 7 to 12. (EC § 49428.2)
- 9) Requires the CDE, by January 1, 2023, to recommend best practices and identify evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health, including staff and student training, contingent upon an appropriation for this purpose. (EC § 49428.15)
- 10) Requires LEAs to certify to the CDE by July 1, 2029, that 100% of certificated employees and 40% of classified employees who have direct contact with students in grades 7 to 12 have received youth behavioral health training at least once, as specified. (EC § 49428.2)
- 11) Establishes the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) and requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to develop and maintain a school-linked statewide fee schedule for outpatient mental health or substance use disorder treatment provided to a student 25 years or younger at a school site, beginning January 1, 2024. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) § 5961.4)
- 12) Requires the DHCS to award competitive grants for school-linked behavioral health partnership grants to eligible entities, including counties, city mental health, tribal entities, LEAs, higher education institutions, publicly funded early childhood education providers, health care service plans, community-based organizations, and behavioral health providers. (WIC § 5961.2)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CDE, on or before July 1, 2027, to enter into a contract with one or more LEAs to serve as lead entities in providing support for the implementation of integrated, universal SEL, behavioral health, and restorative practices for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. Requires that the lead entities have capacity and established expertise in providing resources, technical assistance, and training to LEAs.

- 2) Requires the LEAs selected by the CDE through a competitive process, as specified, to provide guidance, resources, and technical assistance to LEAs to expand the statewide implementation of integrated, universal SEL, behavioral health, and restorative practices to meet the needs of pupils in their school communities.
- 3) Requires the lead entities to ensure that guidance, resources, and technical assistance provided are equity focused and include trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices as part of a comprehensive MTSS.
- 4) Defines “local educational agency” to mean a school district, COE, or charter school.
- 5) States that the implementation of this bill shall be contingent upon an appropriation for its purpose in the annual Budget Act or another statute.
- 6) Makes a series of legislative findings and declarations related to the state’s ongoing efforts to support SEL and the uniquely position nature of school in providing early supports for children and youth.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 1851 helps ensure that California’s commitment to young people translates into real opportunities, stronger systems, and better outcomes for our students. We have made historic commitments to children’s behavioral health, but too often our systems operate in silos, leaving schools without clear guidance or alignment. At a time when chronic absenteeism remains high and students are facing unprecedented behavioral health challenges; we cannot afford fragmentation.

“This bill strengthens coordination and accountability around existing Social Emotional Learning and school-based behavioral health efforts so that prevention happens early, consistently, and equitably. Our students deserve systems that work together, not in isolation.”
- 2) ***Social-emotional learning.*** According to the CDE, SEL reflects the critical role of positive relationships and emotional connections in the learning process and helps students develop a range of skills they need for school and life. SEL skills include the ability to:
 - a) set and achieve positive goals
 - b) feel and show empathy for others
 - c) establish and maintain positive relationships
 - d) make responsible decisions
 - e) understand and manage emotions

There is a growing body of research proving that SEL is fundamental to academic success and must be woven into the work of every teacher in every classroom and every after school and summer learning program in order to prepare all students for college and careers.

To better connect educators with SEL, the CDE has joined the Collaborating States Initiative hosted by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a group of states that share information, best practices, and promising tools and ideas in the interest of building strong SEL in schools across their states.

The integration of SEL to promote equity and address the needs of the whole child, and educators, is supported by many of California's current policies, standards, funding, and decision-making mechanisms, including Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP).

The CDE maintains several resource pages related to SEL, including the SEL Guiding Principles and the Transformative Social Emotional Learning (T-SEL) Conditions and Competencies for Thriving.

- 3) ***California's SEL Guiding Principles.*** In 2017, the CDE convened representatives from more than 20 California education organizations and systems to affirm SEL as an essential part of a well-rounded, quality education in all youth-serving settings and develop the California SEL Guiding Principles (Principles). The Principles are intended to serve as a resource to help LEAs develop LCAP goals; support the local rollout of the MTSS; set school or district leadership team priorities; inform the design of professional learning, instructional approaches, and curricula adoption; help determine assessment methodologies and tools; and build coalitions of families and community stakeholders.

The following Principles are designed to build on the implicit and explicit SEL practices already happening in many schools and to promote the intentional use of evidence and research-based practices to guide decision-making:

- a) Adopt Whole Child Development as the Goal of Education: Take a systems approach to promoting student academic, SEL, physical well-being, and college, career, and civic life readiness. Name SEL as not a "nice to have," but a "must have" to ensure student success in school, work, and community.
- b) Commit to Equity: All students must have opportunities to build SEL skills and receive an assets-based educational experience that is personalized, culturally relevant, and responsive, and intentionally addresses racism and implicit bias. Use practices that build on the existing strengths of students, educators, families, and communities.
- c) Build Capacity: Build the capacity of both students and adults through an intentional focus on relationship-centered learning environments and by

offering research-based learning experiences that cultivate core social and emotional competencies.

- d) Partner with Families and Community: Maximize the resources of the entire school community, including expanded learning opportunities, early learning and care programs, and family and community partnerships, to advance SEL and student well-being.
- e) Learn and Improve: Adopt continuous improvement practices and use evidence to guide decision-making while aiming to enhance the quality of student SEL opportunities. Use data to inform improvement of instructional and school practices, not for accountability purposes.

The Principles are intended to be refined to meet the unique needs of each community and can be used to measure progress toward shared SEL goals.

- 4) ***Multi-Tiered Systems of Support***. MTSS is a comprehensive framework that aligns academic, behavioral, SEL and mental health supports in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students. CA MTSS offers the potential to create needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports to identify and match all students' needs quickly. The MTSS framework provides opportunities for LEAs to strengthen school, family, and community partnerships while developing the whole child in the most inclusive, equitable learning environment, thus closing the equity gaps for all students.

In 2015, Assembly Bill 104 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 13, Statutes of 2015) appropriated \$10 million for developing, aligning, and improving academic and behavioral support systems. The CDE conducted a competitive grant process and awarded the funds to the OCDE for their SUMS proposal, which included the Butte COE as a rural partner. The focus of the SUMS Initiative is to develop resources for MTSS within an LEA that align the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports in an LEA in order to serve the whole child. It involves family and community engagement, administrative leadership, integrated education frameworks, and inclusive policy and practices.

In 2016, an additional \$20 million, appropriated by SB 828 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 29, Statutes 2016), augmented the original grant award.

The Budget Act of 2018 authorized an additional \$15 million, appropriated by AB 1808 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018) and SB 840 (Mitchell, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018), to focus on improving the school climate statewide.

Finally, the Budget Act of 2021 appropriated an additional \$50 million to the SUMS Initiative. The legislation required the OCDE to award \$30 million of these funds as subgrants to LEAs. The legislation also required the CDE to conduct a process to select a partner entity to work with the OCDE and the Butte COE to support high quality professional learning for educators.

The purpose of the full \$95 million awarded to date is to encourage LEAs to establish and align schoolwide, data-driven systems of academic and behavioral supports to more effectively meet the needs of California's diverse learners in the most inclusive environment. The SUMS Initiative has allowed the OCDE and its partners to develop and disseminate statewide resources and technical assistance for this purpose.

This bill requires the CDE to select one or more lead LEAs to provide support for the implementation of integrated SEL, behavioral health, and restorative practices for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The Committee may wish to consider how this bill interacts with current investments made by the Legislature to address the social-emotional health of students.

- 5) **Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative.** Launched in July 2021, CYBHI is a multiyear, multi-billion-dollar effort focused on improving the behavioral health and well-being of children, youth, and families. The CYBHI is the core of the Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health, the state's \$4.7 billion investment to overhaul its mental health system and enhance the pathways connecting families with the needed services. According to the CYBHI's 2024 annual report, CYBHI investments have taken form in the following work streams in educational settings:
- a) *Safe Spaces Trauma Informed Training* – A free, online training designed to help individuals working with children and youth recognize and respond to signs of trauma and stress.
 - b) *CalHOPE Mindfulness, Resilience, and Well-being Supports* – Providing no-cost mental health and wellness resources to schools across the state. The website contains resources that focus on creating trusted spaces, building resilience, and recognizing the signs of mental stress and duress in colleagues, students, and family members.
 - c) *Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program* – Addressing behavioral health access barriers for Medi-Cal students through targeted interventions that increase access to preventive, early intervention, or other behavioral health services provided by school-affiliated behavioral health providers for TK-12 children in public schools.
 - d) *School-Linked Partnership and Capacity Grants* - Providing COEs and LEAs, as well as institutions of higher education (IHEs), with critical resources to build infrastructure and partnerships and achieve a long-term and sustainable funding model for student behavioral health services. These one-time grants aim to increase operational readiness to engage in the CYBHI Fee Schedule program through supporting Medi-Cal enrollment, building service delivery and billing infrastructure, establishing data collection and documentation processes, and supporting collective impact efforts.
 - e) *CYBHI Fee Schedule Program* - Increases access to school-linked behavioral health services. The program establishes a sustainable

reimbursement source from Managed Care Plans, commercial health insurance, and disability insurers. Covered services include outpatient mental health or substance use disorder services for students under 26 years of age. The Fee Schedule creates a more approachable billing model for LEAs and public IHEs, easing burdens related to contracting, rate negotiation, and navigation across delivery systems, and reducing uncertainty around students' health insurance coverage.

- f) *Transforming Together* - Supported by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Transforming Together (T2) brings together a cross-sector Collaborative Leadership Working Group to align and integrate systems efforts for a re-imagined, youth-centered behavioral health ecosystem. Work is conducted in close partnership with CDE's California Community Schools Partnership Program and piloted in four demonstration counties.

- 6) ***Arguments in support.*** In a letter of support submitted to this Committee, this bill's sponsors, Initiate Justice, note the following:

"Importantly, this bill is grounded in the lived experience and policy insight of incarcerated students at Pleasant Valley State Prison who participated in Initiate Justice's Inside Policy Clinic. Through that process, participants identified the absence of early emotional and behavioral support as a key factor contributing to cycles of harm and system involvement. AB 1851 reflects a rare and critical inside-out approach to policymaking by centering the voices of those most directly impacted to inform upstream, preventative solutions.

"Too often, policy responses to violence—particularly gun and gang violence—are reactive, relying on increased punishment after harm has already occurred. However, decades of research and lived experience have shown that this approach is both costly and ineffective in producing safer communities. What we need are upstream solutions that build the skills young people need to navigate conflict, regulate emotions, and develop healthy relationships. Social-emotional learning does exactly that.

"By equipping students with tools such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making, SEL strengthens school climate, reduces behavioral incidents, and supports long-term positive outcomes. Importantly, it provides a proactive framework for violence prevention that aligns with what we know actually improves safety: early intervention, skill-building, and supportive learning environments."

- 7) ***Prior and related legislation.***

AB 1479 (Garcia, 2023) would have established the Pupil Social-Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Program, to be administered by the CDE, to make available grants to LEAs to provide Tier 1 mental health supports to pupils and families, subject to an appropriation for this purpose. AB 1479 was vetoed with the following message:

Unfortunately, this specific proposal creates additional significant ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures up to tens of millions of dollars that are not accounted for in the state budget plan and may be duplicative of other investments made in prior budgets. The 2021 Budget Act provided \$50 million to support the Scale Up Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Statewide Initiative, which provides grants to support schools in implementing services or practices aligned to the MTSS framework. Additionally, the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative is a \$4.7 billion investment towards ensuring that every Californian aged 0-25 has increased access to behavioral health supports.

AB 2598 (Akilah Weber, Chapter 914, Statutes of 2022) requires the CDE to develop and post on its website, by June 1, 2024, evidence-based best practices for restorative justice practices for LEAs to implement to improve campus culture and climate.

AB 2124 (Cristina Garcia, 2022) would have required the SPI to develop, administer, and award the Pupil Peer Support Training Program grant competitively for LEAs serving pupils in grades 9 to 12 to establish a peer support training program. *AB 2124 was vetoed with the following message:*

Peer support programs are valuable, which is why the 2022 Budget Act funded a similar program. AB 178 allocated \$10 million for the School-Based Peer Mental Health Demonstration Project. This grant program will provide competitive grants to high schools to develop peer-to-peer support programs. With our state facing lower-than-expected revenues over the first few months of this fiscal year, it is important to remain disciplined when it comes to spending, particularly spending that is ongoing. We must prioritize existing obligations and priorities, including education, health care, public safety and safety-net programs.

AB 552 (Quirk-Silva, 2022) would have authorized a county behavioral health agency and the governing board or governing body of a LEA to enter into an Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Partnership Program (Partnership Program), as established by this bill, to provide prevention and early intervention, and access to behavioral health and substance use disorder services for pupils at schoolsites. *AB 552 was vetoed with the following message:*

While I share the author's goal of addressing the mental health needs of children and youth, the partnership programs proposed under this bill would duplicate requirements for school-based behavioral health services being developed pursuant to the Children and Youth's Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), which take effect in 2024. Implementation of the CYBHI's statewide all-payer fee schedule will provide a solution to the issue that this bill attempts to address. Additionally, I am concerned that this bill could create significant one-time and ongoing costs in the millions of dollars for the departments that would play a role in implementing these programs.

AB 2221 (Cristina Garcia, 2020) would have required school districts to establish a peer support training program at each high school. *AB 2221 was held in the Assembly Education Committee.*

AB 2639 (Berman, Chapter 437, Statutes of 2018) requires the CDE to identify and make available an online training program in suicide prevention that an LEA can use to train school staff and pupils, consistent with the LEA's policy on suicide prevention.

SUPPORT

Initiate Justice (sponsor)
Alameda County Office of Education
Back to the Start
California Association for Bilingual Education
California Association of School Counselors
California Primary Care Association Advocates
Drug Policy Alliance
GLIDE
Los Angeles County Office of Education

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1858	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Lowenthal		
Version:	June 8, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: California State University: Joint Associate's Degree Pilot Program.

SUMMARY

This bill requires, by July 1, 2027, and upon appropriation, the California State University (CSU) to establish a pilot program to offer an associate degree that is jointly awarded by the CSU and a California Community College (CCC) or a California non-profit independent institution of higher education to former CSU students.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Differentiates the missions and functions of public and independent institutions of higher education. Under these provisions:
 - a) The primary mission of the CSU is to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education, including teacher education. The CSU is authorized to establish two-year programs only when mutually agreed upon by the Trustees and the CCC Board of Governors (BOG). The CSU is also authorized to jointly award the doctoral degree with the University of California (UC) and with one or more independent institutions of higher education.
 - b) The UC is authorized to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and has exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education over graduate instruction in the professions of law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. The UC is also the primary state-supported academic agency for research.
 - c) The independent institutions of higher education are required to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and research in accordance with their respective missions.
 - d) The mission and function of the CCC is the offering of academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level, and the CCCs are authorized to grant the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees. The community colleges are also required to offer learning supports to close learning gaps, English as a second language instruction,

and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EDC) § 66010.4)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CSU Chancellor, by July 1, 2027, to establish a pilot program to offer an associate degree that is jointly awarded by the CSU and a CCC campus, CCC district, or California nonprofit independent institution of higher education to former CSU students who meet both of the following requirements:
 - a) The former student successfully completed coursework equivalent to the requirements for an associate degree.
 - b) The former student has not previously earned an associate degree from a postsecondary educational institution.
- 2) Requires that the program include the following:
 - a) An associate degree in general education studies, which shall be the official name of an associate degree conferred.
 - b) A process to jointly confer the associate degree in general education studies from a community college or independent institution of higher education that awards associate degrees.
 - c) A process for identifying eligible former students.
 - d) A mechanism for verifying an eligible former student's completion of the requirements for the associate degree in general education studies.
- 3) Requires that the associate degree in general education studies be awarded at no cost to the former student.
- 4) Requires participation in the pilot program from CSU, Long Beach. The CSU Chancellor is authorized to include additional campuses, as determined by the CSU Chancellor.
- 5) Requires, by January 2032, the CSU Chancellor to submit a report with the specified information to the Legislature evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot program at the participating CSU campuses.
- 6) Sunsets the bill's provisions on January 1, 2033.
- 7) Declares that provisions are to be known as the California State University: Joint Associates Degree Pilot Program.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, “the path to educational success is often not linear. Working students, veterans, parents, and first-generation college students often leave college due to financial hardship, mental health challenges, or other barriers. Many complete enough coursework to earn an associate degree, but existing law provides no mechanism to award that credential at the CSU level, leaving students without recognition for the work they’ve already done. This is a thoughtful approach to close this gap.”
- 2) **Differentiation of missions and existing joint degree authority.** The state has four segments of higher education: three public and one private. Each plays a vital and unique role for the state and its students. Their mission statements are outlined in state statute. The CCCs are to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Its primary area of mission includes academic and vocational instruction leading to associate degrees and university transfer, career technical education, and remedial education. The primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree. The UC was granted the sole authority to offer doctoral degree programs and is the state’s primary research institution. Existing law recognizes collaboration among segments. Under current law, CSU may establish a two-year program jointly with the CCCs when mutually agreed upon by the CSU Trustees and the CCCs BOG, and current law authorizes CSU to jointly confer doctoral degrees with the UC and independent institutions. This bill would authorize a pilot program under which CSU and a community college or independent institution may confer a joint associate degree to eligible former CSU students. This bill does not authorize CSU to independently award associate degrees.
- 3) **Some college, no degree.** This bill seeks to recognize former CSU students who completed coursework equivalent to an associate degree but left CSU before earning a degree. Rather than requiring students to return and complete additional coursework, this bill would authorize participating institutions to jointly award an associate degree based on coursework already completed. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center has identified a growing trend in efforts to serve students with “some college, no credential.” While re-enrollment remains the primary strategy for increasing postsecondary attainment, the Clearinghouse notes that approximately one-quarter of former students who ultimately earn a credential do so without re-enrolling. According to the report, these credentials may result from institutions removing administrative barriers to graduation, accommodating delayed completion of academic requirements, or adopting policies that award credentials to students who have already completed the required coursework. Examples include reverse transfer programs that award associate degrees after students complete sufficient coursework at a four-year institution and newer initiatives, such as Colorado’s Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) Initiative, that authorize four-year institution to award associate degrees to students who stopped out before completing a bachelor’s degree but accumulated sufficient credits. The report concludes that these approaches recognize that re-engagement does not always begin with re-enrollment and may represent a promising strategy for increasing educational attainment. This bill reflects that emerging effort by creating a mechanism to recognize academic achievement that has already occurred.

- 4) **Joint degree differs from traditional reverse transfer programs.** Rather than authorizing CSU to independently award associate degrees, this bill requires the participating institutions to mutually agree on the process for awarding a joint degree. To implement the pilot, participating institutions will need to establish processes for identifying eligible former students, evaluating completed coursework against the degree requirements, verifying eligibility, and notifying former students that they have the opportunity to receive a jointly awarded associate degree. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) has suggested expanding existing reverse transfer partnerships as an alternative to the approach proposed in this bill, arguing that students could receive established associate degrees tied to existing disciplines and programs of study rather than a newly created joint degree. In contrast, proponents contend that this bill addresses a different population—former CSU students who are no longer enrolled and have already completed coursework equivalent to an associate degree by creating a mechanism to recognize learning already completed without requiring students to return and enroll in additional coursework. The Committee may wish to consider whether existing reverse transfer pathways adequately address the population targeted by this bill or whether a separate joint degree model is warranted.
- 5) **Associate degree in general education studies.** As drafted, this bill specifies that the degree awarded through the pilot be an "Associate Degree in General Education Studies." The CCCCCO and the CCC Academic Senate have raised concerns that limiting the pilot to a general education studies degree may not accurately reflect a former student's completed coursework or provide the same value to employers, and that an associate degree with an area of emphasis may better communicate a student's academic preparation. Additionally, the community colleges have increasingly moved away from awarding broad general studies degrees. ***For this reason, Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to authorize participating institutions to award an Associate Degree in General Studies or, where appropriate, another associate degree with an area of emphasis that is consistent with the former students completed coursework.***

This change would preserve the bill's objective of recognizing previously completed coursework while providing participating institutions with greater flexibility to confer a credential that more accurately reflects a former student's completed academic work.

- 6) **Scope of the pilot program.** The bill requires participation by CSU, Long Beach, and authorizes the CSU Chancellor to include additional campuses in the pilot program. While a pilot program is generally intended to test a new policy on a limited scale before broader implementation, the bill does not limit the number of additional campuses that may participate. Although community colleges are not required to participate, concerns have been raised about a large-scale program developing under the proposed authorization, thereby increasing implementation costs for community colleges. As such, ***Committee staff recommends that the bill be amended to limit participation in the pilot program to no more than five CSU campuses, including CSU, Long Beach.*** Establishing a reasonable cap would preserve the pilot nature of the program while providing

some institutional diversity to evaluate whether the model should be expanded statewide.

- 7) **Pilot program evaluation.** This measure requires the CCCO to report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the pilot by January 1, 2032. In evaluating the pilot, the author may wish to consider whether the report should include additional outcome measures beyond the number of degrees awarded, such as the number of eligible students identified, student acceptance rates, implementation challenges, and whether participating institutions recommend expanding or modifying the program.
- 8) **Arguments in Support.** According to the CSU Chancellor's office, in their letter of support submitted to this Committee in part, "...As the CSU system is not authorized to offer associate degrees, this partnership is vital to empower former students who chose to enroll at the CSU as freshmen but for a variety of reasons—the COVID-19 pandemic, family responsibilities, or the need to work full-time—were unable to complete their bachelor's degree. Unfortunately, this is a national problem: more than 37 million Americans have attended some college without ultimately earning a degree or credential, including six million Californians. Cal State Long Beach is pioneering efforts to re-engage with their former students and develop innovative strategies to meet them where they are. Cal State Long Beach estimates that 1,000 former students who left within the past decade, but earned more than 60 units at the university, would be eligible for this retroactive jointly conferred associate degree and could immediately benefit from this proof of their educational attainment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, associate degree holders earn eighteen percent more than those with only a high school diploma, and they are more likely to have access to benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans..."
- 9) **Arguments in Opposition.** The CCCCOs, argues, in their letter submitted to this Committee, in part, "The California Community Colleges strongly support efforts to grant students recognition for academic work they have completed. We have previously offered amendments to AB 1858 focused on expanding reverse articulation options. Through reverse articulation, community colleges can evaluate coursework completed at a CSU campus and award an associate degree when students have satisfied the requirements of a community college program of study. This approach provides students with a recognized credential tied to established disciplines and academic pathways that provide meaningful opportunities, rather than a newly created general education credential based primarily on the accumulation of lower-division coursework. Awarding a General Education Studies degree runs counter to the direction that California has intentionally pursued for decades. Across our higher education and workforce systems, we have prioritized credentials with clear transfer and workforce value, reflected in initiatives such as the California Career Education Master Plan, the development and expansion of Associate Degrees for Transfer, and the deliberate effort by colleges to phase out many general studies degrees that lack a clear and defined academic or career pathway. This approach is also consistent with the position of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, which has consistently affirmed that completion of a general education pattern alone does not constitute completion of an associate degree. Through

multiple statewide resolutions, the ASCCC has opposed general education patterns as the sole basis for an associate degree area of emphasis. These positions reflect a longstanding understanding that an associate degree signifies completion of a coherent and intentional program of study, not merely the completion of a collection of coursework requirements...”

SUPPORT

California State University, Office of the Chancellor (sponsor)
American Association of University Women - California
Campaign for College Opportunity
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
Long Beach Community College District
Los Angeles Unified School District
Southern California College Attainment Network

OPPOSITION

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
Allan Hancock College
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
California Teachers Association
CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges Board
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2017	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Haney		
Version:	June 16, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: State holidays: Eid.

SUMMARY

This bill (1) authorizes K-12 public schools and community colleges to close on the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and on the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha”; (2) establishes Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state holidays; and (3) authorizes any state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for each of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

K-12 public schools and California Community Colleges (CCCs)

- 1) Requires public schools and CCCs to close on a number of holidays: January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Lincoln Day; Washington Day; Memorial Day; July 4; Labor Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; December 25; and any day appointed by the President as a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday, unless it is a special or limited holiday. (Education Code (EC) § 37220 and 79020)
- 2) Requires public schools close on all days designated by the Governor for a public fast, Thanksgiving, or holiday, all special or limited holidays on which the Governor provides that the schools close, and any other day designated as a holiday by the governing board of a local school district. (EC § 37220)
- 3) Requires CCCs close on any day appointed by the Governor for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday if the Governor requires that the CCCs are closed on the day, or if the Governor does not provide whether the CCCs are required to close. (EC § 79020)
- 4) Authorizes public schools and CCCs to be closed, and the classified service of public schools and CCCs to be entitled to a paid holiday, on the following holidays, if the governing board agrees to close schools for that purpose pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU), including:
 - a) April 24, known as “Genocide Remembrance Day.”

- b) The fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day.”
 - c) The 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar, known as “Diwali.” (EC §§ 37220.7, 45203, 79020, and 88203)
- 5) Requires school districts to offer a minimum of 180 days of instruction per school year, as a condition of apportionment. (EC § 46208)

State holidays

- 6) Provides that holidays in this state are: every Sunday; January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Lincoln Day; Washington Day; Farmworkers Day; April 24, known as “Genocide Remembrance Day”; the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar of each year, known as “Diwali”; Memorial Day; June 19, known as “Juneteenth”; July 4; Labor Day; September 9, known as “Admission Day”; the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day”; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; December 25; Good Friday from 12 p.m. until 3 p.m.; every day appointed by the President or Governor for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday. (Government Code (GOV) § 6700)
- 7) Requires that all state employees be entitled to the following holidays: January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; President’s Day; Farmworkers Day; Memorial Day; July 4; Labor Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; the day after Thanksgiving; December 25; a personal holiday chosen by an employee after 6 months of work; and every day appointed by the Governor of this state for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday. (GOV § 19853)
- 8) Authorizes any state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for the date corresponding with the new moon following the winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should an intercalary month intervene, known as “Lunar New Year,” April 24, known as “Genocide Remembrance Day,” June 19, known as “Juneteenth,” or the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day,” in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit. (GOV § 19853)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

K-12 public schools

- 1) Authorizes public schools to close on the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” if the governing board agrees to close schools for these purposes pursuant to an MOU.
- 2) Authorizes public schools and educational institutions throughout the state to include exercises, funded through existing resources, acknowledging and celebrating the meaning and importance of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

- 3) Authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a model curriculum guide to be available for use by public schools for exercises related to Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.
- 4) Authorizes classified public K-12 school employees to a paid holiday on each of the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” if the governing board agrees to close schools for these purposes pursuant to an MOU.

CCCs

- 5) Authorizes a CCC to close on the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” if the governing board, agrees to close the CCC for these purposes pursuant to an MOU.
- 6) Authorizes classified CCC employees to a paid holiday on each of the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” if the governing board of the community college district agrees to the paid holidays pursuant to a MOU.

State holidays

- 7) Establishes the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” as state holidays.
- 8) Authorizes any state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for each of the dates corresponding with the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha,” in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit.

Other provisions

- 9) Excludes Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha from being judicial holidays.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “AB 2017 recognizes Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as official California state holidays. California is home to one of the nation’s largest and most diverse Muslim communities, yet our state holiday calendar has not kept pace with that reality. Muslim students and families are often forced to choose between fully observing their holiest days and attending school or work obligations. By adding Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to California’s list of recognized state holidays, consistent with the state’s existing recognition of observances such as Lunar New Year and Diwali—AB 2017 promotes inclusion, respect, and a stronger sense of belonging for Muslim Californians while relying on

existing law governing school calendars, employee leave, and institutional observance.”

- 2) ***Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.*** Eid means “festival” or “feast” in Arabic, and there are two major eids each year that are celebrated by Muslims around the world: Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The dates of both holidays are determined by the Islamic lunar calendar, which is based on the cycles of the moon rather than the solar-based Gregorian calendar used in most parts of the world, including the United States. The Islamic lunar calendar consists of 354 or 355 days per year, and as a result, the Gregorian dates of these observances change each year, occurring approximately 11 days earlier in each successive year.

Eid al-Fitr, meaning the “Festival of Breaking the Fast,” is a 3-day festival that marks the conclusion of Ramadan, the month during which Muslims fast from dawn to sunset and commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad. Ramadan is a period of religious observance, prayer, Quran recitation, self-reflection, and spiritual devotion, including the observance of Laylat al-Qadr, one of the holiest nights in Islam. Eid al-Fitr begins on the first day of Shawwal, the month following Ramadan and the 10th month of the Islamic calendar, and is traditionally marked by special congregational prayers held shortly after sunrise, as well as gatherings with family and community members.

Eid al-Adha, known as the “Festival of Sacrifice,” is a 4-day festival that commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience of Allah. The holiday emphasizes the values of faith, sacrifice, generosity, and service to others. Observed beginning on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the final and 12th month of the Islamic calendar, Eid al-Adha coincides with the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage and is traditionally celebrated over a three-day period.

Though both Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are significant religious celebrations marked by prayer and community gatherings, they commemorate different events and traditions. Eid al-Fitr celebrates the completion of Ramadan and is commonly associated with feasting, charitable giving, and the exchange of gifts. In contrast, Eid al-Adha coincides with the conclusion of Hajj and focuses on themes of sacrifice, reflection, generosity, and communal worship. Together, these observances are among the most important holidays in Islam and serve as occasions for spiritual renewal, family gatherings, and community engagement.

- 3) ***This bill authorizes but does not require a school or CCC holiday.*** K-12 public schools and CCCs are required to provide a minimum number of days of instruction per year. CCCs specifically are required to continue in session unless closed on specified holidays. This bill grants K-12 public schools and CCCs the authority to close on the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar for Eid al-Fitr, as well as the 10th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar for Eid al-Adha. Similarly, this bill establishes these specified days as state holidays and authorizes state employees to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit on that day in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit. *Committee staff notes that an additional state holiday does not*

equate to an additional day off from school or a paid day off, and public employees already earn personal holidays that they may use to take off for any day with pay.

- 4) **Resources for schools.** This bill authorizes schools to include exercises, funded through existing resources, acknowledging and celebrating the meaning and importance of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This bill further authorizes SBE to adopt a model curriculum guide to be available for use by public schools for exercises related to Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Though the California Constitution prohibits public schools from teaching any sectarian or denominational doctrine, it does not prohibit instruction about religion. Section 51511 of the Education Code states, “Nothing in this code shall be construed to prevent, or exclude from the public schools, references to religion or references to or the use of religious literature, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts or other things having a religious significance when such references or uses do not constitute instruction in religious principles or aid to any religious sect, church, creed, or sectarian purpose and when such references or uses are incidental to or illustrative of matters properly included in the course of study.”

This bill authorizes K-12 public schools to include exercises, funded through existing resources, acknowledging and celebrating the meaning and importance of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, but does not authorize religious indoctrination.

- 5) **Paid vs. unpaid holidays.** As noted in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee’s analysis, California law does not require a private employer to provide its employees with paid holidays, that it closes its business on any holiday, or that employees be given the day off for any particular holiday. If an employer closes its business on holidays and gives its employees time off from work with pay, that occurred pursuant to a policy or practice adopted by the employer, pursuant to the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, or pursuant to the terms of an employment agreement between the employer and employee, as there is nothing in law that requires such a practice.

At the local level, cities have the liberty to specify by charter, ordinance or resolution what paid holidays the city will provide to its city employees. Similarly, most state workers are bound by the MOU that they have negotiated with the Governor.

For all other state employees, they are generally entitled to the following paid holidays: January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; President’s Day; Farmworkers Day; Memorial Day; July 4; Labor Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; the day after Thanksgiving; December 25; a personal holiday chosen by an employee after 6 months of work; and every day appointed by the Governor of this state for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday.

- 6) **Related and Prior Legislation.**

AB 268 (Kalra, Chapter 358, Statutes of 2025) a) authorizes K-12 public schools and community colleges to close on the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar of each year, known as “Diwali”; b) establishes Diwali as a

state holiday; and, c) authorizes any state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for Diwali, in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit.

SUPPORT

California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (co-sponsor)
Muslim Impact Council (co-sponsor)
Amal Collective
Chinatown Community Development Center
City of Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee
Dana Investment Corp
Intercultural Networks Group
Interfaith Center at the Presidio
Latino & Muslim Unity
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Manara West
Muslim American Society-Social Services Foundation
Muslim Leadership Council of San Diego
Muslim Parents Association
Muslim Public Affairs Council
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
South Asian Network
Vivalon
Two Individuals

OPPOSITION

California Family Council
Real Impact

-- END --

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2071	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Hoover		
Version:	June 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Pupil instruction: digital wellness.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to develop a plan to expand digital wellness instruction in California public schools.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Defines “artificial intelligence (AI)” as an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments. (Education Code (EC) § 33328.5)
- 2) Defines media literacy as the ability to access, evaluate, analyze, and use media and information, and encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship. (EC § 180101)
- 3) Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to consider including media literacy content in the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when they are next revised. (EC § 33548)
- 4) Requires the CDE to maintain on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers. (EC § 51206.4)
- 5) Establishes the California Public Schools AI Working Group, and requires it to assess and release guidance on the safe use of AI in public schools. (EC § 33328.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CDE, on or before January 1, 2028, to develop a plan to expand digital wellness instruction in California public schools. Requires that the plan include all of the following:

- a) Recommendations for age-appropriate instructional resources for elementary, middle school, and high schools.
 - b) Strategies for keeping curriculum current with rapidly evolving digital and AI technology.
 - c) Guidance for schools with limited technology resources.
 - d) Family engagement and education components
 - e) Assessment methods for evaluating instruction effectiveness.
 - f) Strategies for ensuring adequate support and professional development opportunities for educators regarding digital wellness topics, including collaborating with technology companies, mental health organizations, and media literacy experts, as appropriate.
- 2) Establishes several definitions for the purposes of this bill:
- a) “Artificial intelligence,” pursuant to existing statute, means an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments.
 - b) “Digital wellness” means a state of well-being in which an individual uses technology in ways that support physical health, mental health, social connections, and overall quality of life, while minimizing potential harms.
 - c) “Media literacy” means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication, including understanding how media messages are constructed, for what purposes, and with what effects.
- 3) Makes a series of legislative findings and declarations related to the importance of comprehensive digital wellness education and the challenges students face due to the increasing presence of digital technology and AI in a student’s daily life.
- 4) Establishes the Legislature’s intent to ensure that pupils in elementary school, middle school, and high school can benefit from comprehensive education on digital wellness, media literacy, and the responsible use of emerging technologies, including AI.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “In today’s digital landscape, you cannot consider mental health concerns without considering the impact of digital media. Digital literacy is directly contributing to our ongoing mental health crisis, and students deserve access to the tools and education needed to prepare them

for safe digital citizenship. As a state, we are failing to meet students at this critical moment in their development. With the right skills, students are empowered to navigate digital spaces with confidence and discernment.”

- 2) ***The IQC and the SBE.*** This bill requires the CDE to develop a plan to expand digital wellness instruction in California public schools. The Legislature has vested the IQC and the SBE with the authority to develop and adopt state curriculum and instructional materials. The IQC develops curriculum frameworks through a process involving practitioners and experts who have an in-depth understanding of curriculum and instruction, including the full scope and sequence of the curriculum in each subject and at each grade level, constraints on instructional time and resources, and the relationship of curriculum to state assessments and other measures of student progress. Changes are frequently made in response to public comment. The frameworks are then adopted by the SBE in a public meeting.

The resulting curriculum framework is intended to serve as a guidance document for educators and administrators on how to plan for and provide quality, skills-based, standards-aligned instruction on the various content areas.

This bill does not require schools to provide any particular instruction. Further, recent author amendments clarified that the bill would not require any changes or additions to existing curriculum frameworks.

- 3) ***Digital wellness-related content in the Health Framework.*** This bill requires the CDE to develop a plan to expand digital wellness instruction in California public schools. It further defines digital wellness as a state of well-being in which an individual uses technology in ways that support physical health, mental health, social connections, and overall quality of life, while minimizing potential harms.

While digital wellness is not currently referenced in Education Code or elsewhere in California statute, many related concepts and skills contained within this bill’s proposed definition can be found in the 2019 Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (the Framework). Such examples include the following:

- a) In the Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 3rd grade span, teachers begin facilitating conversations on internet safety, “netiquette”, and the importance of using the internet for good purposes, and how their actions online may impact others. When discussing bullying and encouraging students to promote a positive and respectful school environment, teachers explain that this also applies to internet usage and behavior online and through social media.
- b) In the 4th to 6th grade span, students examine television, radio, online, social media, and billboard ads to learn about the past and present strategies and tactics advertisers use to influence people. They also build on their foundational knowledge of internet safety to better understand the dangers of cyberbullying, cyberstalking, grooming, as well as the importance of seeking the help of a trusted adult when feeling personally

threatened or unsafe. Students also learn strategies to support whole family health by sharing screen-time tracking charts with their parents or creating activity plans such as walking after dinner or bicycling together to reduce screen time.

- c) In the 7th to 8th grade span, students learn about responsible decision-making to balance the greater levels of independence and responsibility that they may be experiencing. This includes establishing a healthy balance between technology and social media use and peer dynamics. Students may also build on their knowledge of how media influences people by analyzing online advertisements and photos from popular teen websites to understand how such images can impact one's body image, and realistic perception of beauty.
- a) In the 9th to 12th grade span, students learn about coping mechanisms for stress management from research, their peers, and their teacher and are encouraged to identify goals for handling stress in healthy ways such as meditation, mindfulness, taking a break from social media or technology, talking about your problems or worries to a trusted adult, decreasing negative self-talk, or breaking seemingly large tasks into small tasks. Students also learn more about forms of abuse that can be carried out through technology, including cyber stalking, the sharing of explicit photographs and/or video with others or posting online, possession or distribution of child pornography, demanding email or social media passwords, and taking photographs of someone without their knowledge.

Health education content is required for students in all grade levels; however, *how* the content is delivered is the decision of LEAs. LEAs have the authority to determine whether to provide a standalone health education course, the length of that course, and whether it is a graduation requirement.

- 4) ***Existing resources for digital citizenship.*** Digital citizenship is the safe and responsible use of technology and online behavior modeled by students and adults. The CDE maintains an information page on digital citizenship and its nexus to mental health. As noted on its page, the CDE aims to support the efforts of adults such as educators and caregivers to model and provide safe and responsible online learning environments for students. The CDE's goal is to offer guidance by sharing and curating vetted resources for students, families, and educators to leverage in daily practices so that students feel supported, respected, and valued. These resources include:
 - a) Links to digital citizenship curricula and ready-made lesson plans for students in grades kindergarten through twelve;
 - b) A discussion of the relationship between digital citizenship and mental health;
 - c) Events that support digital citizenship;
 - d) Informational resources hosted by partner organizations; and

- e) Information related to the CDE's annual Digital Citizenship Week.
- 5) ***Existing resources for AI and media literacy.*** Media literacy, as defined in this bill and existing statute, is ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication, including understanding how media messages are constructed, for what purposes, and with what effects. In recent years, the Legislature has advanced several pieces of legislation to enhance media literacy instruction.
- a) SB 830 (Dodd, Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018) required the CDE to create a resource page on its website with a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy and related professional development programs for teachers. These resources are intended to ensure that young adults are prepared with media literacy skills necessary to safely, responsibly, and critically consume and use social media and other forms of media.
- b) AB 873 (Berman, Chapter 815, Statutes of 2023) requires the IQC to consider incorporating the Model School Library Standards (MSLS) and media literacy content at each grade level when the English language arts/English language development (ELA/ELD) curriculum framework is next revised and media literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised after January 1, 2024.
- c) AB 2876 (Berman, Chapter 927, Statutes of 2024) requires the IQC to consider AI literacy, as defined, to be included in the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks and instructional materials, as specified.
- d) SB 1288 (Becker, Chapter 893, Statutes of 2024) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to convene the California Public Schools: AI Working Group to develop guidance and model policy for the safe, equitable, and effective use of AI in schools. The AI Work Group includes educators, students, administrators, classified staff, higher education representatives, and industry experts. Members meet publicly to develop statewide guidance and a model policy, addressing topics such as data privacy, academic integrity, professional development, equitable access, and effective classroom integration. The final guidance and model policy report is due to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2027.

Pursuant to these bills, the CDE maintains various resource pages with guidance; sample learning goals, activities, and prompts; examples of standards aligned instruction; links to free online databases and tools for student research; and contacts for organizations that offer professional development opportunities.

6) ***Prior and related legislation.***

SB 1133 (Strickland, 2026) would require the IQC to consider including information on evidence-based preventative health instruction, including digital

balance, at the next regularly scheduled revision of the Health Education Framework. *SB 1133 is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

AB 1644 (Muratsuchi, 2026) would require the governing board or body of an LEA to adopt a policy to prohibit pupil smartphone use for pupils in TK kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and requires the CDE to conduct a statewide study and report on LEA smartphone policies. *AB 1644 is set for the same hearing as AB 2071 in this Committee.*

SB 1128 (Stern, 2026) would prohibit LEAs from requiring a pupil in kindergarten to take home a school issued electronic device. The bill also requires the CDE to develop and post on its internet website, model policies for the age-appropriate use of school-issued electronic devices in schools, as specified. *SB 1128 is pending a hearing in the Assembly Education Committee.*

SB 1288 (Becker, Chapter 893, Statutes of 2024) requires the SPI to convene a working group on AI, and requires that working group to develop expanded guidance and a model policy on AI for use by LEAs and charter schools.

AB 2876 (Berman, Chapter 927, Statutes of 2024) requires the IQC to consider AI literacy, as defined, to be included in the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks and instructional materials, as specified.

SB 830 (Dodd, Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018) requires CDE to make available to school districts on its internet website, by July 1, 2019, a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers.

SUPPORT

End Chronic Disease (co-sponsor)
GenUp (co-sponsor)
Alameda County Office of Education
Association of California School Administrators
California Alliance for Media Literacy
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Catholic Conference
California State PTA
California Student Media Festival
Center for Leadership, Equity, and Research
CFT – A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Critical Media Project
Digital4Good
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Media Literacy Now
National AI Youth Council
National Association for Media Arts Education
TechNet
Youth and Media Insights Lab

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2158	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Hoover and Lowenthal		
Version:	June 22, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Pupil instruction: outdoor learning.

SUMMARY

This bill recognizes outdoor learning as an effective and developmentally appropriate instructional method and requires the California Department of Education (CDE), on or before July 1, 2028, to curate and maintain resources for educators on outdoor learning on its internet website.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Education and the Environment (OEE) in the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) and requires the OEE to implement a statewide environmental education program. (Public Resources Code (PRC) § 71300)
- 2) Requires the OEE, under the direction of CalRecycle and in cooperation with the CDE and the State Board of Education (SBE), to develop and implement a unified education strategy of the environment for elementary and secondary schools that does all of the following:
 - a) Coordinate instructional resources and strategies for providing active pupil participation in onsite conservation efforts.
 - b) Promote service-learning opportunities between schools and local communities.
 - c) Assess the impact of the unified education strategy on the achievement and resource conservation of participating pupils. (PRC § 71300)
- 3) Requires the CDE and SBE, in cooperation with CalRecycle, to develop and implement, to the extent feasible, a teacher training and implementation plan that guides the phased implementation of the unified education strategy in elementary, middle, and high school programs, for the education of pupils, faculty, and administrators on the importance of integrating environmental concepts and programs in schools. (PRC § 71300)

- 4) Requires the OEE, as part of the unified education strategy, to develop education principles for the environment for elementary and secondary school pupils, in cooperation with the Secretary for Environmental Protection, the Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the CDE, and the SBE. (PRC § 71301)
- 5) Requires that the environmental principles and concepts be aligned to the academic content standards adopted by the SBE in the subjects of English language arts, science, history-social science, health, and, to the extent practicable, mathematics, and shall not conflict with any academic content standards. Requires that the environmental principles and concepts be used to do all of the following:
 - a) To direct state agencies that include environmental education components for elementary and secondary education in regulatory decisions or enforcement actions.
 - b) To align state agency environmental education programs and materials that are developed for elementary and secondary education.
 - c) For provision, by the office, of technical assistance to state agencies involved in the integration of the environmental principles and concepts in programs they operate, and in the integration of the environmental principles and concepts into state curriculum standards, frameworks, and instructional materials, as specified. (PRC § 71301)
- 6) Establishes the Instructional School Gardens Program, under the administration of CDE, for the promotion, creation, and support of instructional school gardens through the allocation of grants, and through technical assistance provided to local educational agencies (LEAs). (Education Code (EC) § 51796)
- 7) Authorizes school projects that support outdoor education on school grounds, including native gardens, orchards, vegetable gardens, outdoor classrooms, and other nature-based outdoor learning spaces, to not comply with accessible path of travel requirements if the cost of doing so would exceed 20% of the project's total construction costs. (EC § 17672)
- 8) Authorizes new construction and modernization projects funded through the Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair, and Safety Bond Act of 2024 to support outdoor learning. (EC § 17072.35)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Defines the following terms:
 - a) "Environmental literacy" means the understanding of, and ability to, apply the environmental principles and concepts, as specified.

- b) “Local educational agency” means a school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school.
 - c) “Outdoor learning” means instructional activities occurring in outdoor settings, including, but not limited to, schoolyards, gardens, campuses, green spaces, community spaces, local parks, public lands, residential outdoor schools, outdoor environmental education facilities, coastal and watershed areas, and other natural or built outdoor environments.
- 2) Recognizes outdoor learning as an effective and developmentally appropriate instructional method that improves mental and physical health, environmental literacy, climate resilience, student engagement, attention and concentration, and whole child development.
 - 3) Encourages LEAs to integrate outdoor learning into standards-aligned instruction across all grades and subject areas, including, but not limited to, science, history-social science, mathematics, English language arts, health, physical education, and visual arts. Specifies that this encouragement shall not be construed as a specific curriculum.
 - 4) Requires the CDE, on or before July 1, 2028, to curate and maintain on its website resources for educators on outdoor learning.
 - 5) Requires that the resources curated and maintained include, at a minimum, the following components:
 - a) Best practices for delivering standards-aligned instruction in outdoor settings.
 - b) Safety and risk management considerations.
 - c) Strategies to ensure equitable access for unduplicated pupils, as specified, pupils with disabilities, and pupils from historically underserved communities.
 - d) Models for enhancing outdoor learning environments (OLEs) on school sites and on offsite field trips.
 - e) Strategies for partnering with community-based organizations, park agencies, tribes, and outdoor education providers.
 - 6) Requires the CDE, to consult with COEs, classroom educators, tribal partners, mental and physical health professionals and researchers, environmental literacy experts, and community organizations with expertise in outdoor learning. Authorizes the CDE to collaborate with nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and other entities with demonstrated expertise in environmental literacy and outdoor learning to support the curation, maintenance, and dissemination of the resources curated and maintained by the CDE.

- 7) Authorizes the CDE to accept voluntary contributions, in cash or in-kind, to pay for the costs of implementation of this bill.
- 8) Establishes the Outdoor Learning and Environmental Literacy Account in the State Treasury in which private donations shall be deposited for the purposes of this bill's implementation. Specifies that money shall be available to the CDE, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purposes of implementing this bill.
- 9) Makes a series of legislative findings and declarations related to the importance of outdoor learning access.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Outdoor learning is a commonsense, research-backed approach that helps reduce excessive screen time, improve student well-being, and support stronger academic outcomes. At a time when our kids are spending more hours than ever on screens, this bill gives schools a practical way to help students reconnect with the natural world while strengthening their focus and academic success. AB 2158 provides the guidance needed to create real change for our student."
- 2) ***Outdoor learning.*** This bill requires the CDE to curate and maintain educator resources on outdoor learning. Outdoor learning offers a variety of engaging learning experiences and methods for integrating standards-based knowledge and skills with environmental education. OLEs provide flexible spaces for diverse learners, on or off campus, and are possible for all student populations in urban, suburban, and rural settings. While taking learning outside can be as simple as utilizing green spaces and school gardens, local school communities often formally embed OLEs in their learning programs in a variety of ways.

The CDE highlights the following research on the benefits of outdoor learning:

- Outdoor learning offers opportunities for students to engage in physical activity and teambuilding. (Finn et al., 2018)
- Outdoor learning improves access to nature, which is beneficial to mental health, reduces stress, increases student engagement, and improves cognitive function. (Ming et al., 2018; Chawla, 2015)
- A study of outdoor education programs showed improvements for at-risk youth in self-esteem, conflict resolution, relationships with peers, problem solving, motivation to learn, and behavior in class. (American Institutes for Research, 2005)
- Children who attended outdoor science school significantly raised their science scores by 27%, and the increase in science knowledge was maintained six to ten weeks after program participation. (American Institutes for Research, 2005)

On its existing resource page on OLEs, the CDE provides guidance on how to expand access to OLEs by developing planning committees, emphasizing inclusive design, and utilizing free tools and strategies like the Green Schoolyards America toolkit, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat Guide, and the CNRA's *Outdoors for All: Providing Equitable Access to Parks and Nature* initiative.

- 3) ***Environmental literacy and environmental education.*** This bill recognizes outdoor learning as an effective and developmentally appropriate instructional method that improves, among other things, environmental literacy. California has advanced several initiatives and investments aimed at enhancing environmental literacy and education, including the following:
 - a) Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs): The Legislature passed AB 1548 (Pavley, Chapter 665, Statutes of 2003) and AB 1721 (Pavley, Chapter 581, Statutes of 2005), which ultimately established OEE under CalRecycle to develop education principles for the environment for elementary and secondary school pupils. The resulting California Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs) are comprised of five environmental principles and 15 supporting concepts that highlight the deep relationship between humans and the natural world and serve as “big ideas” intended to inform standards-based instruction and fuel student inquiry. These EP&Cs have been integrated into several state curriculum frameworks for California public schools serving kindergarten through grade twelve, including the 2016 History and Social Science Framework, the 2016 Science Framework, and the 2019 Health Education Framework.
 - b) The California Blueprint for Environmental Literacy: In 2014, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, convened the Environmental Literacy Task Force to create a blueprint for achieving environmental literacy for all California students. The resulting *Blueprint for Environmental Literacy: Educating Every Student In, About, and For the Environment* highlights the need for expanded environmental literacy education by referencing a survey of 520 California school principals. The Blueprint features six guiding principles that frame six overarching strategies to ensure environmental literacy for all students.
 - c) California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) Network: The CREEC Network fosters regional partnerships throughout the state to promote environmental education and environmental literacy by providing teachers with access to high quality professional learning opportunities and education resources. Along with statewide sponsors and partners, each of the 11 California CREEC Regions provides professional learning opportunities and resources to educators as well as foster communications among schools and organizations interested in supporting the environmental literacy of California's teachers and students.
 - d) Green Ribbon Schools Award Program: The California Green Ribbon Schools (CA-GRS) recognition award honors Kindergarten (K)–12

schools, school districts, and COE that demonstrate exemplary achievement in three key areas: resource efficiency, health and wellness, and environmental and sustainability education. This recognition is part of a broader statewide effort to identify and promote effective practices that enhance student engagement, academic performance, graduation rates, and career readiness.

- e) Seeds for Solutions: The 2021-22 State Budget appropriated \$6,000,000 to San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) to contract for the creation of free and open K–12 standards-based curriculum resources on climate change and environmental justice. The resulting Seeds for Solutions Environmental Literacy Curriculum helps educators provide lessons that empower students to become environmentally literate and engaged community members, ready to act for the well-being of their families, communities, and the environment.

The CDE currently maintains an information page that highlights current environmental literacy resources and grant opportunities.

- 4) ***Practical effect.*** This bill requires the CDE, on or before July 1, 2028, to curate and maintain resources for educators on outdoor learning on its internet website. It also requires that those resources include, at a minimum, the following:
 - a) Best practices for delivering standards-aligned instruction in outdoor settings.
 - b) Safety and risk management considerations.
 - c) Strategies to ensure equitable access for unduplicated pupils, as specified, pupils with disabilities, and pupils from historically underserved communities.
 - d) Models and approaches for enhancing OLEs on school sites. schoolsites and on offsite field trips.
 - e) Strategies for partnering with community-based organizations, park agencies, tribes, and outdoor education providers.

As previously discussed, the CDE already maintains a resource page for a similar purpose. In terms of a practical effect, the bill would likely provide the benefit of ensuring that those resources, as well as those related to environmental literacy, are more easily identified and accessed on the CDE website.

- 5) ***Prior and related legislation.***

SB 1048 (Becker, 2026) establishes the voluntary State Seal of Climate Literacy (SSCL) to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates and requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to recommend criteria under which participating LEAs may award said seal to qualified students.

Requires participating LEAs to collect and annually submit to the CDE specified data related to SSCL participation.

SB 341 (Perez, 2025) would have re-established the Instructional School Gardens Program as a competitive grant program, and shifts its administration from the CDE to the California Department of Food and Agriculture. *SB 341 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

SB 1091 (Menjivar, Chapter 1014, Statutes of 2024) allows, for school construction projects approved by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) on or before December 31, 2030, for certain school ground construction projects to not comply with accessible path of travel requirements if the cost of doing so would exceed 20% of the project's total construction costs.

AB 247 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 81, Statutes of 2024) allows new construction and modernization projects funded through the Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair, and Safety Bond Act of 2024 to support outdoor learning.

SB 720 (Allen, Chapter 374, Statutes of 2018) revised provisions relating to the education principles for the environment by, among other things, (1) renaming them the environmental principles and concepts; (2) revising the process for, and entities involved in, updating the environmental principles and concepts; and (3) requiring the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to ensure that the environmental principles and concepts are integrated into content standards and curriculum frameworks whenever those standards and frameworks are revised.

AB 1548 (Pavley, Chapter 665, Statutes of 2003) established the OEE within the California Environmental Protection Agency and required it to develop environmental education principles and a model curriculum.

SUPPORT

Ten Strands (sponsor)
7th Generation Advisors
Active San Gabriel Valley
Adolfo Camarillo High School
Adventure Risk Challenge
Alameda County Office of Education
American River Natural History Association DbA Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Amigos de Bolsa Chica
Arc
Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education
Association of Nature Center Administrators
Audubon Center at Debs Park
Bay Area Wilderness Training
Bay Tree Design
Black in Marine Science
Black Thumb Farm
BlueSky Consulting
Burbank Eco Council

Cadman Cooking and Garden Education Program
Caldwell Fisher Family Foundation
California Academy of Sciences
California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance
California Association of Science Educators
California Association of Student Councils
California Catholic Conference
California Environmental Education Foundation
California Outdoor Recreation Partners
California Outdoor Schools Association
California State Parks Foundation
California State PTA
Camp Chrysalis
Camp Ocean Pines
Center for Ecoliteracy
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Land-Based Learning
Center for the Study of the Force Majeure
CFT- A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO
Children & Nature Network
Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
Climate Action Campaign of the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate Action Pathways for Schools
Climate Psychology Alliance - North America
Clockshop
Coloma Outdoor Discovery School
Common Vision
Community Nature Connection
Community Resources for Science
Conservation Earth/WildMind
Craig Strang Consulting
Creek Lands Conservation
Crystal Cove Conservancy
Davey's Locker Whale Watching
Davis Forest School
dfusion Inc.
Earthday.org
East Merced Resource Conservation District
Edventure More
Elders Climate Action Northern California Chapter
Elders Climate Action Southern California Chapter
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
Environmental Center of San Diego
Environmental Charter Schools
Environmental Volunteers
Eternal Generations Emerging Foundation
Explore Ecology
Exploring New Horizons Outdoor Schools
Fieldguides Outdoor Education
Foodwise

Fresno Discovery Center
Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
Friends of Joshua Tree
Friends of the Los Angeles River
Friends of the Lost Coast
Golden Gate Bird Alliance
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
Green Schoolyards America
Greenspace - the Cambria Land Trust
Groundwork San Diego Chollas Creek
Headwaters Science Institute
Heal the Bay
HED
Hidden Villa Ranch
Human Values Center
iCREST Education Foundation
In Good Company
Inclusion Outdoors
Inside the Outdoors Foundation
Justice Outside
Kathryn and Robert Riddell Fund
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
LA STEM Collective
Laguna Beach Unified School District
Latino Outdoors
Life Lab
Literacy for Environmental Justice
Living Classroom
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Marin County Superintendent of Schools
Marine Science Institute
Master Gardener Association of San Diego County
MEarth
Mendoparks
Merito Foundation
Mocse
National Marine Educators Association
Naturalists at Large
Nature Bridge
Nature for All
Nevada City School of the Arts
North American Association for Environmental Education
Northern California Recycling Association
Nurture Nature
O'Neill Sea Odyssey
Oakland Goes Outdoors
Orange County Department of Education
Outdoor Afro
Outdoor Outreach
Outdoorism Collective

Outward Bound Adventures
Outward Bound California
Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History
Partnership for Children & Youth
People, Food and Land Foundation
Pittsburg Unified School District
Pogo Park
Point Blue Conservation Science
Project Green
Recreation, Parks & Tourism Department at San Francisco State University
Rialto Unified School District
Richmond Outdoors Coalition
Roots to Branches Education
Sacramento Chinese Community Service Center
Sacramento Splash
Samuel Lawrence Foundation
San Bruno Mountain Watch
San Diego Bird Alliance
San Diego Children and Nature
San Diego County Office of Education's Innovation Department - Outdoor Education
San Diego County Outdoor Education Foundation
San Diego Natural History Museum
San Diego Pediatricians for Clean Air
San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society
San Joaquin County Office of Education
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Save Our Shores
Scaling Student Success
Sci-Lingual Education
Sembrando Lab, LLC
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Shady Creek Outdoor School
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Sierra Nevada Journeys
Sierra Streams Institute
Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action
Slide Ranch
South Yuba River Citizens League
Stanislaus County Office of Education
Stanislaus County Office of Education, Foothill Horizons Outdoor School
Steam Learning Institute
Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
Strategic Energy Innovations
Sustainable Marin Schools
Sustainable Mill Valley
Sustainable Solano
SustainConsulting, LLC
Tahoe Rim Trail Association
The Ecologik Institute

The Escondido Creek Conservancy
The Friends of Daley Ranch
The Gardens at Heather Farm
The Nueva School
The Sage Garden Project
The Watershed Project
The Wildlands Conservancy
Three Oaks Outdoor Science School, Inc
Together in Nature Consulting, PLLC
Tree Fresno
Tri-County Gate Council
Trubel&Co
Trust for Public Land
UC Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science
UC Davis Center for Occupational and Environmental Health
Un Mar De Colores
UndauntedK12
University Elementary At LA Fiesta Garden Committee
Ventana Wildlife Society
Ventura Land Trust
Web of Life Field School
Wildward Institute
Woodcraft Rangers
Words in the Wild
World Ocean Observatory
Yes Nature to Neighborhoods

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2189 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Nguyen
Version: June 22, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: Statewide Special Education Parent Advocacy Collaborative.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes, contingent upon an appropriation, a three-year Statewide Special Education Parent Advocacy Collaborative administered by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to fund a nonprofit organization to build statewide parent leadership, systems advocacy, and policy engagement on behalf of pupils with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees eligible children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and related procedural safeguards.
- 2) Establishes the SCDD as an independent state agency responsible for advocating for individuals with developmental disabilities and implementing the federally required state plan.
- 3) Establishes the Advisory Commission on Special Education to advise the Governor, Legislature, State Board of Education, and Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding special education policy.
- 4) Requires each Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) to maintain a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to advise the SELPA on its local special education program and encourage parent participation.
- 5) Establishes Family Empowerment Centers on Disability (FECs) throughout California to provide information, training, peer support, referrals, and assistance to families of children and young adults with disabilities.
- 6) Establishes Early Start Family Resource Centers to provide information, training, and family support for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities.
- 7) Establishes federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) that assist families in understanding and exercising their rights under IDEA.

- 8) Establishes the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) to support continuous improvement through capacity building, technical assistance, and data-informed improvement strategies.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Makes legislative findings regarding IDEA implementation and enforcement, recent reductions in federal oversight capacity, California's IDEA performance, the need for greater statewide parent engagement, and the role of systems advocacy in improving educational outcomes.
- 2) Establishes the Statewide Special Education Parent Advocacy Collaborative, administered by the SCDD.
- 3) Requires the SCDD to award an \$800,000 annual competitive grant for three fiscal years to a qualified nonprofit statewide advocacy organization and authorizes the council to retain up to five percent for grant administration.
- 4) Specifies eligibility criteria for the selected organization, including demonstrated experience with statewide community organizing, coalition building, disability advocacy, and coordinating with existing parent support organizations and educational entities.
- 5) Requires the grantee to identify statewide policy priorities affecting pupils with disabilities, build a statewide network of at least 200 advocacy leaders, develop a cohort of approximately 40-50 parent and pupil leaders, conduct at least three statewide convenings annually, provide statewide advocacy and leadership training, provide technical assistance on legislative advocacy, coalition building, IDEA compliance, communications, and data use, coordinate with existing parent support organizations to avoid duplication, and collect parent and pupil experiences to inform state policymaking.
- 6) Requires activities to be guided by the CCEE's theory of action.
- 7) Requires measurable outcomes related to parent participation, coordination among organizations, advocacy capacity, and pupil outcomes.
- 8) Requires annual reporting by the grantee and a final report by the SCDD to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 2030.
- 9) Makes implementation contingent upon an appropriation.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "With oversight and enforcement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shifting onto the California Department of Education it is more important now than ever for California to

develop a coordinated infrastructure that unifies and trains parent leaders statewide on how they can stand up for the rights of students with disabilities. As a mother of a child with special needs, I know firsthand how complex and overwhelming the special education system can be. Parents should not have to navigate it alone. AB 2189 ensures families have access to training, support, and a coordinated voice so we can protect the rights of students with disabilities and help ensure the system is working for families.”

- 2) ***The bill establishes a new statewide advocacy infrastructure, rather than expanding direct services to families.*** California already supports parents of pupils with disabilities through Family Empowerment Centers, Early Start Family Resource Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers, CACs, and the Advisory Commission on Special Education. Unlike those entities, this proposal is expressly designed to organize statewide advocacy, leadership development, and policy engagement rather than provide individual assistance or Individualized Education Program (IEP) support. The policy question is therefore not whether parents should receive support, but whether the state should create and fund a new statewide advocacy organization in addition to existing parent support structures.
- 3) ***The bill attempts to distinguish systems advocacy from individual representation, but the practical distinction may become blurred.*** The bill defines advocacy to exclude representation in due process hearings or individual IEP disputes, instead focusing on systems advocacy and policy change. Even so, many of the proposed activities, including training parents on IDEA compliance, collecting family experiences, and monitoring implementation, overlap with functions already performed by existing organizations and naturally arise from individual experiences within the special education system. As implemented, maintaining a clear distinction between systems advocacy and case-specific advocacy may prove challenging.
- 4) ***The bill relies on an outside nonprofit to perform a statewide public policy function.*** Rather than creating the collaborative within an education agency, the bill directs the SCDD to competitively select a nonprofit organization to organize statewide parent advocacy and help shape state-level policy discussions. While the bill includes reporting requirements and measurable outcomes, it also raises broader questions regarding the appropriate role of state-funded nonprofit advocacy organizations in influencing education policy and how success would ultimately be measured beyond participation metrics.
- 5) ***Federal uncertainty provides context for the proposal, but does not by itself establish the appropriate state response.*** The bill is premised in part on reduced federal oversight capacity under IDEA and California’s continued need for assistance in IDEA implementation. Those developments understandably prompt discussion about strengthening state-level accountability and parent engagement. The policy question before the Committee, however, is whether creating a statewide advocacy collaborative administered through a grant to a nonprofit organization is the most effective use of limited state resources, or whether strengthening existing accountability, oversight, or family support structures would better address those same concerns.

SUPPORT

The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration (sponsor)
Association of Regional Center Agencies

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2301	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Soria		
Version:	February 19, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Community College (CCC) Chancellor's Office to establish a Community College Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Differentiates the missions and functions of public and independent institutions of higher education. Under these provisions:
 - a) The primary mission of the California State University (CSU) is to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education, including teacher education. The CSU is authorized to establish two-year programs only when mutually agreed upon by the Trustees and the CCC Board of Governors. The CSU is also authorized to jointly award the doctoral degree with the University of California (UC) and with one or more independent institutions of higher education.
 - b) The UC is authorized to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and has exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education over graduate instruction in the professions of law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. The UC is also the primary state-supported academic agency for research.
 - c) The independent institutions of higher education are required to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and research in accordance with their respective missions.
 - d) The mission and function of the CCC is the offering of academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level, and the CCC are authorized to grant the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees. The community colleges are also required to offer learning supports to close learning gaps, English as a Second Language instruction, and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4)

- 2) Authorizes the CCC Board of Governors, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish baccalaureate degree programs that do not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program offered by the CSU or UC. Allows for the approval of 30 community college baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Current law further requires the CCC Chancellor to consult with and seek feedback from the CSU Chancellor, the UC President, and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities on proposed baccalaureate degree programs, as specified, and establishes a mechanism for the assessment, consultation, and approval of programs where duplication is identified, as specified. (EC § 78040 et seq.)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to develop a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.
- 2) Limits the pilot program to 10 community college districts statewide and requires the chancellor to identify eligible community college districts based on the following criteria:
 - a) The CCC Chancellor is encouraged to ensure there is equitable access between the northern, central, and southern parts of the state for the pilot program.
 - b) Priority granted to community college districts that are located in underserved nursing areas.
 - c) Priority granted to community college districts where the service area of the community college district includes communities with persistent poverty.
 - d) The community college district has a nationally accredited program.
- 3) Requires the community college district to retain the associate degree in nursing program.
- 4) Specifies that the total number of participants in a pilot program at a community college district is to be limited to the class size approved by the Board of Registered Nursing, and the total number of participants in a pilot program is to be limited to 25 percent of that class size, or 35 students, whichever is greater.
- 5) Allows CCC districts without a nationally accredited nursing program, but that are in “candidate” status, to be provisionally selected to participate in this pilot program and commence the program upon final accreditation, as specified. This bill further requires that priority be given to CCC districts located in the Central Valley and Inland Empire. If a CCC district that is provisionally selected is found to be making untimely progress toward accreditation, after notice and an

opportunity to cure, the Chancellor's Office may withdraw the provisional selection and may select a different CCC district to participate in the pilot program.

- 6) Requires the Chancellor's Office to develop a process designed to assist CCC nursing programs applying for national accreditation for the purpose of qualifying for the pilot program, and that assistance be made available to CCC districts upon request.
- 7) Requires each participating district to give priority registration for enrollment in the pilot program to students with an associate degree in nursing from that CCC district.
- 8) Requires that the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) conduct an evaluation of the pilot program to determine the effectiveness of the program and the need to continue or expand the program, as specified. This bill further requires each participating CCC district to submit the information necessary for this evaluation, as determined by the LAO, to the Chancellor's Office.
- 9) Exempts a Bachelor of Science in Nursing offered under the pilot program from being subject to the CCC bachelor's degree approval process outlined in existing law.
- 10) Defines, for purposes of the bill, "underserved nursing area" to mean a Registered Nurse (RN) shortage area designated at a high-, medium-, or low-severity level as identified by the Department of Health Care Access and Information.
- 11) Sunsets this bill's provision on January 1, 2036.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged communities in more rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system can reach these communities and does offer associates degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive or the UC and CSU systems that have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need.

"In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. AB 2301 will take the first steps in this process by allowing a limited number of campuses to expand their nursing programs to offer Bachelors of Science in nursing degree."

- 2) **Differentiation of mission.** The state has four segments of higher education: three public and one private. Each plays a vital and unique role for the state and

in California's higher education system. Their mission statements are outlined in the Master Plan for Higher Education and by state statute. The CCCs are to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Their primary areas of mission include instruction leading to associate degrees and university transfer, vocational instruction, and remedial education. Despite the differentiation of mission, the Legislature has authorized the CSU and CCCs to go beyond their original mission to offer doctoral degree and baccalaureate degree programs, respectively, so long as programs do not duplicate those offered by the other segments with primary jurisdiction. This bill would authorize an additional exception by creating a separate pathway for CCC Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs that is exempt from the existing community college baccalaureate approval process. *The Committee may wish to consider whether this proposal represents an appropriate next step of the community college mission or whether any expansion of community college baccalaureate authority should occur through a broader review of California's higher education structure.*

- 3) **Related budget agreement to expand access.** The 2024 Budget agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, to the CCC system for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program. Moneys allocated to this program may be used to develop or expand associate-level degree programs at the CCCs while also explicitly allowing for the use of those funds to develop or expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing partnerships with CSU, UC, and independent nonprofit colleges. Rather than authorizing community colleges to independently offer additional bachelor's degree programs, the budget agreement invested in strengthening California's existing nursing education pipeline by expanding associate degree capacity while leveraging the bachelor's degree authority of California's universities through collaborative partnerships. Proposals to authorize independent baccalaureate degree programs at CCCs, as proposed in this bill, were not included in the negotiated framework. *Given that these investments were enacted only one year ago, the Committee may wish to consider whether sufficient time has gone by to evaluate their effectiveness before establishing a separate statutory pathway for community college Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs.*
- 4) **State investment in CCC associate degree in nursing programs.** Of California's three public higher education segments, only the CCCs offer associate-level nursing programs. Numerous legislative efforts and investments have been made to expand CCC associate degree in nursing enrollments and improve retention to facilitate the expansion of associate degree in nursing programs, including all of the following:
 - a) Since 2009-10, the Legislature has provided ongoing funding (\$13.4 million) through grants to CCC associate degree in nursing programs in recognition of the relatively high cost of educating nurses.
 - b) The Budget Act of 2015 provided additional nursing program support to expand enrollments and improve student retention in associate degree nursing programs.

- c) The Department of Health Care Access and Information, which administers a state program to help, among other things, increase support for nursing education programs, awarded a total of \$17 million to 34 nursing programs in 2023, including 17 CCC associate degree in nursing programs.
- d) 2024 Budget agreement appropriated funding for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program.

Collectively, these investments demonstrate the Legislature's commitment to expanding community college nursing capacity within the community colleges' traditional role of preparing entry-level registered nurses. *The Committee may wish to consider whether further state investments should continue building upon that role through expanded transfer and Bachelor's of Science in Nursing partnership opportunities, or instead authorize community colleges to independently offer additional bachelor's degree nursing programs.*

- 5) **Is this the appropriate solution?** If it is the desire of the Legislature to expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree programs, arguably, more effective and efficient alternatives do not require a departure from the CCC's mission to expand and streamline Bachelor of Science in Nursing pathways between CCCs and public universities or nonprofit colleges. Further, in its recommendation for alternatives to the original CCC baccalaureate degree pilot program, the LAO's analysis notes that some CCCs have existing agreements with baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. Improving alignment between CCC and the universities could increase the number of CCC students who ultimately obtain a bachelor's degree and reduce the amount of time students take to obtain their degree. The LAO report further asserts that such partnerships could not only be more cost-effective but also benefit more students (including place-bound students), thereby having a more widespread impact. *The Committee may wish to consider all of the following:*
 - *Should community colleges demonstrate that partnership opportunities have been explored before establishing an independent bachelor's degree program?*
 - *Are there statutory or administrative barriers that unnecessarily limit the expansion of collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing pathways?*
 - *Would additional investment in existing university Bachelor of Science in Nursing capacity achieve similar workforce outcomes while preserving California's differentiated system of higher education?*
- 6) **Tuition costs?** Current law allows CCCs to raise tuition for the other CCC baccalaureate degree programs to the same amount as a CSU. This bill, however, makes it clear that those provisions are not applicable to the proposed pilot program but is silent on tuition costs. Tuition fees for CCC courses are currently \$46 per credit. Without statutory authorization, it is uncertain if CCC districts can charge higher rates or retain the \$46 per credit charge for the more advanced nursing degree.

- 7) **Not all CCC nursing programs are accredited.** Accreditation acts as a measure of quality that verifies a program meets standards of educational quality set by a recognized accrediting body. According to the CCC Chancellor's Office, in 2024, of the 77 associate degree for nursing programs, 28 are nationally accredited, 27 by the Accreditation Commission for Education on Nursing (ACEN), and one by the Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation. Nine are candidates for national accreditation by ACEN. All programs have Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) approval. BRN approval ensures compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, whereas accreditation provides a baseline measure of program quality and supports transferability of credits for students seeking an advanced degree. Accreditation also enables students to qualify for federal financial aid. This bill restricts participation in the pilot program to nationally accredited CCC nursing programs but allows a non-accredited CCC program to be provisionally selected as they work toward obtaining accreditation.
- 8) **Nursing programs in California.** Graduates of associate or bachelor nursing degree programs may sit for nurse licensure exams and become licensed RN. Notably, licensure may be achieved with an associate degree. The state's BRN approves all of California's pre-licensure nursing programs offered by public and private colleges and makes decisions about the number of students that new and existing nursing programs are allowed to enroll. The number of nursing programs in the state totals 152, with 101 public, 92 associate degrees in nursing, 47 bachelor of science in nursing, and 13 Entry Level Master's (ELM) programs. According to the most recent BRN annual school report (2022-2023), California graduated about 13,900 students in 2022-23 from RN programs (associate, bachelor's, and ELM combined), which represents a 23.9 percent increase in student completions since 2013-14 (11,291). Completion rates are expected to increase. The 2019-20 academic year was the first year that the number and percentage of bachelor's degree completions surpassed the associate degree completions. The trend continues to persist. The number of joint associate degrees in nursing and bachelor's programs has increased over the last 10 years. All schools are required to provide clinical instruction with clinical placement in a health care facility in each phase of the educational process. Students must pass a national licensure examination to earn a license.
<https://www.rn.ca.gov/forms/reports.shtml#school>
- 9) **Enrollment decisions controlled by the licensing board.** The BRN is one of a few licensing boards that continues to actively approve educational programs and make enrollment decisions. According to a recent state audit of the BRN, two of the key factors that should be included in the BRN's enrollment decisions are the forecasted supply of nurses that the state will need to fulfill demand and the available number of clinical placement slots. The audit found that the BRN has failed to gather and use sufficient data related to both of these factors to appropriately inform its enrollment decisions. *Should the BRN continue to approve RN educational programs? Shouldn't institutions play a greater role in determining enrollment decisions?*
- 10) **Statewide workforce shortage projected to close, and regional workforce disparities may persist.** State forecasts of the RN workforce reports provide

both state-level and regional projections. The Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California, San Francisco, conducted the 2024 reports, “Regional Forecasts of the Registered Nurse Workforce in California,” and “Forecasts of the Registered Nurse Workforce in California,” which find that statewide forecasts have projected that a shortage exists now but that it will abate over the next few years. Projections indicate that rising numbers of nursing enrollments will close the current shortage of RNs by 2028. Noting that after decreases in new RN education enrollments and graduations during the pandemic, RN schools have returned to growth. This growth has been concentrated in private and bachelor’s degree programs. Regional projections indicate that all regions of California face a shortage of RNs, but the degree of shortage varies widely, as does the projected growth of RN supply, particularly in the Central Valley, Central Coast, and San Francisco Bay Area. These disparities suggest that healthcare demand in some regions may fall below population needs, especially when compared to national benchmarks. Factors such as RN degree program graduates, inter-regional migration, and employment rates can influence future workforce projections. The report further notes that regional healthcare and education leaders should closely monitor these variables—along with faculty shortages, clinical placement availability, reliance on contract nurses, and new student enrollments in nursing programs to determine whether and the extent to which local nursing degree program--should expand.

<https://www.rn.ca.gov/pdfs/forms/fogCrecast2023.pdf>

<https://www.rn.ca.gov/pdfs/forms/forecast2024.pdf>

If it is the desire of the Legislature to increase the number of graduates from baccalaureate-level nursing programs, should the pilot program be limited to CCC districts in underserved nursing areas, rather than prioritizing them?

- 11) **Greater higher education coordination.** All of California’s public education institutions share a commitment to work together to ensure that parts of the system work for all Californians. The assignment of distinct missions is important as it helps to justify allocation of state resources for three separate public university systems (CCC, CSU, and UC), contain growth in costs, and facilitate college access for all eligible California students. Although the Legislature recently established the California Education Interagency Council to improve coordination across California’s education systems, California no longer has an entity charged with statewide higher education planning and coordination of institutional missions, academic program development, and long-range postsecondary policy following the elimination of the California Postsecondary Education Commission in 2011. As a result, significant changes to California’s higher education framework are increasingly considered through individual legislative proposals rather than through a comprehensive statewide planning process, which could result in an uncoordinated and fragmented system. This bill illustrates the broader challenge facing the Legislature. The Committee may wish to consider whether major changes to the Community College Baccalaureate Degree Program are better addressed through a comprehensive statewide review rather than through individual program specific approach.
- 12) **Arguments in support.** The California Community College League of California states in their letter of support submitted to this Committee, in part, “Traditionally,

an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) has been the basic credential requirement for employment as a Registered Nurse (RN) in a healthcare facility. However, healthcare workforce requirements are changing, and hospitals are increasingly preferring and requiring a BSN degree. A 2021 Health Impact report found that 18% of California hospitals surveyed stated that a BSN was required for employment—double the percentage from 2017—and 54.3% reported a preference for hiring BSN-prepared nurses. Additionally, 31.5% of nurses with an ADN stated that the lack of a BSN degree was cited as the reason for their failure to be hired.

“Currently, when students are not admitted into a public nursing program, they often turn to for-profit and private institutions. According to the Board of Registered Nursing, the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) systems collectively produce only around 25% of BSN graduates, while the remaining 75% come from private institutions that have established a strong presence in nursing education. While private universities may be a viable option for some students, they are often significantly more expensive than public options. As a result, many students are priced out or are forced to take on substantial debt, contributing to long-term financial strain and reinforcing existing socioeconomic disparities.

“AB 2301 represents an opportunity to leverage California’s community colleges to provide students with an affordable and accessible pathway to a BSN degree, expanding advanced career opportunities for the state’s most diverse student populations and strengthening the pipeline of BSN-prepared nurses for California’s healthcare workforce. By utilizing existing ADN infrastructure, the bill is designed to minimize new programmatic costs”.

- 13) **Arguments in Opposition.** In their letter in opposition submitted to this Committee the CSU, argues, in part, “State law has authorized—with the passage of Assembly Bill 927 (Medina)—that the California Community Colleges (CCC) may establish up to 30 baccalaureate degree programs per academic year, provided that the program or program curricula is not already offered by the CSU or University of California (UC). This process has led to the creation of more than 50 baccalaureate degree programs offered at community colleges across the state. Authorizing Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) programs at community colleges sets a precedent for duplication of CSU and UC baccalaureate degrees, not only in nursing programs but in every field. AB 2301 would result in increased competition for limited clinical placements and qualified faculty, further complicating the problem that already exists in the State.

“Last year, the Governor vetoed an identical bill that would have authorized 10 community college districts to offer a BSN degree...The CSU agrees with the Governor’s statement and believes the most appropriate and proven path forward to achieve an increase in the number of nurses is through partnerships and the ADN to BSN pathways. In 2023, the state budget provided \$300 million over five years to expand CCC nursing programs, including support for BSN partnerships with the CSU and other higher education institutions.

“CSU universities offer several online Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) to BSN programs which serve rural students and allow them to fulfill all upper division coursework remotely while a community health clinical requirement is completed in the student’s local area. Twenty CSU universities offer ADN-to-BSN programs, and the CSU partners with 49 community colleges on concurrent ADN-to-BSN pathways to further shorten time to completion. Unlike pre-licensure BSN programs that remain impacted due to the requirement and shortage of clinical placements, post-licensure ADN-to-BSN programs maintain significant enrollment capacity. Since 2017, the CSU has consistently graduated more than 1,000 students each year through these programs. We believe these programs are the most appropriate and proven path forward to achieve an increase in the number of BSNs”.

- 14) ***Related and prior legislation.*** AB 664 (Alvarez, 2026) authorizes the CCC Chancellor to allow the Southwestern Community College District to offer no more than four workforce- aligned baccalaureate degree programs, as provided. Requires interim and final reports from the LAO, and sunsets the provisions on January 1, 2035. AB 664 is set to be heard by this Committee on July 1, 2026.

AB 2053 (Ta, 2026) authorizes the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the Coast Community College District to offer a workforce-aligned cybersecurity baccalaureate degree program at Coastline College, as provided. Require the LAO to, on or before July 1, 2030, conduct and present to the Legislature and the Governor an interim evaluation of the baccalaureate degree program that is offered pursuant to that authorization and, on or before July 1, 2034, a final evaluation of that degree program, as provided. AB 2053 was heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21, 2026, and failed passage.

AB 2136 (Pacheco, 2026) authorizes the Board of Governors of the CCC to authorize the Cerritos Community College District to offer up to three applied baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of public safety management, paralegal studies, and automotive technology. AB 2136 was held in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

AB 2694 (Alvarez, 2026) changes the standard governing when community college districts may offer baccalaureate degree programs, replacing a hard prohibition on duplicating CSU or UC programs with a more flexible “substantially similar within the geographic region” test that includes exceptions for unmet workforce need and lack of CSU or UC enrollment from that region. The bill also modifies the objection and consultation process, narrowing the required consultation to programs that may be substantially similar to nearby CSU or UC offerings and streamlining the written agreement process when an objection is filed. AB 2694 is scheduled to be heard in this Committee on July 1, 2026.

SB 960 (Cabaldon, 2026) limits the prohibition on CCC duplication of CSU baccalaureate degree programs to instances where a CSU’s campus local admission area includes or overlaps with the CCC district’s territory, except when the CSU program has been impacted for at least three consecutive years. SB 960 is currently pending hearing in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

AB 1400 (Soria, 2025) would have required the Chancellor of the CCC to develop a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. AB 1400 was vetoed by the Governor, whose message read in part:

“Last year, I vetoed a nearly identical bill, citing two primary reasons that continue to persist.

“First, the 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand BSN partnerships with UC, CSU, and independent nonprofit higher education institutions. These partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education must continue to collaborate on building these programs, and returning this bill will ensure those collaborative efforts are not undermined.

“Second, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been authorized to offer independent programs outside of their traditional roles, provided they do not duplicate degree offerings of other public segments. I encourage the CCC system to focus on implementing this expanded authority and to ensure that it can continue to make progress on the unique and vital role the CCC plays in serving its students and the state. Given these significant changes, a pause should be maintained to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted”.

SB 155 (Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 71, Statutes of 2024) created Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program to expand nursing programs and partnerships, address nursing shortages, and increase, educate, and maintain the next generation of registered nurses through the community college system. The Budget Act of 2024 supported this program with \$60 million Proposition 98 General Fund per year for five years, starting in 2024-25, with CCC Strong Workforce Program funding.

AB 2104 (Soria, 2024) would have required the Chancellor of the CCC to develop a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that authorizes select CCC districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. AB 2104 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, whose veto message read in part:

“I support the author’s intent to expand access to baccalaureate nursing degree programs in underserved communities. The 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) partnerships with higher education institutions. These types of partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number

of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration.

“Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.”

SB 895 (Roth, 2024) would have required the CCC Chancellor’s Office to establish a Community College Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 CCC districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. SB 895 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, whose veto message read in part:

“I appreciate the author’s commitment to expanding access to baccalaureate nursing degree programs for community college students. The 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) partnerships with higher education institutions. These types of partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration.

“Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.”

AB 1311 (Soria, Chapter 126, Statutes of 2023) required the LAO to conduct an assessment, on or before January 1, 2025, evaluating the efficacy of existing programs in allied health jointly offered between campuses of the CCCs, the CSU, and the UC. Required the final assessment to be reported, in writing, to the Legislature and the Governor on or before January 1, 2025, as specified.

SUPPORT

United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (sponsor)
 Allan Hancock College
 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
 Antelope Valley Community College District
 Association of California Community College Administrators
 Barstow Community College
 Cabrillo Community College
 Calbright College
 California Community College Baccalaureate Association

California Hospital Association
California Latino Legislative Caucus
California School Employees Association
California Teachers Association
Cerritos College
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District
Chaffey College
Citrus College
Clovis Community College
Coalinga College
Coast Community College District
College of Marin
College of the Canyons
College of the Desert
College of the Redwoods
College of the Sequoias
College of the Siskiyous
Columbia College
Community College League of California
Contra Costa Community College District
Copper Mountain College
Cuesta College
De Anza College
El Camino College
Evergreen Valley College
Feather River College
Foothill College
Foothill-De Anza Community College District
Fresno City College
Gavilan College
Glendale Community College
Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
Hartnell College
Imperial Valley College
Kern Community College District
Lake Tahoe Community College
Lassen Community College
LeadingAge California
Lemoore College
Long Beach City College
Long Beach Community College District
Los Angeles Community College District
Los Angeles Pierce College
Los Angeles Unified School District
Madera Community College
Mendocino College
Merced College
MiraCosta College
Modesto Junior College
Mt. San Antonio College

Mt. San Jacinto Community College
NextGen California
North Orange County Community College District
Ohlone College
Palo Verde College
Palomar Community College District
Pasadena Area Community College District
Peralta Community College District
Rancho Santiago Community College District
Reedley College
Rio Hondo College
Riverside City College
Riverside Community College District
San Bernardino Community College District
San Diego City College
San Diego Community College District
San Diego Continuing Education
San Diego Mesa College
San Diego Miramar College
San Diego Unified School District
San Francisco Community College District
San Jose City College
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District
San Mateo County Community College District
Santa Monica College
Santa Rosa Junior College
Shasta College
Sierra College
Solano Community College
South Orange County Community College District
Southwestern College
State Center Community College District
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Taft College
Valley Children's Healthcare
Ventura College
Ventura County Community College District
Victor Valley College
Victor Valley Community College District
West Hills Community College District
West Valley-Mission Community College District
Yosemite Community College District
Yuba College
Yuba Community College District

OPPOSITION

California Faculty Association
California State University, Office of the Chancellor

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2417 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Zbur
Version: May 18, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: Community colleges: part-time faculty: retirement.

SUMMARY

This bill requires community college districts (CCDs) to provide temporary faculty performing CalSTRS-creditable service with the option of participating in the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program, the CalSTRS Cash Balance Benefit Program if offered by the district, or Social Security. The bill also requires CalSTRS and CalPERS to develop informational materials comparing these retirement options, and requires districts to provide those materials to newly hired temporary faculty beginning July 1, 2027.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires public employers, under federal law, to provide employees with either Social Security coverage or membership in a qualified retirement plan.
- 2) Establishes CalSTRS, including the Defined Benefit Program and the Cash Balance Benefit Program, for eligible public education employees.
- 3) Establishes CalPERS for eligible public employees.
- 4) Requires CCDs to classify faculty employed to teach not more than 67% of a full-time assignment as temporary employees.
- 5) Excludes temporary and adjunct community college faculty from mandatory CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program membership, but permits eligible employees to elect membership.
- 6) Authorizes CCDs to offer the CalSTRS Cash Balance Benefit Program to eligible part-time and temporary employees.
- 7) Requires employers to notify employees with retirement election rights and provide written information to assist with that election.
- 8) Provides that CalSTRS-covered employment generally is not covered by Social Security, meaning employees do not earn Social Security credits for that service.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Applies to temporary community college faculty performing CalSTRS-creditable service.
- 2) Requires these employees to be provided the option of membership in:
 - a) The CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program;
 - b) The CalSTRS Cash Balance Benefit Program, if offered by the district; or
 - c) Social Security.
- 3) Clarifies that districts may offer another retirement option in addition to those specified in the bill.
- 4) Requires CalSTRS and CalPERS, by July 1, 2027, to develop and post informational materials describing:
 - a) Differences in membership and contributions among the available retirement options;
 - b) Examples of how long it takes to vest in benefits; and
 - c) Examples of the impact of earning Social Security credits.
- 5) Requires CCDs, beginning July 1, 2027, to provide those materials to newly hired temporary faculty.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Part-time community college faculty, who bring real-world experience and in-field expertise into the classroom, face significant inequities compared to their full-time counterparts. One of the most consequential gaps is in retirement information and options. Many part-time faculty who have spent decades contributing to social security are not informed about how to continue or strengthen those benefits, or how those benefits compare to enrolling in a different retirement system. Compounding the issue, not all community college districts even offer social security as an option, nor do they consistently provide clear, side-by-side information about available retirement choices. [This bill] ensures that every part-time faculty member is given complete, transparent information about their retirement options—and the opportunity to continue contributing to social security if they choose. Workers deserve the information they need to make the best financial decisions for themselves and their families. Providing that clarity empowers educators to plan for a secure and stable future.”

- 2) ***The unique employment patterns of community college faculty.*** Unlike many K-12 educators, temporary community college faculty often enter teaching after careers in other industries and may have accumulated retirement benefits through Social Security or other retirement systems prior to joining a CCD. Because temporary faculty frequently work part-time, teach at multiple institutions, or enter the profession later in their careers, retirement decisions may have different implications than they do for employees who spend an entire career in public education. The bill seeks to ensure employees receive information that allows them to evaluate those options based on their individual circumstances.
- 3) ***Builds upon ongoing legislative efforts to improve conditions for temporary faculty.*** Temporary faculty comprise a significant majority of the community college instructional workforce, representing nearly 70% of academic employees statewide. In recent years, the Legislature has invested substantial resources toward addressing long-standing concerns regarding pay parity, office hours compensation, health care access, and other employment conditions for temporary faculty. This bill takes a narrower approach by focusing on retirement literacy and informed decision-making rather than expanding compensation or benefits directly.
- 4) ***Statewide consistency in information provided to employees.*** Although existing law provides retirement election rights and notification requirements for eligible employees, the author and sponsors contend that retirement options are not always presented consistently across districts and that employees may not fully understand the long-term implications of available choices. By requiring CalSTRS and CalPERS to develop standardized informational materials and requiring districts to distribute those materials to newly hired temporary faculty, the bill seeks to establish a common baseline of information regardless of where an employee is hired.

SUPPORT

California Federation of Teachers (sponsor)
 California Federation of Labor Unions
 California School Employees Association
 SEIU California

OPPOSITION

None received

-- END --

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2460	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Celeste Rodriguez		
Version:	April 6, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Pupil health: mental health: model referral protocols.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), on or before July 1, 2027, to update existing model referral protocols for addressing pupil behavioral health concerns to include guidance on providing equity-centered mental health supports in case of a local emergency related to immigration enforcement activities or deportations of pupils or their family members. The bill also requires the governing board or body of a local educational agency (LEA), on or before July 1, 2028, to update its policy based on the CDE's updated model referral protocols or develop a local equivalent in consultation with local school and community stakeholders, and behavioral health professionals.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the CDE, by June 1, 2025, to develop model referral protocols for addressing student mental health concerns, in consultation with specified agencies and stakeholders, and authorizes these protocols to be used on a voluntary basis by schools. (Education Code (EC) § 49428.1)
- 2) Requires the governing boards or bodies of LEAs, by January 31, 2026, to adopt at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns of students in grades 7 to 12. (EC § 49428.2)
- 3) Requires the CDE, by January 1, 2023, to recommend best practices and identify evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health, including staff and student training, contingent upon an appropriation for this purpose. (EC § 49428.15)
- 4) Requires LEAs to certify to the CDE by July 1, 2029, that 100% of certificated employees and 40% of classified employees who have direct contact with students in grades 7 to 12 have received youth behavioral health training at least once, as specified. (EC § 49428.2)
- 5) Requires LEAs by November 1, 2024 to coordinate agreements between school districts and charter schools within a county in order to develop a system through which qualified mental health professionals and other key school personnel

employed by individual school districts and charter schools throughout the county could be rapidly deployed on a short- or long-term basis to an area of the county that has experienced a natural disaster or other traumatic event, in order to provide support to pupils and staff. (EC § 49429.5)

- 6) Requires LEAs to provide information to parents and guardians regarding their children's right to a free public education, regardless of immigration status or religious beliefs. (EC § 234.7)
- 7) Requires LEAs to educate pupils about the negative impact of bullying other pupils based on their actual or perceived immigration status or their religious beliefs and customs. (EC § 234.7)
- 8) Requires the Attorney General (AG), in consultation with stakeholders, to publish model policies limiting assistance with immigration enforcement at public schools to the fullest extent possible, consistent with federal and state law, by April 1, 2018. Requires the AG to consider all of the following issues in developing the model policies:
 - a) Procedures related to requests for access to school grounds for purposes related to immigration enforcement;
 - b) Procedures for LEA employees to notify the superintendent of the school district or the county office of education (COE) or the principal of the charter school if an individual requests or gains access to school grounds for purposes related to immigration enforcement; and
 - c) Procedures for responding to requests for personal information about students or their family members for purposes of immigration enforcement. (EC § 234.7)
- 9) Requires all LEAs to adopt the model policies on immigration enforcement at public schools developed by the AG by July 1, 2018. (EC § 234.7)
- 10) Requires the superintendent of a school district or COE and the principal of a charter school to report to the respective governing board or body of the LEA any requests for information or access to a schoolsite by a law enforcement official for the purpose of enforcing the immigration laws in a manner that ensures the confidentiality and privacy of any potentially identifying information. (EC § 234.7)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CDE, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, to update the existing model referral protocols for addressing pupil behavioral health concerns to include guidance on providing equity-centered mental health supports in case of a local emergency related to immigration enforcement activities or deportations of pupils or their family members.

- 2) Requires the CDE to post the above model referral protocols on its internet website on or before July 1, 2027.
- 3) Requires the governing board or body of an LEA, on or before July 1, 2028, to adopt at a regularly scheduled public meeting, an update to the policy on referral protocols for addressing behavioral health concerns, as specified, to include guidance on providing equity-centered mental health supports in case of a local emergency related to immigration enforcement activities or deportations of pupils or their family members.
- 4) Requires the adopted policy to be based on the updated model referral protocols developed by the CDE and developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders and school-linked behavioral health professionals. Requires the policy to, at a minimum, address procedures related to referrals to behavioral health professionals and support services.
- 5) Provides that policies adopted before January 1, 2027, may be considered to meet the requirements of this bill if they fulfill the requirements outlined above.
- 6) Makes a series of findings and declarations about the fear of deportation and its effect on pupil mental health.
- 7) Expresses the intent of the Legislature to ensure that schools are better prepared to respond when pupils are affected by trauma, fear, and instability by requiring the update of the model referral protocols to include guidance for pupils impacted by immigration enforcement that strengthens early identification, culturally responsive and multilingual support, family and community partnerships, and continuity of care.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Students cannot succeed in school when fear and trauma keep them from the classroom. In many immigrant communities, aggressive immigration enforcement has created deep anxiety for children who fear family separation, parental detention, or sudden disruption at home. That fear does not stay outside the school gates — it affects attendance, concentration, emotional well-being, and a student’s ability to learn.

“AB 2460 recognizes that schools need a clearer mental health framework to respond when students are experiencing this kind of community-wide trauma. California’s children deserve learning environments that are prepared to support them with stability, compassion, and continuity during times of crisis.”
- 2) ***Impacts of increasing immigration enforcement on student mental health.*** According to a 2025 survey of 1,036 adults in immigrant families conducted by the Urban Institute, over 1 in 7 adults in immigrant families with children reported their children experienced increased emotional distress because of immigration-related worries. Fifteen percent of adults in immigrant families with children reported that their children experienced increased stress, anxiety, or sadness because of worries about immigration status in the previous year. Such effects

were higher for those in mixed-status families (27%) but were also felt in families with all citizens (8%) and a mix of green card holders and citizens (15%).

A 2025 article in *Psychiatric News*, a publication of the American Psychiatric Association, examined the mental health consequences of contemporary U.S. immigration enforcement on immigrant children and families, drawing from clinical vignettes, epidemiological data, and community-based research (Fortuna et al., 2025). The article highlights the following:

- Forced family separations, particularly those resulting from immigration enforcement (e.g., detention, deportation), introduce acute psychological risks. A national study of 547 U.S.-born adolescents ages 11 to 16 found that having a detained or deported family member was associated with elevated risk for suicidal ideation, externalizing behaviors, and alcohol use (Roche et al., 2020).
- In young children, abrupt caregiver loss has been linked to sleep and appetite disturbances, emotional dysregulation, and developmental regression (MacLean et al., 2019).
- Forcible separation from a caregiver is recognized as an adverse childhood experience (ACE) that contributes to toxic stress, ambiguous loss, and long-term risk for psychiatric disorders (Roberts et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2020).
- Even the threat of separation can generate profound emotional harm. Children in mixed-status families often live with chronic anticipatory anxiety that a loved one could be detained or deported. These fears have been shown to lead to school absenteeism, academic disengagement, and heightened emotional distress (Ramos-Sánchez & Llamas, 2024).

- 3) ***Students' right to public education.*** As noted in the AG's December 2025 updated guidance on promoting safe and secure learning environments, the U.S. Constitution provides all students with the right to receive an education without discrimination based on immigration status. In *Plyler v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that undocumented immigrants are guaranteed due process and equal protection rights under the U.S. Constitution, and that children cannot be denied equal access to a public education because of their immigration status. Therefore, schools must provide free public education to all students, regardless of their immigration status and regardless of the citizenship status of the students' parents or guardians.

Similarly, California law affirms the equal educational rights of immigrant students. Under the California Constitution, all students and staff, regardless of immigration status, have the inalienable right to attend campuses that are safe, secure, and peaceful. State statute further prohibits discrimination based on a student's immigration status.

4) ***Model referral protocols for addressing pupil behavioral health concerns.***

The Model Referral Protocols for Addressing Pupil Behavioral Health Concerns (“the Protocols”) are designed by the CDE, in consultation with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), members of the Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup, and pupil behavioral health stakeholders to assist schools in creating or refining timely referral systems that support students’ behavioral health needs. The Protocols provide guidance for identifying, referring, and supporting students experiencing behavioral health challenges.

The Protocols promote best practices to enhance collaboration between schools, families, and external service providers. They are grounded in multi-tiered systems of support, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive approaches. The goal is to establish consistent, effective, and accessible referral systems that contribute to positive outcomes for all students.

The Protocols are structured around five key components:

- a) Needs Assessment: Understand behavioral health trends, gaps, and available supports.
- b) Building Capacity: Strengthen internal and community-based systems.
- c) Planning: Develop coordinated strategies based on assessed needs.
- d) Implementation: Execute referral protocols through a collaborative model.
- e) Evaluation: Assess system impact and make continuous improvements.

Existing law requires the governing board or body of an LEA to adopt a policy on referral protocols for addressing pupil behavioral health concerns in grades 7 to 12 by January 31, 2026. These policies must be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders and school-linked behavioral health professionals, and be based on the CDE’s model referral protocol.

The adopted policies must also specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Pupils bereaved by death or loss of a close family member or friend.
- b) Pupils for whom there is concern due to behavioral health disorders, including common psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse.
- c) Pupils with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders.
- d) Pupils experiencing homelessness or placed in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
- e) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning pupils.

This bill requires the CDE to update its model referral protocols to include guidance on providing equity-centered mental health supports in case of a local emergency related to immigration enforcement activities or deportations of pupils or their family members, on or before July 1, 2027. It further requires the governing board or body of an LEA to update their policies on behavioral health referral protocols to include corresponding guidance, on or before July 1, 2028, and specifies that if an LEA has already adopted a policy that already addresses the specified supports, then that policy may be deemed sufficient to fulfill this new requirement.

- 5) ***Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)***. Launched in July 2021, CYBHI is a multiyear, multi-billion-dollar effort focused on improving the behavioral health and well-being of children, youth, and families. The CYBHI is the core of the Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health, the state's \$4.7 billion investment to overhaul its mental health system and enhance the pathways that connect families with the services they need. According to the CYBHI's 2024 annual report, CYBHI investments have taken form in the following work streams in educational settings:
- a) *Safe Spaces Trauma Informed Training* – A free, online training designed to help individuals working with children and youth recognize and respond to signs of trauma and stress.
 - b) *CalHOPE Mindfulness, Resilience, and Well-being Supports* – Providing no-cost mental health and wellness resources to schools across the state. The website contains resources that focus on creating trusted spaces, building resilience, and recognizing the signs of mental stress and duress in colleagues, students, and family members.
 - c) *Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program* – Addressing behavioral health access barriers for Medi-Cal students through targeted interventions that increase access to preventive, early intervention, or other behavioral health services provided by school-affiliated behavioral health providers for TK-12 children in public schools.
 - d) *School-Linked Partnership and Capacity Grants* - Providing COEs and LEAs, as well as institutions of higher education (IHEs), with critical resources to build infrastructure and partnerships and achieve a long-term and sustainable funding model for student behavioral health services. These one-time grants aim to increase operational readiness to engage in the CYBHI Fee Schedule program through supporting Medi-Cal enrollment, building service delivery and billing infrastructure, establishing data collection and documentation processes, and supporting collective impact efforts.
 - e) *Transforming Together (T2)* - Supported by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, T2 brings together a cross-sector Collaborative Leadership Working Group to align and integrate systems efforts for a re-imagined, youth-centered behavioral health ecosystem.

Work is conducted in close partnership with CDE's California Community Schools Partnership Program and piloted in four demonstration counties.

- 6) ***CYBHI Fee Schedule Program.*** As part of the CYBHI, DHCS was tasked with establishing and maintaining a statewide multi-payer fee schedule for school-linked behavioral health (known as the CYBHI Fee Schedule), enabling LEAs and public IHEs to receive funding for outpatient services rendered at a school or school-linked site. To be eligible for covered services, children and youth must be under the age of 26; enrolled in public TK-12 schools or IHEs; and covered by Medi-Cal managed care plans, Medi-Cal Fee-for-Service, health care service plans, and disability insurers. Since 2024, DHCS has enrolled around 700 LEAs and public IHEs in the CYBHI Fee Schedule program.
- 7) ***Arguments in support.*** In a letter of support submitted to this Committee, Para Los Niños noted the following:

“AB 2460 addresses a serious and growing challenge facing students and families across California. Children in immigrant communities are bringing fear, anxiety, and trauma into the classroom as they live under the threat of immigration enforcement, detention, and family separation. These harms fall especially hard on students from immigrant families, including children in mixed-status households, whose emotional well-being and ability to learn can be disrupted both at home and at school [...]

“While California has made significant progress in supporting student behavioral health, there remains a lack of comprehensive policy addressing the unique trauma and mental health challenges resulting from family separation and immigration-related risks—issues impacting Californians at alarming rates. AB 2460 represents a prudent and necessary step towards ensuring that students affected by immigration enforcement and family instability receive the support, stability, and care they need when such harms threaten their educational well-being.”

- 8) ***Prior and related legislation.***

AB 49 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 122, Statutes of 2025) establishes, as an urgency measure, the California Safe Haven Schools Act and prohibits, except as required by state or federal law, school officials and employees of an LEA from allowing officers or employees of an agency conducting immigration enforcement to enter a school site without providing a valid judicial warrant or court order. Prohibits LEAs from providing information about students, their families, teachers, and school employees to immigration authorities

SB 98 (Pérez, Chapter 124, Statutes of 2025) requires the governing boards of school districts and COEs, and the governing boards of charter schools, to include procedures for notifying parents and school staff when immigration enforcement is confirmed on the school site within the comprehensive school safety plan. It further requires the California State University, each California Community College District, and each Cal Grant qualifying independent IHE, and requests the University of California Regents to notify specified individuals when

the presence of immigration enforcement is confirmed on their respective campuses or schoolsites.

AB 419 (Connolly, Chapter 663, Statutes of 2025) requires LEAs to post specified information about immigration enforcement actions at California schools on its website and the website of each school within the LEA in English and any additional languages that a school is required to provide translated documents.

SB 153 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 38, Statutes of 2024) requires the CDE, on or before June 1, 2025, to develop model referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns, for use, on a voluntary basis, by LEAs and requires LEAs to adopt a policy on referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns in grades 7 to 12 by January 31, 2026.

AB 2072 (Gabriel, Chapter 909, Statutes of 2022) requires, by November 1, 2024, COEs in consultation with the CDE and other relevant state and local agencies, to coordinate agreements between school districts and charter schools within the county to develop a system for rapidly deploying qualified mental health professionals and other key school personnel employed by individual school districts and charter schools throughout the county to areas of the county that experienced a natural disaster or other traumatic event.

AB 309 (Gabriel, Chapter 662, Statutes of 2021) requires the CDE to develop model pupil mental health referral protocols, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, subject to the availability of funding for this purpose.

SB 224 (Portantino, Chapter 675, Statutes of 2021) requires LEAs and charter schools that offer courses in health education to students in middle school or high school to include in those courses instruction in mental health that meets specified requirements and requires the CDE, by January 1, 2024, to develop a plan to increase mental health instruction in California public schools.

AB 2022 (Chu, Chapter 484, Statutes of 2018) requires each school of a school district or COE, and each charter school, to notify students and parents or guardians of students, at least twice per school year, about how to initiate access to available student mental health services on campus or in the community.

AB 699 (O'Donnell, Chapter 493, Statutes of 2017) requires the AG to publish model policies limiting assistance with immigration enforcement at public schools, requires LEAs to adopt the model policies or equivalent policies, and provides education and support to immigrant students and their families.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators
California Association of Student Councils
California Behavioral Health Planning Council
California Catholic Conference
EdTrust-West
Fresno Unified School District

Para Los Ninos
Santa Clara County Office of Education

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2468 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Patel
Version: June 22, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: School accountability: pupils with disabilities: inclusion.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) Project in statute and expands the project by assigning responsibility for statewide universal technical assistance to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and responsibility for targeted compliance-related support to the California Department of Education (CDE), contingent upon an appropriation.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires each local educational agency (LEA) to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible pupils with disabilities in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- 2) Requires pupils with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), such that they are educated alongside nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and removed from the general education environment only when necessary.
- 3) Requires California to develop and implement a State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) measuring the state's performance under IDEA, including indicators related to LRE placements.
- 4) Establishes the CCEE to advise and assist LEAs in achieving the goals established in local control and accountability plans through the statewide system of support, including differentiated assistance and direct technical assistance.
- 5) Authorizes the CDE to conduct general supervision and monitoring activities necessary to ensure LEAs comply with IDEA and state special education requirements, including compliance monitoring and corrective action.
- 6) Establishes the statewide system of support to provide coordinated technical assistance and continuous improvement support to LEAs.
- 7) Establishes the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program to increase access to inclusive early learning opportunities for children with exceptional needs.

- 8) Requires the CDE to publish LEA data related to federal LRE indicators on its website and make that information available through the California School Dashboard.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the SIP Project in statute.
- 2) Requires the SIP Project to be jointly administered by the CDE and the CCEE, through contracts or a memoranda of understanding with one or two county offices of education (COEs).
- 3) Assigns responsibility to CDE for targeted technical assistance provided to LEAs identified through IDEA SPP indicators and the department's general supervision process.
- 4) Assigns responsibility to CCEE for universal statewide technical assistance, including professional learning, demonstration sites, educator resources, inclusion academies, teacher preparation partnerships, and project evaluation.
- 5) Requires CDE and CCEE to coordinate implementation through shared referral processes, data-sharing protocols, and annual joint reviews.
- 6) Requires annual reports to the Legislature describing project activities, participation, outcomes, and recommendations.
- 7) Requires both agencies to ensure implementation is consistent with existing federal and state special education rights, including individualized education program (IEP) requirements and protections for pupils who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.
- 8) Conditions implementation upon an appropriation and expresses legislative intent to appropriate at least \$30 million over five years to CCEE, in addition to separate funding for CDE.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Research over many decades has found that inclusion offers a host of academic, behavioral, and social benefits for students with disabilities, as well as for their peers. In spite of these benefits, California has lagged behind most other states in the rate of inclusion of students with disabilities for many years.

"50 years after the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), California schools still struggle to realize the vision that all students with disabilities experience meaningful inclusion and belonging in the academic and social life of school communities. Research consistently shows that schools

need sustained, practice-embedded support and a systemwide, proactive approach to achieve meaningful gains in inclusive education.

“Recent research from Policy Analysis for California Education shows that districts participating in the Supporting Innovative Practices project have increased inclusion at a rate significantly higher than the state average. Over five years, SIP districts experienced 13 times the growth compared to the state average. Districts required to participate by the California Department of Education because of low rates of inclusion experienced growth 6 times the state average.

“AB 2468 will ensure that SIP is able to continue and expand its successful work, as well as align and integrate it with the other improvement initiatives.”

- 2) ***What is the appropriate division of responsibilities between CDE and CCEE?*** Recent amendments substantially revise the bill’s administrative structure. Rather than transferring the SIP Project entirely to the CCEE, the bill establishes a shared governance model in which CDE administers compliance-driven technical assistance required under federal law, while CCEE administers universal technical assistance through the statewide system of support. This approach better recognizes CDE’s responsibilities as California’s state educational agency under IDEA, while leveraging CCEE’s expertise in continuous improvement. However, because both agencies would administer different components of the same statewide initiative through separate appropriations and contracts with COEs, the Committee may wish to consider whether the bill sufficiently defines each agency’s responsibilities and decision-making authority to minimize duplication, avoid inconsistent guidance to LEAs, and establish clear accountability for overall program outcomes.
- 3) ***The bill shifts responsibility for statewide universal supports from CDE to CCEE.*** Although CDE would continue administering targeted technical assistance connected to its federal monitoring responsibilities, the bill assigns responsibility for universal supports, including statewide professional learning, educator resources, inclusion academies, demonstration sites, and teacher preparation partnerships, to CCEE. This represents a significant policy decision regarding where statewide expertise on inclusive instructional practices should reside. The Committee may wish to consider whether these functions are more appropriately housed within CCEE because they align with the collaborative’s broader continuous improvement mission, or whether they should remain within CDE alongside other statewide special education initiatives to preserve a single statewide lead on instructional guidance and technical assistance for pupils with disabilities.
- 4) ***The bill codifies an administrative program while also prescribing its operational structure.*** Unlike many education programs created directly in statute, the SIP Project has operated administratively for approximately a decade through CDE and COEs. The bill not only establishes the project in statute, but also specifies in detail how it must be administered, the activities it must conduct, the agencies responsible for implementation, coordination requirements, annual reporting, and legislative intent regarding future funding. Codifying these

operational decisions provides stability and legislative direction but may also reduce administrative flexibility to adapt the project as state priorities, federal requirements, or lessons learned from implementation evolve.

- 5) ***The bill builds upon California's existing statewide system of support.*** The bill is intended to integrate inclusive instructional practices into California's broader statewide system of support rather than operate as a standalone special education initiative. Throughout the bill, the SIP Project is directed to align with differentiated assistance, direct technical assistance, educator workforce initiatives, teacher preparation programs, literacy efforts, community schools, and other statewide improvement initiatives. To the extent this coordination can be successfully implemented, it may reduce duplication of technical assistance and reinforce the principle that improving outcomes for pupils with disabilities is a shared responsibility across general education and special education systems rather than the responsibility of special education programs alone. At the same time, successful implementation will require careful coordination between agencies to ensure that technical assistance remains coherent rather than fragmented.
- 6) ***The budget resolves the funding question, leaving administration as the principal policy issue.*** The Legislature's budget discussions have largely addressed whether additional funding should be provided to expand the SIP Project. As a result, the policy question presented by this bill is no longer whether the program should continue, but rather how responsibility for administering the expanded program should be allocated between CDE and CCEE. The Committee's review, therefore, should focus on governance, accountability, and the interaction between the project's universal support activities and CDE's federally required special education oversight responsibilities.

SUPPORT

Alameda County Office of Education
 Antelope Valley Union High School District
 Association of Regional Center Agencies
 Butte County SELPA
 California Association for Bilingual Education
 California Catholic Conference
 California County Superintendents
 California School Boards Association
 DJ B Diamond
 El Dorado County Office of Education
 Eureka City Schools
 Imperial County SELPA
 Katie Novak Education Consulting
 Kern County Office of Education
 Los Angeles County Office of Education
 Manteca Unified School District
 Merced County Office of Education
 Merced County SELPA
 NextGen California

North Monterey County Unified School District
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Organized Binder
Sacramento County Office of Education
San Diego Unified School District
San Francisco Unified School District
San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Santa Barbara County Education Office
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Soquel Union Elementary School District

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2540 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Stefani
Version: May 18, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Michelle Nguyen

Subject: Public health: public postsecondary education: student health centers: abortion by medication techniques.

SUMMARY

This bill, upon appropriation, requires a community college with a student health center, by January 1, 2029, to offer access to abortion by medication techniques. This bill allows that this service may be performed by providers on staff at a student health center, through telehealth services, by providers associated with a contracted external agency, or through partnerships with other community health providers, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the mission and function of the California Community Colleges (CCC), which, in part, is to:
 - a) Offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for both younger and older students.
 - b) Authorizes the CCC to grant the associate in arts degree and the associate in science degree.
 - c) Requires the CCC to offer English as a Second Language instruction, adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level.
 - d) Advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4)
- 2) Requires, by January 1, 2023, each public university student health center on a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) campus to offer abortion by medication techniques onsite; establishes the College Student Health Center Sexual and Reproductive Health Preparation Fund to support medication abortion readiness at CSU and UC student health centers; and defines "medication abortion readiness" to include assessment of clinic needs, purchasing equipment, making facility improvements, establishing protocols, creating patient educational

materials, and training staff, but not the provision of abortion by medication techniques. (EC § 99250, et seq.)

- 3) Allows the governing board of a community college district (CCD) to require CCC students to pay a fee in the total amount of not more than ten dollars (\$10) for each semester for health supervision and services, including for the operation of a student health center or centers. Allows the governing board to increase this fee by the same percentage increase as the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Purchase of Goods and Services. (EC § 76355)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires a CCC with a student health center, by January 1, 2029, to do both of the following:
 - a) Offer access to abortion by medication techniques, and allows that this service may be performed by providers on staff at the student health center, through telehealth services, by providers associated with a contracted external agency, or through partnerships with other community health providers, as appropriate.
 - b) Promote awareness of the services for abortion by medication techniques that the student health center offers access to, provide that information to students, and post the availability of those services on its internet website.
- 2) Provides that the implementation of #1 above is contingent upon an appropriation for its purposes in the annual Budget Act or another statute.
- 3) Requires that the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), upon request from a CCC student health center, assist and advise on potential pathways for the student health center to bill public programs and health insurance providers to help pay for the costs of providing access to abortion by medication techniques.
- 4) Requires the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, by January 1, 2030, to submit a report to the Legislature, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, that includes, but is not limited to, the following information separately for each CCC:
 - a) The number of student health centers that provide abortion by medication techniques, provide access to medication abortion techniques through other providers, or both.
 - b) The number of abortions by medication techniques performed at student health centers or assisted through student health centers, disaggregated, to the extent possible, by student health center.

- 5) Provides that the reporting requirement described above is inoperative on January 1, 2031, pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code.
- 6) Requires UC or CSU clinics providing primary health care services to students, by January 1, 2028, to: a) promote awareness of the services for abortion by medication techniques that are offered at the clinics, b) provide information on those services to students, and c) post the availability of those services on its internet website.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Reproductive healthcare is an essential part of student health. All students deserve the same, equitable access to critical services – no matter what type of college they choose to attend. While CSU and UC students already have access to medication abortion, community college students, who are more likely to be low-income, working, and students of color, do not get to reap the benefits of this important service. This bill closes a gap by ensuring that 2.2 million students can access medication abortion services at their student health centers, through telehealth, or through contracted external entities. AB 2540 will also require campuses to provide information about medication abortion services, so students can access care without stigma, confusion or delay.”
- 2) ***CCC health centers.*** Out of 116 CCCs, there are 92 CCCs that have health care centers in the state. Though some university health care centers are full service, community colleges with health care centers generally have a more limited role in their students’ medical care, in that they are designed to provide episodic and short-term acute care and are referral-based models connecting students to community providers. These centers are not generally designed to offer preventive care or to treat chronic pain, and some are led by registered nurses and do not have a prescriber in their health center.

CCC student health fees reflect this limited model of care, with a maximum fee of \$28 per semester in 2026-27. In contrast, the UC requires students to be charged a fee for the UC Student Health Insurance Plan. This fee varies by campus and is estimated to cost \$2,533 per semester at UC Berkeley, for example.

- 3) ***Prior legislation required UC and CSU health centers to offer abortion by medication, but explicitly excluded CCCs from the bill.*** SB 24 (Leyva, Chapter 740, Statutes of 2019) required UC and CSU to offer abortion by medication techniques onsite, and allows for the service to be performed by providers on staff at the student health center, through telehealth services, or by providers associated with a contracted external agency. SB 320 (Leyva, 2017), a bill that was substantially similar to SB 24, included the CCCs in an earlier version of this bill, which was later excluded by committee amendments taken by the Senate Health Committee.

A difference between this bill and SB 24 is that this bill includes the CCCs with health centers but currently requires *offering access* to abortion by medication techniques and does not require that it happens *onsite*. Though this bill allows for the service to be performed by providers on staff at the student health center, CCC

health centers would very likely have to comply with the requirements of this bill by providing referrals to community centers or through telehealth services.

- 4) ***Uncertainty with pending Supreme Court decision.*** On May 14, 2026, the Supreme Court preserved access to a drug used in the most common method of abortion and rejected lower-court restrictions while a lawsuit continues. The Supreme Court's order allows women seeking abortions to continue obtaining the drug, mifepristone, at pharmacies or through the mail, without an in-person visit to a doctor. The current dispute is similar to one that reached the Supreme Court several years ago, when the justices blocked a 5th Circuit ruling and kept Mifepristone widely available, before ultimately unanimously dismissing the original lawsuit in 2024. While the Supreme Court's recent ruling keeps the status quo in place for now, some warn that the case is far from settled.

This bill requires CCC health centers to offer access to abortion by medication techniques, specifying that this service may be performed by providers on staff at the student health center, through telehealth services, by providers associated with a contracted external agency, or through partnerships with other community health providers, as appropriate. CCC health centers continue to be concerned about a scenario where telehealth services, which may be the only viable option for certain colleges (given a lack of available providers and community health partners), may be taken away as an option, leaving some CCC health centers with less capacity and fewer resources to serve students on their campuses.

- 5) ***Committee amendments.*** This bill is double-referred, with the Senate Health Committee being the first committee of referral. The Senate Health Committee passed AB 2540 out of its committee during their hearing on June 24, 2026, with a commitment from the author to take amendments in the Senate Education Committee. *Committee staff recommends, and the author agrees to, the following amendments:*

- *Clarify the ways that a CCC is deemed to have provided access to abortion by medication techniques.*
- *Authorize the CCCCO to enter into a statewide agreement with a health provider to provide CCC health centers with services and resources to meet the requirements of this bill.*
- *Require the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls to consult the CCCCO to develop a standardized reporting framework that minimizes administrative burden and protects student privacy.*
- *Specify that a CCC student health center is not required to collect protected health information from an external provider.*
- *Specify that the implementation of this bill is contingent upon appropriation in the budget act to support both direct and indirect costs of CCC health centers, and specifies eligible uses of funds.*

6) *Related and Prior Legislation.*

SB 24 (Leyva, Chapter 740, Statutes of 2019) requires student health centers located on a campus within the UC or CSU that provide primary health care services to students, after January 1, 2023, to offer abortion by medication techniques onsite.

SB 320 (Leyva, 2018) was substantially similar to SB 24. SB 320 was vetoed by Governor Brown, who stated, in part:

“Access to reproductive health services, including abortion, is a long-protected right in California. According to a study sponsored by supporters of this legislation, the average distance to abortion providers in campus communities varies from five to seven miles, not an unreasonable distance. Because the services required by this bill are widely available off-campus, this bill is not necessary.”

SUPPORT

ACCESS Reproductive Justice (co-sponsor)
Black Women for Wellness Action Project (co-sponsor)
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (co-sponsor)
Reproductive Freedom for All California (co-sponsor)
Student Senate for California Community Colleges (co-sponsor)
Training in Early Abortion for Comprehensive Healthcare (co-sponsor)
Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity (co-sponsor)
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
ACLU California Action
American Association of University Women of California
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, District IX
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
California Medical Association
California Nurse-Midwives Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
San Francisco Marin Medical Society
Women’s Foundation California

OPPOSITION

California Family Council
Fieldstead and Company
LivingWell Medical Clinic

-- END --

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2551	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Elhawary		
Version:	June 11, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: Public postsecondary education: Equity in Higher Education Act: prohibition on violence, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination: student hearings.

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 a repeal date of January 1, 2029, for provisions that require the Trustees of the California State University (CSU), and requests of the Regents of the University of California (UC), to adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that 1) prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, 2) prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange, and 3) establish reasonable content-neutral time, place, and manner (TPM) restrictions, and, if applicable, any advance permitting requirements for protests on campus.

BACKGROUND

Existing federal law:

- 1) Requires that no person in the United States, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 21, Subchapter V, § 2000d ... commonly known as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act)
- 2) Prohibits Congress from making any law respecting an establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise thereof; abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. (First Amendment to the United States Constitution)

Existing state law:

- 1) States that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any characteristic listed or defined in the Government Code or any other characteristic that is contained in the prohibition of hate crimes set forth in the Penal Code, including immigration status, in any program or activity

conducted by any postsecondary educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance or enrolls students who receive state student financial aid. (Education Code (EC) § 66270)

- 2) States that the Trustees of the CSU and the Regents of the UC have the primary responsibility to prevent and address conduct that either creates a hostile environment for students on campus, or results in differential treatment of students on campus based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or disability status. (EC § 66270.7)
- 3) Requires the Trustees of the CSU and requests the Regents of the UC to adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that: a) prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, and b) prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange of ideas or the educational mission of the universities. (EC § 66270.7)
- 4) Provides that every person may freely speak, write, and publish his or her sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of this right, and prohibits a law from restraining or abridging liberty of speech or press. (California Constitution, Article I, § 2)
- 5) Prohibits the Regents of the UC, the Trustees of the CSU, the governing board of a community college district, a private postsecondary educational institution, and an administrator of any campus of those institutions, from making or enforcing a rule subjecting a student to disciplinary sanction solely on the basis of conduct that is speech or other communication that, when engaged in outside a campus of those institutions, is protected from governmental restriction by the United States Constitution or California Constitution. (EC § 66301 and § 94367)
- 6) Provides that #4 and #5 do not prohibit an institution from adopting rules and regulations that are designed to prevent hate violence from being directed at students in a manner that denies them their full participation in the educational process, if the rules and regulations conform to standards established by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Section 2 of Article I of the California Constitution for citizens generally. (EC § 66301 and § 94367)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes a repeal date of January 1, 2029, for the following provisions that are required of the CSU Trustees and requested of the UC Regents:
 - a) Adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that 1) prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, 2) prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange, and 3) establish reasonable content-neutral TPM restrictions, and, if applicable, any advance permitting requirements for protests on campus.

- b) Adopt rules and procedures to take reasonable steps to respond to #1 and #2 listed in the paragraph above.
 - c) Require each campus to publish on the campus's internet website the TPM restrictions, and any advance permitting requirements for protests on campus.
 - d) Develop mandatory training programs for students, as follows:
 - i) What constitutes violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, and the procedures for investigating violations of the student code of conduct.
 - ii) When and where protests and gatherings may be held, including the difference between public fora, limited public fora, nonpublic fora, and private property, consistent with the United States Constitution and California Constitution.
 - e) Submit a report, by January 2 of each year, to the Legislature on the implementation and administration of these provisions, as specified.
- 2) Requires the CSU, and requests of the UC, to establish a committee and requires the committee to hold at least two student hearings before January 1, 2029, to elicit feedback regarding specified content-neutral TPM restrictions, including how students feel about the restrictions and the way the restrictions are being enforced.
- 3) Requires the CSU, and requests of the UC, to include demographic data for a report of student code of conduct violations related to a) prohibiting violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus and b) prohibiting conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange of ideas or the educational mission of the CSU.
- 4) Removes the statement that the Trustees of the CSU and the Regents of the UC have the primary responsibility to prevent and address conduct that either creates a hostile environment for students on campus, or results in differential treatment of students on campus, specifically *based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or disability status*.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Due to the unintended consequences of prior legislation, students are most directly affected by time, place, and manner (TPM) restrictions and their enforcement, yet their perspectives are often overlooked. Various pressing concerns have been raised about TPM implementation, including the arrest of peaceful protesters, the disciplinary actions against student advocates and organizers, and the disproportionate impact of enforcement on students and faculty of color. By establishing committees and requiring student hearings in the California State University system, AB 2551

creates meaningful opportunities for students to contribute their thoughts and experiences in informing campus policy that affects their rights, safety, and lives on campus.”

The author continues, “This bill also promotes transparency and accountability by requiring collection of demographic data on TPM conduct violations. Data collection and student feedback are essential to empowering students and ensuring the equitable and consistent application of TPM policies. AB 2551 includes a sunset date of January 1, 2029, providing an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.”

- 2) ***Recent legislation addressing protests on college campuses.*** In the wake of protests on college campuses in spring 2024, the 2024 Budget Act required the CSU and the UC to prepare a campus climate notification by the beginning of the Fall 2024 term and to develop a systemwide framework to provide for consistency with campus implementation and enforcement. (For the UC specifically, a lack of compliance meant that \$25 million from the state budget would not be released to UC campuses.) Further, the 2024 Budget Act required each UC and CSU campus to provide notification of the following to students before the start of each academic year:
- a) The campus’ TPM policy, which identifies the allowable parameters of free speech activities and the campus.
 - b) The Student Code of Conduct, which identifies acceptable student behavior, and relevant state and federal laws.
 - c) The systemwide Nondiscrimination Policy.
 - d) The process by which the campus will resolve any complaint of a violation of relevant institutional policies, state law, or federal law, including complaints against individuals not affiliated with the campus.
 - e) The range of consequences possible for students, faculty, or staff who violate relevant institutional policies, state law, or federal law.
 - f) How the campus may respond to activities that threaten the safety of students, faculty, or staff, and disrupt their ability to access the campus or buildings, the educational process, or activities on campus.
 - g) How the campus intends to foster healthy discourse and bring together campus community members, and viewpoints that are ideologically different, in order to best promote the educational mission of the institution and the exchange of ideas in a safe and peaceful manner.
 - h) Identify educational programs and activities for faculty, staff, and students to support the balance between free speech activities, educational mission, and student safety.

- i) A list of the resources available on campus for faculty, staff, and students to receive mental health and trauma support.

Three months later, SB 1287 (Glazer, Chapter 892, Statutes of 2024) was signed by the Governor. SB 1287 requires the Trustees of the CSU, and requests the Regents of the UC, to adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that:

- a) Prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus.
- b) Prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange of ideas or the educational mission of the segment.
- c) Establish reasonable content-neutral TPM restrictions, and, if applicable, any advance permitting requirements for protests on campus.

SB 1287 also requires the campuses to adopt rules and procedures to take reasonable steps to respond to each incident creating a hostile environment on campus or that limits the free exchange of ideas; requires mandatory training programs for students; and requires students to acknowledge their campus' student code of conduct.

According to the author at the time, "Across our higher education system, the freedom of expression has been impaired with increasing reoccurrences of harassment, intimidation, and violence on campus targeted towards those with differing viewpoints. California's colleges and universities have a responsibility to promote free speech and to prevent harassment and discrimination that violates anti-discrimination laws. Many marginalized communities are suffering from discriminatory attacks. SB 1287 is about making sure that California universities are places where everyone can share their thoughts and ideas freely. We want to protect free speech and academic freedom while also preventing any form of harassment or discrimination. The need has been highlighted by incidents of antisemitism that have resulted from the October 7th terrorist attack in Israel. By having the higher education institution's set clear rules and reporting systems, we're making sure that universities can maintain an environment where everyone feels respected and can learn without fear of intimidation, harassment, or violence."

- 3) ***Consistent with 2024 Budget Act requirements, UC and CSU put forward systemwide frameworks in August 2024.*** Before 2024, all UC and CSU campuses had TPM restrictions to ensure safety, security, and order. However, the 2024 Budget Act specifically required the UC and CSU systems to develop a systemwide framework to provide consistency with campus implementation and enforcement.

In letters sent to leadership of their respective campuses in August 2024, the UC Office of the President provided a directive to each campus to provide a compilation of existing policies that most commonly apply to protest and

demonstration activity, while the CSU Chancellor's Office developed and issued a systemwide TPM policy. Both UC and CSU letters also included prohibitions on university property for the following:

- Camping/encampments and unauthorized structures.
- Restricting free movement, particularly regarding denying access to a university facility/space or occupying buildings and facilities.
- Masking to conceal identity, either with the intent to violate laws or policies or with the intent to intimidate any person or group.

- 4) ***Reasonable content-neutral TPM restrictions.*** Freedom of speech on college campuses is allowed within the confines of student codes of conduct and TPM restrictions. Institutions cannot discipline a student for engaging in a free speech activity, but can discipline a student if the free speech activity crosses into unlawful behavior, or otherwise violates an institution's student codes of conduct.

All UC and CSU campuses maintain TPM restrictions to ensure safety, security, and order, and have been permitted to do so long before the enactment of SB 1287. As established by case law, reasonable TPM restrictions on protected speech are permissible, provided that the restriction is content neutral, that the restriction serves a significant governmental interest, that the restriction is not more extensive than necessary to serve that interest, and that alternative means must exist to communicate the expression that is limited by the regulation.

TPM restrictions regulate when, where, and how expression may occur freely. Regarding time, regulations may restrict the use of amplified sound during early morning or late evening hours in public forums, and case law also permits the requirement that large groups get a permit in advance of an event, protest, or demonstration. Regarding place, case law distinguishes between public and non-public forums where speech may be expressed freely, and regulations allow for activities to not block pathways or traffic. Regarding manner, regulations may address decibel levels of amplified sound, limits on signs and banner size, erecting physical structures, and the use of barricades to ensure pathways and emergency access.

- 5) ***This bill requires two student hearings and the collection of demographic data before effectively repealing SB 1287 in January 2029.*** This bill requires each CSU campus, and requests of each UC campus, to hold at least two student hearings before January 1, 2029, to elicit feedback regarding content-neutral TPM restrictions, including how students feel about the restrictions and the way the restrictions are being enforced. This bill also requires the CSU, and requests of the UC, to report information on student code of conduct violations relating to conduct that creates a hostile environment and conduct that limits the free exchange of ideas, and to report *demographic data* specifically.

The author has expressed concerns with how SB 1287 has been enforced and seeks an avenue for students to provide feedback on TPM restrictions. In particular, the author indicates that campus police and administration have at times

implemented or enforced the provisions of SB 1287 in an overly rigid or overzealous way, such that some students have felt targeted based on what they are protesting. *Though there are ample opportunities for students to express concerns by engaging directly with campus and system leadership and providing public comment at meetings of the Trustees or Regents, if students do feel that enforcement of TPM restrictions are disproportionately skewed toward them without justifiable cause, it may be difficult to express those concerns through typical public settings.*

Because of the author's concerns, the author wants campuses to gather data on these specified student code of conduct violations and include demographic data to see if the data shows any trends that would suggest that certain students are being disproportionately targeted. *Both the UC and CSU are required to report information on these specified student code of conduct violations; however, the data that is collected and reported is not specific to TPM restrictions or students' expression of free speech, so unless the language is revised to require that the data be collected and reported differently, collecting demographic data would not necessarily provide the author with a better understanding of whether these students are being disproportionately affected because of TPM restrictions.*

- 6) ***Relationship between TPM restrictions, the student codes of conduct, and student discipline.*** The author's office states that certain students have felt that the response from campus police and campus administration during student protests has been outsized relative to the level of purported infraction. For example, the author's office has stated that some students who stepped outside the permitted protest area feel that campus police overreacted to their doing so. *However, it should be noted that institutions' policies do not penalize students for violations of TPM restrictions specifically; rather, any discipline for students would result from a violation of the student code of conduct or from unlawful behavior, according to the institutions' policies.*

As an example, UC's August 2024 letter required their campuses to have a consistent tiered response across all campuses that starts with informing a person of a violation, making multiple requests, and being warned of potential consequences, and then escalates to being cited for a violation of relevant UC policy, and arresting or detaining someone for unlawful behavior. *In the case of a student merely stepping outside the permitted protest area, that does not seem like it would not necessarily, on its face, result in a violation of the student code of conduct. However, if the campus police were overzealous in their policing of the protest area, that should be reviewed and could be seen as overstepping how the policies are meant to be implemented.*

- 7) ***What evidence do we have of these issues?*** The author's office cited having heard about these issues from meetings with small groups of students, and later consulting with student groups, but it is not known how widespread an issue this is, and if there is a root cause. The anecdotes that have been presented sometimes have conflicting or unclear details, and Committee staff has not independently verified these accounts. As a result, Committee staff has limited ability to assess the scope of the concerns and the nature of the problem.

SB 1287 does require information to be reported on the implementation and administration of the bill, and must specifically include information on student code of conduct violations relating to conduct that creates a hostile environment and conduct that limits the free exchange of ideas, as summarized below:

- In UC's most recent report dated February 2026, UC reported 53 violations of codes of conduct related to the "Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, or other University activities"; 14 violations of codes of conduct related to "Participation in a disturbance of the peace of unlawful assembly"; and 4 violations of codes of conduct related to "Violation of the UC Anti-Discrimination Policy". UC notes that these data represent all incidents across the system and that they do not collect data on codes of conduct violations related to TPM restrictions.
- In CSU's most recent report dated December 2025, CSU reported 201 violations that resulted in a finding of responsibility for these behaviors and noted that these violations may be duplicative, as students may have been charged for multiple violations of the CSU Code of Conduct for one case. CSU notes that these data represent all incidents across the system and that they do not collect data on codes of conduct violations related to TPM restrictions.

To the extent that enforcement of SB 1287 is an issue, it may be more appropriate to create a bill that is tailored to documenting, and developing a better understanding of, any issues of enforcement. To that end, this bill requires hearings for students to provide feedback and additional reporting of disaggregated demographic data, which is consistent with attempting to better understand the nature of the problem. However, this bill also repeals the provisions of SB 1287, effective January 1, 2029, and SB 1287 has not been implemented for two full years. *Given the gravity of the issues being considered—free speech in public forums, the right to assemble, political speech on college campuses, and student and employee safety—the Committee should consider if a policy of this magnitude should have a more solid foundation of the issues that are happening on the ground.*

- 8) ***Repealing SB 1287 would not necessarily prohibit TPM restrictions.*** This bill repeals the provisions of SB 1287, effective January 1, 2029. SB 1287 requires the CSU, and requests of the UC, to adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that 1) prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus, 2) prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange, and 3) establish reasonable content-neutral TPM restrictions, and, if applicable, any advance permitting requirements for protests on campus. SB 1287 also requires students to acknowledge the campus' student code of conduct and requires mandatory training programs for students.

TPM restrictions have been discussed at length in multiple cases argued before the Supreme Court, and they were already permissible before the enactment of SB 1287. As discussed above, all UC and CSU campuses had TPM policies in place at the time of the 2024 Budget Act and SB 1287. However, the requirements in

those bills pushed the CSU and UC campuses to adopt a systemwide framework to provide for consistency with campus implementation and enforcement. *If SB 1287 were repealed, the CSU and UC could still elect to maintain robust campus-level and systemwide policies relating to TPM restrictions, and they could still maintain policies that prohibit conduct that creates a hostile environment or denies a person's ability to participate in the free exchange of ideas.*

- 9) **Committee questions.** Given the substantive policy changes this bill seeks to make, *the Committee may wish to consider the following questions:*
- a) *If the primary concern is enforcement of TPM restrictions and student code of conduct violations as it pertains to student protest, is there a way to better study how SB 1287 is being implemented and enforced across campuses, and if certain populations of students are being disproportionately affected?*
 - b) *What mechanisms currently exist to review or address concerns regarding the enforcement of TPM restrictions?*
 - c) *What are the impacts of repealing SB 1287, in both abstract and concrete terms, especially if repealing SB 1287 would not prohibit TPM restrictions on college campuses?*
- 10) **Committee amendments.** *Committee staff recommends, and the author accepts, the following amendments:*
- a) *Remove the repeal date of January 1, 2029 for this section of law.*
 - b) *Require the CSU, and request of the UC, to report on student code of conduct violations that happened during, or as a result of, an on-campus protest, and require that this data be disaggregated by race and gender.*
 - c) *Recast the student hearing requirements in a new section, and revise the requirements so that the CSU is required, and UC is requested, to hold an open forum on a CSU campus and a UC campus—instead of every CSU and UC campus—to elicit student feedback on TPM restrictions, and require the CSU, and request of the UC, to submit a notification to relevant policy committees of the Legislature about the location and date for the open forum.*
 - d) *Remove an edit that indicates that the CSU Trustees and UC Regents have the primary responsibility to prevent and address conduct that results in differential treatment of students on campus, specifically based on a “student’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or disability status”.*
- 11) **Related and Prior Legislation.**

SB 1287 (Glazer, Chapter 892, Statutes of 2024) requires the Trustees of the CSU and requests the Regents of the UC to (1) adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that prohibit violent, harassing, intimidating, or

discriminatory conduct that creates a hostile environment on campus; (2) adopt rules and procedures in the student codes of conduct that prohibit conduct that limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the free exchange of ideas or the educational mission of the segment; (3) develop mandatory training programs for students; and, (4) require each student to acknowledge the code of conduct.

SB 108 (Wiener, Chapter 35, Statutes of 2024), which is part of the 2024 Budget Act, required the CSU and the UC to prepare a campus climate notification by the beginning of the Fall 2024 term and to develop a systemwide framework to provide for consistency with campus implementation and enforcement. SB 108 required each UC and CSU campus to provide notification of specified topics to students before the start of each academic year. SB 108 also stated that, for the UC, a lack of compliance meant that \$25 million from the state budget would not be released to UC campuses.

SUPPORT

1021 Members for Palestine
California Faculty Association
Church State Council
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California
University of California Student Association

OPPOSITION

California State University
University of California

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2651	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Bonta		
Version:	June 25, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Informed Parents, Healthy Schools Act.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to develop and issue a notice to the governing authority of a school or institution, public or private, when said school or institution falls below a specified immunization rate necessary to maintain herd immunity for one or more specified diseases. The bill also requires the governing authority of said school or institution to issue the same notice to the parents and guardians of enrolled pupils, within 10 days of receiving the CDPH notice.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

Health and Safety Code (HSC)

- 1) Prohibits the governing authority of a school or institution, public or private, from unconditionally admitting a person as a pupil of any private or public elementary or secondary school, childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center, unless the pupil has been fully immunized prior to their admission to that institution. Requires the following immunizations to be documented:
 - a) Diphtheria.
 - b) Haemophilus influenzae type b.
 - c) Measles.
 - d) Mumps.
 - e) Pertussis (whooping cough).
 - f) Poliomyelitis.
 - g) Rubella.
 - h) Tetanus.

- i) Hepatitis B.
 - j) Varicella (chickenpox).
 - k) Any other disease deemed appropriate by the department, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. (HSC § 120335(b))
- 2) Defines a “governing authority” as the governing board of each school district or the authority of each other private or public institution responsible for the operation and control of the institution, or the principal or administrator of each school or institution. (HSC § 120335(a))
 - 3) Specifies that the requirements listed above do not apply to a pupil in a home-based private school or a pupil who is enrolled in an independent study program, as specified, and does not receive classroom-based instruction. (HSC § 120335(f))
 - 4) Specifies that the requirements listed above do not prohibit a pupil who qualifies for an individualized education program (IEP), pursuant to state and federal law, from accessing any special education and related services required by his or her IEP. (HSC § 120335 (h))
 - 5) Requires that a pupil be allowed enrollment to any private or public elementary or secondary school, or specified institution within the state, if, prior to January 1, 2016, the pupil submitted a letter or affidavit on file at the respective institution stating beliefs opposed to immunization. Specifies that the enrollment authorization shall only extend until the pupil enrolls in the next grade span. Defines “grade span” to mean (1) birth to preschool; (2) kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, including transitional kindergarten (TK); and (3) grades 7 to 13, inclusive. (HSC § 120335 (g))
 - 6) Prohibits a governing authority, on or after July 1, 2016, from unconditionally admitting a pupil for the first time, or readmitting or advancing any pupil to 7th grade level, unless the pupil has been immunized for his or her age, as specified. (HSC § 120335 (g))
 - 7) Requires the CDPH to develop a standardized, electronic immunization medical exemption form. Requires the form to be used by licensed physicians or surgeons and transmitted to the CDPH California Immunization Registry (CAIR). Requires the form to include, among other items, a description of which immunizations the student should be exempted from, the medical basis for the exemption, and whether the exemption is permanent or, if temporary, when it is expected to expire. (HSC § 120372)
 - 8) Requires the governing authority of a school district or institution to file a written report, on at least an annual basis, on the immunization status of new entrants to the school with the CDPH and the local health departments on prescribed forms.

Clarifies that the local health department shall have access to the complete health information as it relates to immunization of each student in order to determine immunization deficiencies. (HSC § 120375)

- 9) Requires the CDPH to create a standardized system to monitor immunization levels in schools and institutions, and to monitor patterns of unusually high exemption form submissions from a particular physician and surgeon. (HSC § 120372)

Education Code (EC)

- 10) Requires the governing board of each school district to annually notify the parent or guardian of a minor pupil regarding various rights or responsibilities of the parent or guardian relevant to the school environment. (EC § 48980)
- 11) Requires, beginning July 1, 2026, the notification described in #9 above for pupils admitted to, or advancing to, grade 6 to include a notification to the pupil's parent or guardian containing a statement about the state's public policy on human papillomavirus (HPV) immunizations, advising that the pupil adhere to current CDPH immunization guidelines and recommendations before admission or advancement to the grade 8. (EC § 48980.4)
- 12) Requires a county office of education (COE) or the governing board of a school district of attendance to exclude any pupil who has not been properly immunized, as specified. Requires the governing board of a school district to notify the parents or guardians of the pupil that they have two weeks to supply evidence either that the pupil has been properly immunized or that the pupil is exempt from the immunization requirement, as specified. (EC § 48216)
- 13) Requires the governing board of a school district to cooperate with the local health officer in measures necessary for the prevention and control of communicable diseases in school-age children. (EC § 49403)
- 14) Authorizes a credentialed school nurse to conduct immunization programs with schools and ensure that every student's immunization status is in compliance with the law. (EC § 49426)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

CDPH Notice:

- 1) Requires the CDPH to establish, and update as needed, the immunization rate necessary to prevent the spread of each of the following communicable diseases:
 - a) Diphtheria.
 - b) Haemophilus influenzae type b.

- c) Measles.
 - d) Mumps.
 - e) Pertussis (whooping cough).
 - f) Poliomyelitis.
 - g) Rubella.
 - h) Tetanus.
 - i) Hepatitis B.
 - j) Varicella (chickenpox).
 - k) Any other disease deemed appropriate by the department, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the HHS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians.
- 2) Requires the CDPH to establish notification procedures to annually inform a private or public elementary or secondary school, childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center, and the county public health department, and the local health officer, as specified, when at that school or institution, an immunization rate for one or more vaccines against one or more specified diseases is determined to fall below the relevant immunization rate established pursuant to #1 above. Requires the notification written by the CDPH to meet all of the following requirements:
- a) The notification shall be distributed in the same year that the determination above is made.
 - b) The notification shall include all of the following:
 - i) The immunization rate established by the CDPH pursuant to #1 vaccine.
 - ii) For each vaccine against the diseases outlined in #1 above, the immunization rate at the school or institution where the immunization rate is determined to have fallen below the immunization rate established by the CDPH for both the current and prior school years. Immunization rates for each vaccine shall be listed by the grade level included in the calculation, and shall include the approximate period of time that the immunization rate applies to
 - iii) A statement that children with permanent or temporary medical exemptions, children enrolled in independent study programs who

do not receive classroom-based instruction, and children who have been conditionally admitted to the school or institution are not included in the immunization rate calculation.

- iv) Evidence-based explanations regarding the importance of maintaining immunization rates at levels sufficient to prevent disease transmission, and the increased risk of outbreaks and spreading of communicable diseases when immunization rates fall below these levels.
 - v) Information developed or approved by the CDPH, regarding accessible locations where pupils and their families can obtain the specified required immunizations, including, but not limited to, contact information for the local health department and internet websites that provide immunization location information.
 - vi) A link or quick response (QR) code to the “Shots for School” webpage maintained by the CDPH or a successor webpage, and any additional webpages that contain immunization resources for parents and guardians.
- 3) Requires that the notification be translated into any language, in addition to English, that is spoken by 15% or more of the enrolled pupils.
- 4) Requires the CDPH, in implementing the provisions of the bill, to apply existing data de-identification standards and methodologies to protect individual privacy, including, but not limited to, when reporting immunization rates for a school or institution with low enrollment, could reasonably risk the identification of an individual pupil. Requires actions taken by the CDPH pursuant to this bill to be consistent with applicable state and federal privacy laws.
- 5) Specifies that a child is excluded from the immunization rate calculation developed by the CDPH if the child meets one of the following criteria:
- a) The child has a permanent or temporary medical exemption, pursuant to existing law.
 - b) The child has been conditionally admitted to the school or institution, pursuant to existing law.
 - c) The child is enrolled in an independent study program, as specified, and does not receive classroom-based instruction.
- 6) Requires a school or institution that receives a notification from the CDPH to distribute the CDPH notification to the parents and guardians of enrolled children in a manner determined by the school or institution, within 10 business days of receiving said notification.
- 7) Requires the governing authority of a school or institution to cooperate with the CDPH in carrying out the requirements of this bill.

- 8) Defines “school or institution” as a private or public elementary or secondary school, childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Parents deserve to have easy access to the information that keeps their children safe. AB 2651 requires the California Department of Public Health to notify parents when a school’s vaccination rate falls below herd immunity levels. By ensuring parents have this knowledge, this bill gives parents additional tools to make informed decisions about their children’s well-being. With this knowledge, parents are better equipped to care for their immunocompromised children and family members. Thirty-nine states saw kindergarten vaccination rates fall below the herd immunity threshold for measles, mumps, and rubella in the 2023-24 school year. AB 2651 reinforces California’s commitment to giving parents the resources they need to make educated decisions for their children’s health, without changing current vaccination requirements.”
- 2) ***Herd immunity.*** According to a 2020 article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA):

“Disease spread occurs when some proportion of a population is susceptible to the disease. Herd immunity occurs when a significant portion of a population becomes immune to an infectious disease and the risk of spread from person to person decreases; those who are not immune are indirectly protected because ongoing disease spread is very small.

“The proportion of a population who must be immune to achieve herd immunity varies by disease. For example, a disease that is very contagious, such as measles, requires more than 95% of the population to be immune to stop sustained disease transmission and achieve herd immunity.

“Vaccination creates immunity without having to contract a disease. Herd immunity also protects those who are unable to be vaccinated, such as newborns and immunocompromised people, because the disease spread within the population is very limited. Communities with lower vaccine coverage may have outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases because the proportion of people who are vaccinated is below the necessary herd immunity threshold. In addition, the protection offered by vaccines may wane over time, requiring repeat vaccination.”
- 3) ***School immunization and reporting requirements.*** As noted in the *Existing Law section*, children in California are required to receive 10 immunizations in order to attend public and private elementary and secondary schools, childcare centers, family day care homes, nursery schools, day nurseries, and developmental centers (pre-kindergarten facilities). Schools and pre-kindergarten

facilities are required to enforce immunization requirements, maintain immunization records for all enrolled children, and submit reports to the state.

- 4) ***Currently authorized exemptions or considerations.*** In California, in order for a child to be exempt from meeting the state’s immunization requirements, they must fall into one of the following circumstances:
- a) Homeschool: The child is attending a home-based private school or an independent study program and does not receive classroom-based instruction.
 - b) Medical: The child has received a medical exemption from a licensed physician and surgeon that contains, among other items, a description of each immunization the student should be exempted from, the medical basis for each exemption, and whether the exemption is permanent or, if temporary, when it is expected to expire.
 - c) Conditional acceptance: The child is a youth in foster care, a youth experiencing homelessness, a youth transferring from another state, or has had at least one dose of each required vaccine and is not yet overdue for the next dose. In these circumstances, a child may be conditionally admitted to school for 30 days, even if they are under-vaccinated or unable to provide vaccine records. If, after 30 days, the child’s parent or guardian has not provided proof of full vaccination, they may be excluded from attendance.

Existing statute and CDPH guidance further state that students with an IEP should continue to receive all necessary services identified in their IEP, regardless of their immunization status. This does not explicitly exempt such students from immunization requirements; rather, it states that a student’s immunization status shall not prohibit the student from receiving special education and related services required by their IEP.

- 5) ***The CDPH California Immunization Registry Hub and “Shots for School” webpages.*** Existing law requires all California schools and pre-kindergarten (childcare/preschool) facilities to document the vaccination status of all children attending childcare, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and 7th grade. Annual school reports are submitted through the *CAIR Hub*, CDPH’s official school immunization reporting website. The reporting data submitted by schools and childcare facilities is compiled into summary reports and data files each year. These reports and data files can be found on the CDPH *Shots for Schools* webpage. Both the CDPH and local health departments are required to monitor the immunization status of all children.

The *Shots for Schools* webpage serves as a central hub for parents, schools, and community members to find information on vaccination requirements, current laws and regulations, general guidance for schools, and various Frequently Asked Questions documents.

Importantly, the *Shots for Schools* webpage is also home to the “How is Your School Doing?” interactive map, which shows vaccination status for each school

or facility for children in childcare, kindergarten, or 7th grade. The latest data viewable on the map for all identified grade levels is from the 2021-22 school year; however, data files and summary reports for the 2025-26 school year are separately available for kindergarten facilities.

The Committee may wish to consider whether further support for CDPH capacity may allow the Shots for Schools webpage to be a better source of up-to-date information.

- 6) **State audit of California schools with low vaccination rates.** Schools that fail to report student immunization rates to the CDPH, or that report that over 10% of kindergarten or 7th grade students are not fully vaccinated, are subject to an audit. Audit lists can be found on the CDPH website and includes information about the total enrollment numbers; measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) and varicella vaccination rates for kindergarten classes; Tdap vaccination rates for 7th-grade classes; the combined conditional and overdue rate; the percentage of students enrolled in independent study programs; and the percentage of students who receive IEP services.

According to reporting by EdSource, 428 California schools reported low vaccination rates and are being audited in 2025-26 (Lambert and Willis, 2026). In 2023-24, 570 schools were audited, suggesting some improvement. However, 110 of these schools have been on the audit list for the last three years, suggesting persistent unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations. Schools found to be out of compliance with state immunization requirements may lose average daily attendance (ADA) funding for unvaccinated students. Between 2021 and 2024, 62 schools lost some funding due to low vaccine rates.

- 7) **California's immunization rates.** The Senate Health Committee's analysis of this bill notes the following:

California schools are required to check immunization records for all new student admissions at kindergarten through 12th grade, and all students advancing to 7th grade before entry. According to CDPH's Immunization Branch website, students admitted to kindergarten need records of five doses of the DTP vaccine (four doses acceptable if one given on or after fourth birthday), four doses of the polio vaccine (three doses acceptable if one given on or after fourth birthday), two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, three doses of the hepatitis B vaccine, and two doses of the varicella vaccine. Students advancing to 7th grade additionally need records of one dose of a pertussis booster (Tdap) that is usually given at age 11 or older.

According to CDPH's 2024-2025 Kindergarten Summary Report, the proportion of all kindergarten students reported as receiving all required immunizations was 93.7%, similar to 2023-2024, but lower than the 94.1% rate in 2022-2023. Vaccination rate by vaccine for all kindergarteners was 95.1% for 4+ doses of DTP vaccine, 96% for 3+ doses of polio vaccine, 96.1% for 2+ doses of MMR vaccine, 97.2% for 3+ doses of hepatitis B vaccine, and 95.7% for 2+ doses of varicella vaccine. CDPH reports that

although statewide immunization levels among kindergarten students remained high, regional differences persisted, with 26% of counties reporting kindergarten MMR rates below 95%, the approximate threshold necessary to prevent the transmission of measles.

- 8) ***Utility of the notification or resulting data.*** This bill requires the CDPH to calculate an immunization rate necessary to prevent the spread of specified diseases (or herd immunity rate) and notify a local educational agency (LEA) if the immunization rate at a schoolsite falls below that necessary herd immunity rate. Once CDPH issues the notification to an LEA, the bill requires that the LEA share the notification with the parents and guardians of students enrolled at the schoolsite, within 10 days of receipt.

This bill provides the CDPH with discretion as to how to calculate the herd immunity rate, however, it explicitly excludes children with permanent or temporary medical exemptions, children enrolled in independent study programs who do not receive classroom-based instruction, and children who have been conditionally admitted to the school from being included in the vaccination rate that is compared to the herd immunity rate.

CDPH's currently available audit data for schools with low vaccination rates (discussed in Comment 5) combines the percentage of students enrolled under conditional admission and those who are overdue on required doses. As such, it is not immediately clear how many students are currently overdue on vaccinations but do not fall under the category of conditional enrollment.

According to the author, this bill seeks to empower parents and guardians of students—particularly those who are either immunocompromised or live with immune-compromised family members—with the information they need to keep their children safe from preventable communicable diseases.

The Committee may wish to consider how usable or representative the ultimate vaccination data will be in light of the exclusion of various student populations from the CDPH calculation, the dynamic nature of student enrollment throughout the year, and the fluctuations that may occur during the period of time between the LEA submitting the vaccination data and the CDPH issuing a notice to LEAs.

- 9) ***What happens after the notice?*** This bill tasks the CDPH with issuing a notification to LEAs when their vaccination rates fall below the level necessary to maintain herd immunity. Schools are required to report student immunization data to CDPH via CAIR Hub by a December deadline; however, there does not appear to be an official mechanism to report updated information to CDPH after the reporting period ends. This implies that even if students come into compliance with immunization requirements after the December deadline, CDPH cannot issue an updated notice to help schools inform their communities that herd immunity has been reached.

Both the CDPH and local health departments are required to monitor the immunization status of all children. While some local health departments maintain online tools and dashboards that allow the public to view vaccination

rates by school district and individual school, it does not appear that that capability exists across the state.

The author may wish to consider whether additional CDPH or local health department reporting infrastructures may be necessary to allow LEAs to provide updates to the families of enrolled students after the initial CDPH notification is issued.

- 10) **Arguments in support.** In a letter of support submitted to this Committee, the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) notes the following:

“Despite the progress in ensuring vaccinations are safe and accessible in the state, California has recently experienced an increase in measles cases, with more cases (73) identified during the first quarter of this year than in all of 2025. Additionally, the state is currently auditing 428 public schools where more than 10% of kindergartners or seventh-grade students appear to not be fully vaccinated during the last school year. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that vaccination coverage among kindergartners in the United States during the 2024–2025 school year declined across all recommended vaccines compared to the previous year, with rates ranging from 92.1% for the diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (DTaP) vaccine to 92.5% for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) and polio vaccines.

“AB 2651 would help preserve herd immunity, prevent school-driven disease outbreaks, and save public health, educational, and health care funding by ensuring school communities are aware of low vaccination rates.”

- 11) **Arguments in opposition.** In a letter submitted to the Committee noting its opposition to this bill, the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) notes the following:

“Since schools are unable to update vaccination records with CDPH once the reporting period has closed, the state will only have a place-in-time snapshot of data that becomes more inaccurate as time passes. Despite the fact that a school has achieved herd immunity by families presenting the school with updated vaccination records after the reporting period has closed, AB 2651 would require the school to still notice all families with outdated, inaccurate information based on their point-in-time data. For small schools, one student’s changed status could bring the entire school back to herd immunity status. And while schools have a 10-business day turnaround once the state notices a school, there is no specified timeline for CDPH to issue notices to schools once the data is reported. As front office staff and school nurses attempt to explain the notices to families with a message that CDPH has “old information,” schools are now inappropriately thrust into a position to refute public health notices and risks creating unnecessary confusion and distrust among families. At a time when schools continue working to restore student attendance and

engagement following the pandemic, AB 2651 would erroneously create a message that schools are “unsafe.”

“AB 2651 is also based on data points that don’t exist yet since the bill was recently amended to exclude legal exemptions from the immunization-rate calculation, so the scope of the problem this bill is trying to address is unclear. There is no data to indicate how many schools would now remain on CDPH’s notification list since current data from the “Shots for School” website includes students with legal exemptions.”

12) **Prior and related legislation.**

AB 1797 (Akilah Weber, Chapter 582, Statutes of 2022) requires, rather than permits, a health care provider and specified entities to disclose certain information from a patient’s medical record or the client’s record to local health departments operating countywide or regional immunization information and reminder systems and to the CDPH.

SB 871 (Pan, 2022), among other provisions, would have deleted the requirement in current law that any immunization added to the list of mandatory immunizations for attendance at a school or childcare program added administratively, as deemed appropriate by the CDPH, allow for both medical and personal belief exemptions. This bill was held in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 276 (Pan, Chapter 278, Statutes of 2019) requires the CDPH to develop an electronic, statewide, standardized medical exemption request form for immunization requirements in existing law.

SB 714 (Pan, Chapter 281, Statutes of 2019) prohibits the governing authority, on and after July 1, 2021, from unconditionally admitting or readmitting to any of the specified institutions for the first time, or admit or advance any pupil to 7th grade level, unless the pupil has been immunized as required, or the parent or guardian files a medical exemption form, as specified.

SB 277 (Pan, Chapter 35, Statutes of 2015) eliminates the personal belief exemption from the requirement that children receive specified vaccines for certain infectious diseases prior to being admitted to any public or private elementary or secondary school or day care center.

SB 2109 (Pan, Chapter 821, Statutes of 2012) requires, on and after January 1, 2014, a separate form prescribed by the CDPH to accompany a letter or affidavit to exempt a child from immunization requirements under existing law on the basis that an immunization is contrary to the beliefs of the child’s parent or guardian.

SUPPORT

California Academy of Family Physicians (Co-Sponsor)
California State PTA (Co-Sponsor)

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists - District IX
California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
California Dental Association
California Medical Association
California Podiatric Medical Association
California Primary Care Association Advocates
California School Employees Association
Children's Specialty Care Coalition
County Health Executives Association of California
SEIU California

OPPOSITION

A Voice for Choice Advocacy
Association of California School Administrators
California Association of School Business Officials
Protection of the Educational Rights of Kids
Small School Districts Association
V is for Vaccine

-- END --

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2771 **Hearing Date:** July 1, 2026
Author: Committee on Business and Professions
Version: June 25, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Subject: California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009.

SUMMARY

This bill extends the sunset date for the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) until January 1, 2031, and makes additional technical changes, statutory improvements, and policy reforms in response to issues raised during the Bureau's sunset review process.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (Act) until January 1, 2027, and requires the Bureau to, among other things, review, investigate and approve private postsecondary institutions, programs and courses of instruction pursuant to the Act, and authorizes the Bureau to take formal actions against an institution/school to ensure compliance with the Act and even seek closure of an institution/school if determined necessary. The Act requires unaccredited degree granting institutions to be accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The Act also provides for specified disclosures and enrollment agreements for students, requirements for cancellations, withdrawals, and refunds, and that the Bureau shall administer the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to provide refunds to students affected by the possible closure of an institution/school. (Education Code § 94800 et seq.)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes the Bureau, upon receipt of any of the notifications required when an out-of-state private postsecondary educational institution enrolls a California student or in response to a complaint submitted to the Bureau about the institution, to request from the institution and the institution is required to provide, information necessary to determine whether the institution's registration should be revoked or have conditions placed upon it.

- 2) Clarifies that the religious school exemption does not include secular programming or career prep programs that have religious perspectives or verbiage to references in the titles or description of those programs.
- 3) Modifies the process for which an institution that is exempt from the Act may request exemption verification from the bureau by further authorizing the Bureau to approve the request, or determine that it is unable to verify the exemption and prohibits the Bureau from granting a verification of exemption to:
 - a) An institution that previously held an approval to operate and has an outstanding citation or fine, or is under discipline.
 - b) An institution that offers one or more programs designed to lead to licensure that does not hold approval from the pertinent licensing body or bodies.
- 4) Specifies that the Bureau's determination pertaining to a verification of exemption is not an adverse administrative action and is not subject to appeal, and that the verification of exemption is not required to operate as an exempt institution.
- 5) Modifies minimum operating standards for an institution by requiring an institution offering a degree to be accredited by one or more accreditation agencies, with the scope of that accreditation covering the offering of all degree programs instead of at least one of its programs.
- 6) Clarifies that the existing exemption for nondegree programs that charge less than \$2,500 does not apply to institutions that provide any training or curriculum for Class A, B, or C commercial driving license, except for employer-administered commercial driving license education programs for entities employing 250 or more commercial driving license drivers in the state.
- 7) Limits the flight instruction exemptions to only those that provide instruction consistent with federal regulations.
- 8) Adds, previously owned, controlled, or managed an institution that closed without complying with legal requirements to provide refunds to impacted students or appropriately preserve and make available records, to the reasons for which an institution may be denied an application for an approval to operate.
- 9) Conditions for provisional approval to operate status for an unaccredited institution seeking to offer degree programs on the following:
 - a) Not offering more than two degree programs during the term of its provisional approval to operate degree programs.
 - b) Limit enrollment of students on student visas to no more than 25 percent of total enrollment in any provisionally approved degree program.
- 10) Authorizes the Bureau, within the first four years, instead of two years, of issuance of the provisional approval to operate degree programs, to empanel a

- visiting committee to review the institution's accreditation plan and also any related documents or materials as determined by the visiting committee.
- 11) Allows the Bureau to terminate, instead of suspending, an institution's provisional approval status that fails to comply with approval to operate requirements, as specified, and imposes a 2-year moratorium from reapplying for provisional approval status after termination.
 - 12) Authorizes the Bureau to terminate, instead of suspending, an institution's provisional approval to operate degree programs that were issued due to the losing accreditation when failing to comply with provisional approval requirements.
 - 13) Clarifies that an approval to operate only be granted after the Bureau has determined that the applicant has satisfied the minimum operating standards.
 - 14) Prohibits, for institutions that have been granted approval to operate by means of accreditation, a nondegree program offered by that institution not within the scope of accreditation from being included as an approved program without the express written consent of the institution's accrediting agency.
 - 15) Adds the "addition of a separate branch," regardless of distance, and "withholding of any documentation for licensure, certification, or eligibility to sit for related examinations as a means of collecting a debt or because the student owes a debt," to the list of changes considered substantive changes to an approval to operate.
 - 16) Prohibits an institution from withholding proof of training documentation because the student owes a debt or as a tool for debt collection.
 - 17) Adds to the list of materials an institution is required to provide a prospective student prior to enrollment, a handbook, or other student facing materials (if they have it), that provide additional clarity about the information or policies required to be included in their catalog. The bill also adds to this disclosure list a statement regarding a student's obligation to repay a loan and the manner in which that amount may be adjusted, as specified.
 - 18) Adds "a description of the method of delivery that will be used for instruction in the educational program" and a statement regarding a student's obligation to repay loan and manner to which that amount maybe adjusted, to information that must be disclosed to students in the enrollment agreement.
 - 19) Modifies other institutional disclosure of information requirements, related to the institution's current catalog, college financing plan, and credit contract arrangements, as specified.
 - 20) Makes the institution's recipient of proceeds from a credit contract that does not contain the required disclosure a violation of the Act.

- 21) Makes debt voidable if, at the time of evidence of indebtedness, that institution did not hold an approval to operate or valid out of state registration with the Bureau or if the educational program is discontinued, canceled, or if the institution closes before completion of the educational programs.
- 22) Requires institutions to notify the Bureau of investigations by other oversight entities, increased regulatory oversight or monitoring, bankruptcy filings, felony criminal charges involving the institution or its leadership, and certain civil actions and arbitrations alleging violations of education, consumer protection, or fraud laws. The bill further requires institutions to provide documentation related to qualifying judgments and settlements, narrows the definitions of “investigation” and “oversight entity”, and removes the existing citation provision in favor of specifying that noncompliance constitutes a material violation, and authorizes the Bureau to impose enforcement actions, including citation, probation, suspension, or revocation of the institution’s approval to operate.
- 23) Makes various modifications to the STRF, including:
 - a) Clarifying that the STRF relieves or mitigates economic loss suffered by a student in connection with enrollment.
 - b) Establishing that the Bureau may rely on findings by an oversight entity, as specified, when determining if there is a significant decline in the quality or value of education of a program more than 120 days before closure that a student is eligible for a refund under STRF.
 - c) Establishing that a student is eligible for a refund under STRF can be a student whom a government body, at any point, designates the student as eligible for relief under a program that addresses unlawful activity or closure, including, but not limited to, a refund, restoration of benefits, or loan discharge program such as federal “Closed School Discharge,” “False Certification,” or “Borrower Defense” programs.
 - d) Establishing that a student is eligible for a refund under STRF who has been awarded restitution, a refund, or other relief, including, but not limited to, an enforcement action, settlement agreement, debt relief determination, or monetary award by an arbitrator or court, based on unlawful activity by an institution or representative of an institution, but who has been unable to collect the award from the institution or obtain debt cancellation.
 - e) Specifying that, in making a determination about student eligibility and economic loss, in addition to evidence submitted with an application, the Bureau may consider all available evidence, including, but not limited to, evidence obtained in the Bureau’s investigation and enforcement functions and evidence available to the Bureau that is obtained in the course of oversight and enforcement actions by an accreditor, other government agency, or private adjudication. The Bureau will take into account the availability of records and may accept an attestation or other substantiation as deemed appropriate.

- 24) Specifies that, in determining the amount of STRF assessments to collect from each student as specified, the Bureau will strive to maintain a fund balance in the STRF between \$15 million and \$25 million.
- 25) Requires institutions, pursuant to regulations adopted by the Bureau, to provide certain information, such as student records and transcripts, or a plan for those records, as specified.
- 26) Removes an annual reporting requirement disaggregating temporary restraining orders, interim suspension orders, and disciplinary actions taken by the Bureau.
- 27) Specifies that the Bureau is to additionally cite any person offering or providing public educational programs without proper approval to operate issued by the Bureau, as specified.
- 28) Specifies that each institution will be deemed to have authorized, in addition to its accrediting agency, any accrediting agency from which it is pursuing accreditation, to provide the Bureau, the Attorney General, any district attorney, city attorney, or the Student Aid Commission, within 30 days of written notice, copies of all documents and other material concerning the institution that are maintained by the accrediting agency.
- 29) Establishes that an accrediting agency must provide the Bureau, the Attorney General, a district attorney, a city attorney, or the California Student Aid Commission with information within 30 days, as specified, for institutions accredited by *or in pursuit of accreditation* by that accrediting agency.
- 30) Requires the Bureau to provide written reports, as specified, to the Legislature annually, instead of every six months, and participate in all oversight hearings conducted by the appropriate policy committees and budget subcommittees of the Senate and Assembly.
- 31) Extends the Bureau's sunset until January 1, 2031.
- 32) Specifies that no reimbursement is required, as specified, because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, as specified.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "this bill is the sunset review vehicle for the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, authored by the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions. The bill extends the Bureau's sunset date and enacts technical changes, statutory improvements, and policy reforms in response to issues raised during the Bureau's sunset review oversight process"
- 2) **California Private Postsecondary Education Act.** The state's program for regulation of private postsecondary and vocational education institutions has

historically been plagued with problems. During the late 1980's, California developed a reputation as the "diploma mill capital of the world."

After numerous legislative attempts to remedy the laws and structure governing regulation of private postsecondary institutions, AB 48 (Portantino, Chapter 310, Statutes of 2009) was enacted to establish the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (Act), which took effect January 1, 2010. The Act provided the regulatory framework for oversight of private postsecondary educational institutions operating with a physical presence in California.

The Act requires all unaccredited colleges in California to be approved by the Bureau, and all nationally accredited colleges to comply with numerous student protections. It also establishes prohibitions on false advertising and inappropriate recruiting. The Act requires disclosure of critical information to students such as program outlines, graduation and job placement rates, and license examination information, and ensures colleges justify those figures. The Act also guarantees students can complete their educational objectives if their institution closes its doors while providing the Bureau with enforcement powers necessary to protect consumers.

In 2014, SB 1247 (Lieu, Chapter 840, Statutes of 2014) amended the Act to require degree-granting institutions to be accredited, prohibit an institution that participates in federal veterans' aid funding from claiming an exemption from the Act, and expanded the use of STRF payments to cover economic loss.

The Act was subsequently amended in 2015, SB 1192 (Hill, Chapter 593, Statutes of 2015), to extend the Bureau sunset date until 2021. SB 1192, among other things, required an out-of-state online institution to register with and pay a fee to the Bureau, extended the sunset date for a degree-granting institution to obtain accreditation, increased certain institutional fees, and established the Office of Student Assistance and Relief to provide outreach and individualized assistance to students impacted by unlawful activities or closure of a Bureau-approved institution.

SB 802 (Roth, Chapter 552, Statutes of 2021) made various changes to the Act, including an extension until January 1, 2023. SB 802 also updated various definitions and exemption criteria, allowed the Bureau to extend deadlines by which approved institutions must be accredited according to certain conditions, and made various other changes intended to strengthen the Bureau's role in protecting students.

Most recently, SB 1433 (Roth, Chapter 544, Statutes of 2022), extended the sunset date to January 1, 2027, defined "physical presence," exempted certain programs, created a pathway for accredited institutions whose accreditors lose federal recognition to continue operating; authorized the Bureau to deny applications for known violators of the law, allowed for regulation of out-of-state public institutions, and added five new prohibited business practices.

- 3) **Sunset review recommendations.** On March 17, 2026, the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, the Assembly Committee on Business and

Professions, the Senate Committee on Education, and the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development jointly held a Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education Sunset Review Hearing. Discussed in this hearing were recommendations made by the Bureau in their 2026 Sunset Review Report, which identified 28 new issues (in addition to 15 issues identified in their 2021 Sunset Report). The Committees produced a background paper, which included staff recommendations for the Committees on 38 separate issues, including many that were identified in the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education Sunset Review Report. This bill incorporates 23 of the Bureau's 28 recommendations.

- 4) **Standards for application review.** Existing law requires the Bureau to independently verify all information submitted by applicants seeking an approval to operate. According to the Bureau, this requirement is impractical given the volume and complexity of information submitted and diverts resources from higher-risk oversight activities. Existing law also requires applicants to demonstrate the "capacity" to meet minimum operating standards rather than actually meeting those standards. The Bureau recommended eliminating the independent verification requirement and requiring applicants to satisfy the minimum operating standards before an approval to operate is granted. This bill responds to the identified issues by removing the independent verification requirement and clarifying that the Bureau may grant an approval to operate only after determining that the applicant has satisfied the minimum operating standards.
- 5) **Issues relate to accreditation.** Accreditation serves as a baseline measure of institutional quality. Institutions approved by means of accreditation are generally not subject to the same review process as other institutions because the Bureau relies on institutional accreditation as evidence of educational quality. During the sunset review, the Bureau noted that some institutions have offered nondegree programs that fall outside the scope of their accreditor's review, leaving those programs without meaningful oversight. The Bureau recommended limiting approval by means of accreditation to programs within the accreditor's approved scope and requiring accreditation to cover all degree programs offered by an institution. This measure attempts to address this issue by requiring institutions offering degree programs to maintain accreditation covering all degree programs and prohibiting nondegree programs outside the scope of accreditation from being deemed approved unless the institution's accrediting agency provides express written consent.

Additionally, the Bureau recommended expanding its access to accrediting agency records to support its oversight. Existing law deems the institution to have authorized its accrediting agency to provide records to the Bureau upon request. This bill expands that authorization to include any accrediting agency from which the institution is pursuing accreditation and requires those accrediting agencies to provide requested records to the Bureau and specified enforcement agencies within 30 days of written notice.

- 6) **Oversight of unaccredited degree-granting institutions.** Existing law provides a pathway for unaccredited institutions to operate degree programs

while pursuing accreditation through provisional status. During the sunset review, the Bureau identified several concerns with the provisional approval process, including institutions repeatedly restarting the accreditation timeline, enrolling large numbers of international students who may be particularly vulnerable as their visa status depends on continued enrollment, and statutory provisions that imply provisional approval may be reinstated after termination. This bill addresses these concerns by limiting provisionally approved institutions to no more than two degree programs, capping enrollment of students on visas at 25 percent of each provisionally approved degree program, extending the timeline for visiting committee reviews from two to four years, imposing a two-year waiting period before an institution may reapply for provisional approval following termination or surrender. This measure also replaces statutory references to “suspension” with “termination” for provisionally approved degree programs that fail to achieve accreditation, reflecting that those programs are no longer eligible to operate.

- 7) **Exemptions from the Act.** During the sunset review, the Bureau reported that various exemptions have been interpreted more broadly than intended, allowing some entities to qualify for exemptions that may extend beyond the Legislature’s original intent while offering programs that closely resemble regulated educational programs. The Bureau also reported receiving requests for verification of exemption from entities that use those determinations to imply state approval. This bill narrows several exemptions by clarifying the scope of religious exemptions, limiting flight instruction exemptions to programs operating under specified federal requirements, restricting certain commercial driver’s license training exemptions, improving verification of exemption process, and establishing additional conditions under which the Bureau may deny or decline to issue a verification of exemption.
- 8) **Student consumer protections.** Multiple recommendations in the sunset review focused on areas where existing law could better protect students from financial and educational harm. Many of the proposed changes focused on ensuring students receive complete and accurate information before enrolling, are not prevented from obtaining records needed for employment or licensure, and have access to appropriate remedies when institutions engage in unlawful conduct or cease operations. This bill aims to address those issues by updating many of the Act’s consumer protection provisions to improve disclosures, preserve student access to educational records, and improve available student remedies. Specifically, it makes changes requiring institutions to provide additional student-facing materials before enrollment, updating enrollment agreement and financial disclosure requirements, prohibiting institutions from withholding documentation needed for professional licensure because of an outstanding debt, clarifying student record preservation requirements, expanding eligibility for STRF claims, and updating consumer credit contract requirements to better align with federal law.
- 9) **Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF).** STRF provides financial relief to eligible students who suffer economic losses due to school closures or institutional misconduct. Under current law, when the STRF balance exceeds \$25 million, the Bureau is required to temporarily stop collecting from institutions,

and when the STRF balance drops below \$20 million, the Bureau is to resume collecting. In 2015, the STRF fee was fifty cents per every one thousand dollars in institutional charges assessed on a student, the funds exceeded the \$25 million threshold, and the Bureau stopped collecting and amended the regulations to a collection rate of zero. In February 2021, the STRF dropped below the \$20 million threshold, and the Bureau resumed collection of the fifty cents per thousand dollars in March 2021. The Bureau has since paused assessments after the fund again reached the statutory collection threshold. During sunset review, the Bureau explained that the current \$20 million to \$25 million collection range creates administrative challenges because assessments cannot be stopped immediately, and the statutory cap does not account for pending claims. The Bureau also identified a number of issues that may delay relief for eligible students. In the oversight hearing background paper, committee staff recommended clarifying that economic losses need only be connected to a student's enrollment, expanding eligibility to recognize certain federal student loan discharges and other governmental enforcement actions as evidence of institutional misconduct, and allowing the Bureau to rely on attestations and other available evidence when institutional records are unavailable. Staff also recommended providing greater flexibility in managing the STRF balance by allowing the Bureau to maintain the fund between \$15 million and \$25 million, rather than requiring assessments to stop and restart at fixed thresholds, and clarifying that otherwise eligible students remain eligible for STRF even when assessments are temporarily paused.

This bill implements these proposed changes by clarifying STRF eligibility standards, expanding the types of evidence the Bureau may consider when determining eligibility and economic loss, authorizing reliance on findings by other government entities and private adjudications, permitting attestations when records are unavailable, and directing the Bureau to strive to maintain the STRF balance between \$15 million and \$25 million. This bill also clarifies that students are not disqualified from receiving STRF relief solely because they enrolled during a period when STRF assessments were suspended. These changes are intended to make STRF administration more predictable while ensuring students are not burdened by administrative timing.

- 10) **Oversight related changes.** The Bureau recommended other statutory changes to improve its ability to oversee regulated institutions, respond to emerging risks, and coordinate with other oversight entities. This bill seeks to support the Bureau's oversight authority by expanding information sharing requirements among institutions, accreditation agencies, and government entities, requiring institutions to report specified investigations and enforcement actions, increasing penalties for unapproved operations, and reducing the Legislature's reporting requirement from 6 months to annual, while maintaining oversight hearings.
- 11) **Remaining funding issue.** The Bureau's main source of revenue is an annual institution fee, based on a percentage of annual revenue reported by licensed institutions. Currently, the Bureau's fund has a significant structural imbalance - annual expenditures exceed annual revenue intake, which draws down the balance of the fund. The fund's balance has been declining over the last several

years. According to the Bureau's Sunset Review Report, expenditures have exceeded revenues for many years, requiring loans and General Fund support to maintain operations. The Bureau recommended changes to its fee structure to restore long-term solvency. However, the proposed adjustments are not included in this measure. Committee staff understands that conversations are ongoing regarding the Bureau's funding structure to ensure it has sufficient resources to carry out its oversight and enforcement responsibilities, including those adopted under this bill.

- 12) **Heard by the Senate Business Professions and Economic Development Committee.** The Bureau is positioned within the Department of Consumer Affairs. As such, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Business Professions and Economic Development Committee. This bill was heard by that Committee on June 29.

SUPPORT

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
The Institute for College Access & Success

OPPOSITION

None received

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