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California State Senate

EDUCATION



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AGENDA

Wednesday, August 26, 2026
Upon Call of the Chair -- 1021 O Street, Room 2200

PURSUANT TO SENATE RULE 29.10 (b)

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-------|--|
| 1. | AB 1581 | Ramos | Pupils: data reporting: American Indian and Alaska Native pupils. |
| 2. | AB 1969 | Bonta | California Community Schools Partnership Program: Promise Neighborhoods. |

PURSUANT TO SENATE RULE 29.10 (d)

- | | | | |
|----|--------|----------|---|
| 3. | SB 549 | Allen | Heritage schools: enrollment and notice. |
| 4. | SB 632 | Arreguín | Community colleges: California College Promise. |

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1581	Hearing Date:	August 26, 2026
Author:	Ramos		
Version:	August 21, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: Pupils: data reporting: American Indian and Alaska Native pupils

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 requires the California Department of Education (CDE), beginning on July 1, 2028, to annually post statewide aggregate educational outcome data for the prior school year for American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) pupils, as defined, on the CDE's website, including, but not limited to, the number of pupils, the academic achievement of pupils, and the rate of suspension, expulsion, and chronic absenteeism of pupils.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes a longitudinal data system known as the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) to:
 - a) Provide school districts and the CDE access to data necessary to comply with federal reporting requirements.
 - b) Provide a better means of evaluating educational progress and investments over time.
 - c) Provide local educational agencies (LEAs) with the data needed to improve pupil achievement, including college and career readiness.
 - d) Provide an efficient, flexible, and secure means of maintaining longitudinal statewide pupil level data between and among the state's educational segments and operational tools, as defined.
 - e) Facilitate the ability of the state to publicly report data.
 - f) Ensure that any data access provided to researchers, as required, is provided only to the extent that the data access is in compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. (Education Code (EC) § 60900)

- 2) Requires, pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, specified LEAs to consult with appropriate officials from American Indian tribes or tribal organizations approved by the tribes located in the area served by the LEA prior to its submission of a required plan or application for a covered program under the Act. (United States Code, Title 20 § 7918)
- 3) Establishes the California American Indian education centers program to serve as community-based educational resource centers for American Indian pupils, parents, guardians, and public schools in order to promote the academic and cultural achievement of American Indian pupils. (EC § 33381)
- 4) Encourages LEAs to form California Indian Education Task Forces with California Indian tribes local to their region or tribes historically located in the region. (EC § 33391)
- 5) Requires the CDE, by June 1, 2022, in collaboration with, and subject to the approval of, the executive director of the State Board of Education, to use specified funding to enter into a contract with a county office of education (COE) or a consortium of COEs for the purposes of developing a model curriculum related to Native American studies by September 1, 2025. Requires that the model curriculum be housed on the platform developed and maintained by the California History-Social Science Project. (EC § 51226.9)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Defines “pupils”, for purposes of this bill, as pupils who identify as AI/AN only, and pupils who identify as AI/AN in addition to another race or ethnicity.
- 2) Requires the CDE, beginning with July 1, 2028, to post statewide aggregate educational outcome data for the prior school year for AI/AN pupils, as specified, on CDE’s website every year on July 1, which includes:
 - a) The number of pupils.
 - b) The academic achievement of pupils, as determined by quantitative data currently collected.
 - c) The rate of suspension and expulsion of pupils.
 - d) The rate of chronic absenteeism of pupils.
 - e) The four- and five-year cohort graduation rates of pupils.
- 3) Requires CDE to use data, where appropriate, reported pursuant to existing law to meet the requirements of this bill.

- 4) Makes findings and declarations related to the importance of accurate identification of AI/AN pupils in California.

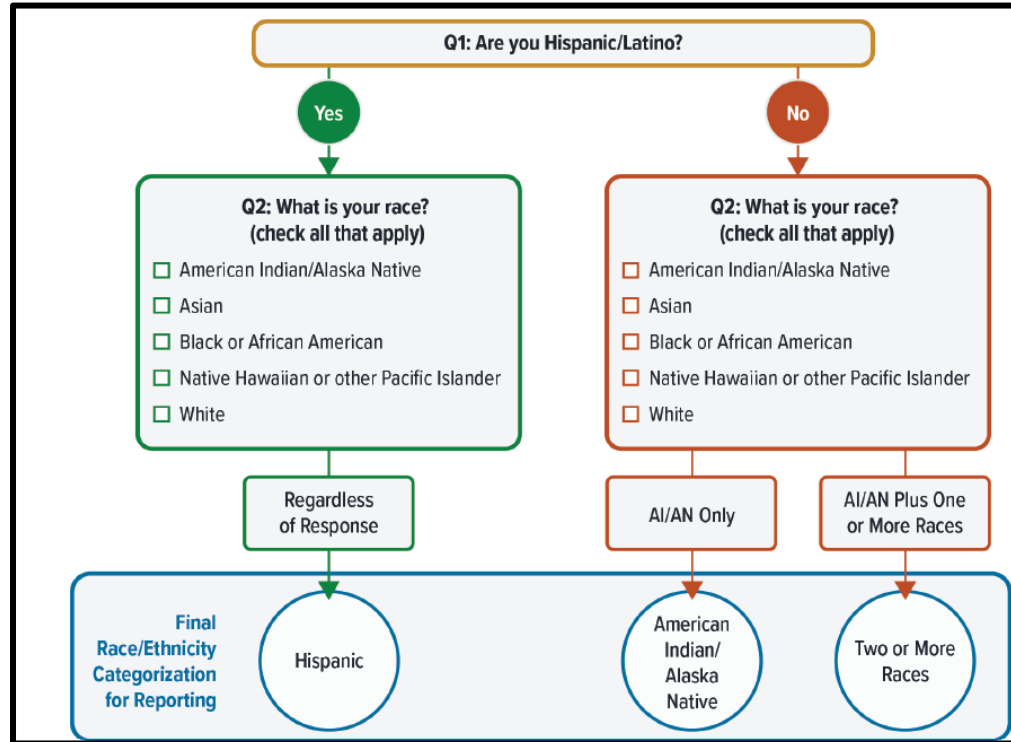
STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Due to federal guidelines, California is undercounting almost 90% of its Native American students. That is a grave and obscenely ridiculous undercount of a population that is severely underserved. The undercount results in inadequate allocation of resources to serve these students with the culturally responsive programs they need to succeed and thrive in school and broader community. Our state should not continue a centuries-old tradition of neglect or worse to its First People. By requiring this report, we can utilize an inclusive count of Native students on important metrics which could help inform policy decisions.”
- 2) ***A 2023 report highlighted issues with accurate representation of AI/AN national and state pupil data, which is collected and reported based on federal guidelines and standards.*** A 2023 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the Indigenous Education State Leaders Network (IESLN)—called “Indigenous Students Count: A Landscape Analysis of American Indian and Alaska Native Student Data in U.S. K–12 Public Schools”—found that though Indigenous students in the country are estimated to be about 1% of the K–12 student population in public schools, the “undercounting of Indigenous students may be as high as 70% nationwide.” The author has indicated that this bill is aimed at addressing the findings of this report.
- 3) ***Report focuses on two issues for accurately representing AI/AN pupils in national and state data.*** The AIR and IESLN report states that in the K–12 public education system, race and ethnicity data are collected and reported using guidelines adopted by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) in 2007 and aligned with the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB’s) 1997 standards. Specifically, in 1997, the OMB introduced the following format known as the “two-part question”:
 - Are you Hispanic or Latino?
 - What is your race? (check all that apply)

The report indicates two primary mechanisms for which AI/AN pupils are underrepresented in national and state data (see the graphic below from the report for a visual representation of this undercount):

- For a parent or guardian of a pupil answering “yes” to the first part of the “two-part question”, then *the pupil is considered Hispanic or Latino regardless of how they answer the question about race*. This means an AI/AN pupil who also identifies as Hispanic or Latino is included as part of the count of Hispanic or Latino pupils and is not recorded as AI/AN in demographic data.

- For a parent or a guardian of a pupil answering “no” to the first part of the “two-part question”, but identifying two or more races, then *the pupil is considered in the “two or more races” category only*. This means a pupil who identifies their race as both AI/AN and White is part of the count of multi-racial pupils and is not recorded as AI/AN in demographic data.



The report indicates that a more “inclusive” definition of AI/AN would count students who are indicating that their race is AI/AN, even if they are also indicating they are Hispanic or Latino or if they identify as multi-racial.

- 4) ***The federal government planned changes in March 2024 to its collection and reporting of federal data on race and ethnicity, but implementation has stalled under the current Administration.*** Beginning in June 2022, the OMB began working on a set of revisions to its Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15), which are its standards for maintaining, collecting, and presenting federal data on race and ethnicity, to develop recommendations for improving the quality and usefulness of federal race and ethnicity data. These revisions would be the first to SPD 15 since 1997. By March 2024, the OMB published key revisions to SPD 15, including:
- Using one combined question for race and ethnicity (instead of the “two-part question”), and encouraging respondents to select as many options as apply to how they identify.
 - Adding Middle Eastern or North African as a new minimum category. (The new set of minimum race and/or ethnicity categories would be: AI/AN; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and White.)

- c) Requiring the collection of additional details beyond the minimum required race and ethnicity categories for most situations, to ensure further disaggregation in the collection, tabulation, and presentation of data when useful and appropriate.

One of the primary goals of SPD 15 is to ensure consistent and comparable race and ethnicity data across the federal government. To help meet that goal, the revisions to SPD 15 instruct federal agencies to begin updating their surveys and administrative forms as quickly as possible, and federal agencies were given until 2029 to adopt these changes, ahead of the 2030 Census. However, according to the CDE, guidance that the USDE had intended to send to state educational agencies in September 2025 was indicated to be delayed due to the federal shutdown. It is currently unclear when CDE and other state educational agencies will receive updated guidance on SPD 15 from the federal government, which would govern data collection and reporting of these data, especially given the significant reductions in force at USDE and the President's plans to abolish the department.

Moreover, according to a December 2025 article from National Public Radio, the OMB stated that the Administration has started a new review of the SPD 15 standards and how the 2024 revisions were approved, signaling the possibility that the Administration may not adopt the 2024 revisions to SPD 15 for federal government data more broadly.

- 5) ***Federal guidelines ultimately dictate how race and ethnicity data is collected by the states.*** The author identifies an important issue regarding how AI/AN data is counted and how the current rules aggregating the data can lead to a misrepresentation or underrepresentation of AI/AN data, especially given how that data informs federal program allocations.

Due to federal guidelines on how states must collect and report data related to race and ethnicity, the State of California is limited in how it can address this problem from a data collection and reporting standpoint, specifically. Federal guidelines exist, in part, because of a desire for the data to be comparable across states and to build a national dataset with all states using the same standards. The AIR and IESLN report highlights a national problem that points to federal requirements as its root cause, not a problem that is specific to what the state is doing or that the state could fix on its own. If the State of California decided to deviate from federal guidelines (i.e., not ask the "two-part question"), the state would be out of compliance, which could put federal funds for CDE at risk. Absent changes at the federal level, state legislation would not be able to ultimately change how these data are collected and reported to address the underrepresentation of AI/AN pupils that is referenced in the 2023 report.

However, even if data collection and reporting is subject to federal guidelines, CDE and districts can still look at underlying data to shine a light and report on data using other definitions of race and ethnicity data, including for AI/AN pupils. This bill attempts to do that by requiring CDE to post statewide aggregate educational

outcome data for AI/AN pupils, by using a revised definition of AI/AN pupils that is considered more inclusive.

For an example of how this may work, AI/AN pupils—whose data is currently reported to the federal government as Hispanic or Latino or as multi-racial—would be included in the CDE’s annual post of statewide educational outcome data on AI/AN pupils, which would be more consistent with the recommendations of the 2023 report.

SUPPORT

Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (source)
California Charter Schools Association
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Rancho Santiago Community College District
SEIU California
Yurok Tribe

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1969	Hearing Date:	August 26, 2026
Author:	Bonta		
Version:	August 21, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: California Community Schools Partnership Program: Promise Neighborhoods.

SUMMARY

This bill requires a local educational agency (LEA) that elects to retain up to 10% of California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) funds for its eligible schoolsites to use those funds in a way that is consistent with the Community School framework. The bill also requires LEAs to, among other things, use those funds to serve as a network lead for multiple eligible schoolsites located in a Promise Neighborhood.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes, in federal law, the Promise Neighborhood program, which provides grants to nonprofit organizations, tribal organizations, or institutions of higher education, which, together with partners, develop and implement plans to significantly improve outcomes of children living in a given neighborhood. (Title 20 United States Code (USC) § 7274)
- 2) Defines “community school” to mean a public school serving preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, with strong and intentional community partnerships ensuring pupil learning and whole child and family development, and specifically includes the following:
 - a) Integrated supports services, including the coordination of trauma-informed health, mental health, and social services that ensure coordination and support with county and LEA resources and nongovernmental organizations, and early screening and intervention for learning and other needs.
 - b) Family, pupil, schoolsite staff, and community engagement, which may include home visits, home-school collaboration, culturally responsive community partnerships to strengthen family well-being and stability, and school climate surveys.
 - c) Collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators, including professional development to transform school culture and climate, that centers on pupil learning and supports mental and behavioral health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, restorative

justice, and other key areas relating to pupil learning and whole child and family development.

- d) Extended learning time and opportunities, including before and after school care and summer programs. (Education Code (EC) § 8901 (b))
- 3) Defines “Promise Neighborhood” to mean a targeted geographic area served by the Promise Neighborhoods program, as authorized by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95), or a collaborative network of service providers that serves geographically defined areas or neighborhoods and focuses on revitalizing economically-disadvantaged communities through the establishment of a cradle-to-career network of services aimed at improving the health, safety, and education of the occupants in the defined area. (EC § 8901(m))
- 4) Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt and maintain an implementation Framework for the California Community Schools Partnership Act that is responsive to evidence and research on the CCSPP model and outcomes, which shall include, but not be limited to all of the following:
- a) The statutory pillars of integrated supports services; family, pupil, schoolsite staff, and community engagement; collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators; and extended learning time and opportunities.
 - b) The key conditions of learning, cornerstone commitments, and proven practices consistent with successful community school research, including, but not limited to, embedded instructional and service coordination practices, shared governance, community engagement, and integration with other community-based approaches like Promise Neighborhoods.
 - c) Required data, reporting, and accountability elements necessary for schoolsites, LEAs, and a system of support for continuous improvement, including, but not limited to, measurable indicators for shared governance, community engagement, and integration of services at the county and regional levels.
 - d) Differentiated elements for elementary and secondary community school models.
 - e) Differentiated measures for LEA and schoolsite readiness to implement a new community school, and achieve certification, as specified.
 - f) Key practices for county coordinators and regional transformational assistance centers. (EC § 8901.5)
- 5) Requires the SBE to review and adopt, as necessary, an updated framework, as specified, on or before January 1, 2030, and every five years thereafter, in response to specified CCSPP evaluation results and certification

recommendations, and other research on the program's pupil and system outcomes. (EC § 8901.5)

- 6) Appropriates, for the 2026–27 fiscal year, an initial sum of one billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) from the General Fund to the California Department of Education (CDE) to administer the CCSPP (EC § 8903(b))
- 7) Authorizes an LEA to retain up to 10% of funds awarded pursuant to the California Community School Partnership Program for its eligible schoolsites each fiscal year. Requires that those funds be used to administer community schools established at eligible schoolsites, manage professional learning and networking, and coordinate services and funding streams for community schools under the LEA with eligible schoolsites. (EC § 8903(f))

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Makes a series of legislative findings and declarations on the importance of collaborative approaches such as neighborhood-based partnerships, regional place-based partnerships, and community schools in ensuring that a continuum of services reach children in communities where they are needed the most.
- 2) Establish the intent of the Legislature that the vital contributions provided by community-based and regional networks be brought to scale so that all children and families have the opportunities and continuum of services needed to break the cycle of poverty.
- 3) Requires LEAs that elect to retain up to 10% of CCSPP funds for its eligible schoolsites to use those funds in a way that is consistent with the Community Schools Framework.
- 4) Requires LEAs, among other things, use those retained funds to serve as a network lead for multiple eligible schoolsites located in a Promise Neighborhood.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “California has made historic investments in our children through community schools, universal prekindergarten, expanded learning, behavioral health, school meals, and other programs designed to help children thrive. Yet too often, these investments operate in separate systems, leaving schools and families to navigate a complicated web of programs on their own. AB 1969, the It Takes a Village Act of 2026, builds on California’s historic \$1 billion investment in community schools by providing technical clarification that strengthens the partnerships and infrastructure necessary to make that investment successful over the long term.

“AB 1969 recognizes that community partnerships and coordination are needed. The bill strengthens coordination between local educational agencies, community-based organizations, county offices of education, and Promise

Neighborhoods, and allows LEAs to use existing administrative funding to serve as a network lead for multiple community school sites within a Promise Neighborhood. By better coordinating the resources we already invest in children and families, AB 1969 helps ensure students can access the academic, health, behavioral health, and other supports they need to succeed. It takes a village to raise a child, and AB 1969 helps ensure California's public systems work like one."

- 2) ***Promise Neighborhoods.*** The Promise Neighborhood Initiative is a federal grant program that seeks to create cradle-to-career pipelines in communities historically impacted by poverty. Modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, Promise Neighborhoods serve as a place-based educational approach that connects community members with access to high-quality early care and education, smooth and effective transitions to K-12 schools, and pathways to postsecondary and career success.

Since the first cohort in 2011, Promise Neighborhood program funds have helped grantees establish 46 Promise Neighborhoods across the country, with 356 participating schools. California currently has ten Promise Neighborhood sites located in San Francisco's Mission District, Oakland, Hayward, Los Angeles, Chula Vista, San Diego, Corning, and Klamath River.

According to the California Promise Neighborhood Network, Promise Neighborhood investments have produced successful outcomes for children and families living in economically disadvantaged communities across California. Notable highlights include the following.

The Chula Vista + San Diego Promise Neighborhood

- 49,819 adults and 5,170 children served
- Achieved a 15% gain in average daily attendance rates for K-12 students and a 15% decrease in chronic absenteeism
- Improved kindergarten readiness 100% since 2023

Hayward Promise Neighborhood

- 7,375 adults and 29,212 children served
- Achieved a 5% increase in students' average daily attendance and a decrease in student absenteeism from 52.6% in 2023 to 23% in 2024

Mission Promise Neighborhood

- 15,970 adults and 17,855 children served
- Reduced chronic absences by 10%
- Increased kindergarten readiness by 9%

- 3) ***California Community Schools Partnership Program.*** As noted in the SBE's 2022 adopted California Community Schools Framework, a community school is any school serving pre-kindergarten through high school students using a whole-child approach, with an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. As a school improvement strategy, community school initiatives enable LEAs and

schools to work closely with educators, students, and families to understand and address the unique needs, assets, and aspirations of the school community.

Community schools often include four evidence-informed programmatic features, which are aligned and integrated into high-quality, rigorous teaching and learning practices and environments:

- a) Integrated support services;
- b) Family and community engagement;
- c) Collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators; and
- d) Extended learning time and opportunities.

Since the passage of the California Community Schools Partnership Act in 2021, the Legislature has allocated over \$4.1 billion for the CCSPP.

This year's Budget Act approved an additional \$1 billion in ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund for the CCSPP to expand the community school model to more school sites that have large concentrations of students from low-income families, English learners, and youth in foster care.

The CCSPP has long recognized Promise Neighborhoods as a compatible community-based approach, encouraged LEAs to develop partnerships with existing Promise Neighborhood lead agencies, and authorized LEAs that serve as network leads for multiple eligible schoolsites within a Promise Neighborhood to use CCSPP to support planning needs.

This bill amends language from the 2026 Budget Act to require an LEA that elects to retain up to 10% of CCSPP funds for administrative purposes to, among other things, use those funds to serve as a network lead for multiple eligible schoolsites located in a Promise Neighborhood.

4) ***Prior and related legislation.***

AB 1321 (Bonta, 2023) would have established the California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services Grant Program. AB 1321 was substantively similar to AB 1969 prior to its most recent amendments. AB 1321 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2517 (Bonta, 2022) would have created the California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services Grant Program to provide competitive awards to eligible entities to implement comprehensive, integrated continuum of C2C solutions. AB 2517 was vetoed by Governor Newsom with the following veto message:

"The author's goal of ensuring coordinated investments in services and supports to achieve better outcomes for children and families throughout

their lives is laudable, and I note that the 2022 Budget Act includes \$12 million one-time General Fund to support specified Promise Neighborhoods in California. However, there would be substantial costs to administer AB 2517 in addition to tens of millions of dollars in grant funding that would be necessary, neither of which are accounted for in the budget.”

AB 132 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 144, Statutes of 2021) establishes the C2C Data System to link data on student progress through education, workforce training, employment, health and social services; establishes a governing board comprised of 21 members; and establishes the Office of C2C Data within Government Operations Agency until July 1, 2026, among other things.

AB 932 (Levine, 2021) would have established the C2C Grant Program to administer public and private funds to address child poverty and achievement gaps in California children. AB 932 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 686 (Allen, 2019) would have enacted the California Promise Neighborhoods Act of 2019, which would have provided grants, administered by the State Department of Education, to implement a comprehensive integrated continuum of cradle-to-college-to-career solutions, including academic, health, and social programs. AB 686 was set to be heard in the Assembly Education Committee, but the hearing was canceled at the request of the author.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 549	Hearing Date:	August 26, 2026
Author:	Allen		
Version:	August 17, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	No
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: Heritage schools: enrollment and notice.

SUMMARY

This bill (1) authorizes heritage schools to serve children who are enrolled in transitional kindergarten (TK), effectively serving children who are at least 4 years old, instead of children who are at least 4 years and 9 months of age, and (2) requires heritage schools to provide notice to a child's parent or guardian stating that the California Department of Education (CDE) has no regulatory authority over heritage schools and does not monitor heritage school operations or instruction.

BACKGROUND

Existing law, effective January 1, 2027:

- 1) Defines a "heritage school" as a school that serves children who are at least 4 years and 9 months of age and no older than 18 years of age; who attend a public or private full-time day school; that maintains membership in a state or national cultural or language association; has regular hours of operation; does not operate out of a residential home; maintains in its possession a copy of the registration form electronically filed with the Education Commissioner; and which offers all of the following:
 - a) Education or academic tutoring, or both, in a world language.
 - b) Education on the culture, traditions, or history of a country other than the United States (U.S.).
 - c) Culturally enriching activities, including but not limited to, art, dancing, games, or singing, based on the culture or customs of a country other than the U.S. (Education Code (EC) § 33195.4)
- 2) Requires a person, firm, association, partnership, or corporation operating a heritage school to file an electronic registration form with the Education Commissioner annually in January, including the following information for that current year:
 - a) All names, whether real or fictitious, of the person, firm, association, partnership, or corporation under which it has done or is doing business.
 - b) Address and telephone number of the heritage school.

- c) Names and addresses of the directors and principal officers of the person, firm, association, partnership, or corporation.
 - d) School enrollment by grade span, number of teachers, and whether the school is coeducational or limited to boys or girls.
 - e) Assurances that records of the courses of study offered and the names, addresses, and qualifications of faculty members are maintained at the school and are true and accurate.
 - f) A criminal record summary for every employee.
 - g) An acknowledgement that the director and all employees are mandated reporters. (EC § 33195)
- 3) Prohibits the heritage school from expressing that the filing of the registration form represents that the State of California, the Education Commissioner, the State Board of Education (SBE), the CDE, or an accrediting agency has made an evaluation, recognition, approval, or endorsement of the school or course, unless this is an actual fact. (EC § 33195)
- 4) Specifies that the filing of the registration form does not grant a heritage school a right to receive state funding. (EC § 33195)
- 5) Prohibits a heritage school from employing a person who would be prohibited from employment by a public school district because of their conviction for any crime. (EC § 33195.1)
- 6) Requires the employees of an entity that has a contract with a heritage school that may have contact with students to submit or have submitted their fingerprints to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and prohibits those employees to come in contact with students until the DOJ has ascertained that the employee has not been convicted of a felony. (EC § 33195.2)
- 7) Establishes the Heritage Enrichment Resource Fund in the State Treasury, funded through registration fees for heritage schools, and authorizes the Education Commissioner to expend funds, upon appropriation, to process payments for the registration of heritage schools. (EC § 33195.5)
- 8) Requires the director of a heritage school to undergo at least 15 hours of health and safety training, including but not limited to the following topics: pediatric first aid, prevention of infectious diseases and immunizations, prevention of childhood injuries, and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). (EC § 33195.6)
- 9) Requires all employees and volunteers of a heritage school to be in good health, as verified by a health screening, including a test for tuberculosis; and requires students attending a heritage school to have access to working sinks, toilets, and drinking water; and not to have access to medication or cleaning supplies. (EC § 33195.6)

- 10) Requires a heritage school to not be subject to licensure by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and requires a heritage school to notify the parent or guardian upon the enrollment of their child that the heritage school is exempt from child care licensure and that attendance at a heritage school does not satisfy California's compulsory education requirements. (EC § 33195.6)
- 11) Defines "transitional kindergarten" as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. (EC § 48000)
- 12) Requires that a child be admitted to a kindergarten maintained by the school district at the beginning of a school year if the child will have their fifth birthday by September 1 of the school year. (EC § 48000)
- 13) Requires a school district or charter school, as a condition of receipt of apportionment for pupils in a TK program, ensure that a child who will have their fourth birthday by September 1 to be admitted to a TK program maintained by the school district or charter school. (EC § 48000)
- 14) Requires, commencing with the 2025-26 school year, to maintain an average of at least one adult for every 10 pupils for TK classrooms. (EC § 48000)
- 15) Requires each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years old to be subject to compulsory full-time education, unless specifically exempted. (EC § 48200)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes heritage schools to serve students who are enrolled in TK, in addition to children who are enrolled in kindergarten or grades 1 to 12, inclusive.
- 2) Requires heritage schools to provide a notice to the pupil's parent or guardian stating that CDE has no regulatory authority over heritage schools and does not monitor heritage school operations or instruction.
- 3) Makes technical and clarifying changes, including chaptering out changes.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "In 2021, California created universal transitional kindergarten (TK) so that all four-year-olds have access to free public TK. That commitment was pivotal in expanding access to early learning for children. Now that more four-year-olds are attending school, families must adjust their childcare plans for the gaps that may exist until a parent or guardian is available to pick them up, since the school day may not match work schedules."

The author continues, "Existing law establishes Heritage Schools as out-of-school programs that offer additional learning opportunities and activities based on a particular culture and language. However, existing law also establishes the

minimum age to attend these schools at four years and nine months old. With the establishment of universal TK, this law has not been updated to recognize the need for after-school programs for TK students. This bill will allow TK students to attend Heritage Schools and benefit from their after-school programming, while giving families another option for childcare.”

- 2) ***What are heritage schools?*** Existing law defines a heritage school as a school that serves children who are at least 4 years and 9 months of age and no older than 18 years of age and who also attend a public or private full-time day school. Heritage schools do not satisfy the state’s compulsory education requirements and therefore operate outside of compulsory education to offer supplemental instruction in the culture, traditions, or history, and language of a country other than the U.S. Many heritage schools also offer before school or after school programs. Heritage schools must file an electronic registration form with the Education Commissioner beginning January 1, 2027 (and previously with the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI)), and a list of heritage schools can be found on CDE’s website.

CDE’s database of heritage schools include programs ranging from those run by a Greek Orthodox church and a Chinese Baptist church, a Japanese language and cultural study program, a Hebrew school, and corporations that run before school and after school programs in many locations throughout the state. According to the registration data available from CDE from 2026, there are 1,011 heritage schools registered with CDE, with a total enrollment of 133,537 students, with 95% of these students enrolled in kindergarten through 6th grade and 5% in grades 7 to 12.

- 3) ***Heritage schools are not subject to state oversight—not from CDE nor CDSS.*** Consistent with existing law, CDE’s website indicates that the Education Commissioner (formerly the SPI) nor CDE evaluates, approves, recognizes, accredits, nor endorses any heritage school. CDE does not monitor heritage school operations, instruction, or the data submitted on a heritage school’s annual registration form. CDE’s only role with heritage schools is to maintain the heritage school registration form and process, which heritage schools are required to submit annually. Similarly, heritage schools are exempt from childcare licensing, so CDSS has no responsibility to recognize or monitor these schools or programs.

That being said, existing law outlines several requirements and expectations for heritage schools. Heritage schools must comply with numerous health and safety provisions, including:

- The director and all employees and contractors having contact with students must have background checks and would not be prohibited from employment by a public school district because of their conviction for any crime.
- The director and all employees must be mandated reporters and have received the necessary training.
- The director must receive 15 hours of training in health and safety topics, including first aid, CPR, and injury prevention.

- All employees and volunteers must be in good health as verified by a health screening, including a test for tuberculosis.
- Students must have access to working sinks, toilets, and drinking water.

In addition, a building operated by a heritage school, like any other privately owned building, must comply with the requirements imposed by the county, city, and other agencies within whose jurisdiction the building is located, and such requirements include zoning, health and safety codes, fire codes, and other local ordinances.

- 4) ***TK is now available to all 4-year-olds.*** Though a child's attendance in kindergarten is not compulsory, local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to offer kindergarten programs to age-eligible children, and existing law defines TK as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program. However, not every school site in a district is required to offer TK.

According to a report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) titled "California's Universal Prekindergarten Implementation, 2024-25"—which was a year before full TK implementation—94% of LEAs responding to a survey reported offering TK, and 70% of these offered TK at all applicable school sites. LEAs may offer TK as a part-day or full-day program, and the report notes that 85% of LEAs offered a full-day TK option, and 88% offered expanded learning programs for TK students to provide care for out-of-school hours.

Existing law requires that an LEA, as a condition of receipt of apportionment, ensure that a child who will have their fourth birthday by September 1 to be eligible to be admitted to a TK program. In the 2025-26 school year, a total of 213,313 children were enrolled in TK statewide, up from 177,570 in the 2024-25 school year. The LPI reports that, in 2024-25, this represented 55% of the TK-eligible population. The overall uptake of TK has declined through the period of expansion of the program in recent years, which may be due to lack of awareness of TK, differing family preferences and needs, or potential barriers to enrollment.

- 5) ***Supervision of 4-year-old children.*** The National Association for the Education of Young Children's recommended adult-to-child ratio in child care programs for 4-year-olds is 1:10. In California, existing law requires that TK classes have staffing of one adult for every 10 students as of 2025-26, and similarly, existing law requires a school offering before or after school programming through the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program to maintain a staff-to-pupil ratio of 1:10 if they are working with pupils in TK or kindergarten. Current regulations for contractors operating a California State Preschool Program serving 4-year-old children must maintain an adult-to-child ratio of 1:8. *The Committee may wish to consider the fact that heritage schools have no mandated adult-to-child ratios for serving children as young as 4 years old as proposed in this bill.*

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

AB 130 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 44, Statutes of 2021) expands the TK program beginning in the 2022-23 school year and achieves Universal TK eligibility by 2025-2026.

SB 1116 (Huff, Chapter 286, Statutes of 2010) requires heritage schools to file an electronic registration form with the SPI detailing specific information relative to personnel and the course of study, and requires heritage school employees to be fingerprinted.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 632	Hearing Date:	August 26, 2026
Author:	Arreguín		
Version:	August 19, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Michelle Nguyen		

Subject: Community colleges: California College Promise.

SUMMARY

This bill reduces the minimum unit requirement for a California community college (CCC) student to qualify for a California College Promise fee waiver from 12 units, or a full-time courseload, to 9 units. This bill also requires a CCC, as a condition of receiving program funds, to provide written notification to a student, upon issuing an initial fee waiver, on (1) the period of eligibility for a California College Promise fee waiver is limited to two academic years, (2) a description of the units a student needs per semester or academic year to complete an associate degree or certificate within two academic years, and (3) information on how to access other financial aid opportunities available to a student who has exceeded their two years of eligibility for a fee waiver.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the mission and function of the CCCs, 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 community college districts (CCDs) to charge students an enrollment fee of \$46 per unit per semester. (EC § 76300)
- 3) Provides for a fee waiver for certain types of students, including those who meet minimum academic and progress standards adopted by the Board of Governors

(BOG) and have incomes below certain thresholds established by the BOG or have demonstrated financial need pursuant to federal law. (EC § 76300)

- 4) Establishes the California College Promise, under the administration of the Chancellor of the CCCs, and requires the Chancellor, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to distribute funding to CCDs to fund colleges that meet specified requirements. (EC § 76396)
- 5) Authorizes a community college to use funding appropriated for the California College Promise to waive some or all of the fees for two academic years for first-time community college students and returning community college students, who are enrolled full time at the college, and who complete and submit either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act application (CADAA). (EC § 76396.3)
- 6) Defines “full time” as 12 or more semester units or the equivalent. (EC § 76396.3)
- 7) Permits that a student enrolled in fewer than 12 units may be deemed “full time”, for purposes of eligibility for the California College Promise, at the discretion of the institution if the student has been certified as “full time” by a staff person in the disabled student services program at the institution who is qualified to make such a designation. (EC § 76396.3)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires a community college, as a condition of receiving funding for the California College Promise, to provide a written notification to a student, upon issuing the student an initial fee waiver, that states the following:
 - a) A statement informing the student that the period of eligibility for a California College Promise fee waiver is limited to two academic years, as specified.
 - b) A description of the number of units a student needs to complete per semester or the quarterly equivalent, or the number of semester or quarterly units the student needs to complete per academic year, to complete an associate degree or certificate program within two academic years.
 - c) Information on how to access other financial aid opportunities available to a student who has exceeded their two years of eligibility for a fee waiver.
- 2) Reduces the minimum unit requirement for community college students to qualify for a California College Promise fee waiver from 12 units, or a full-time courseload, to 9 units.
- 3) Revises the definition of “full time” to be “eligible workload”, which means 9 or more semester units or the equivalent, for purposes of eligibility for the California College Promise.

- 4) Provides that a student enrolled in fewer than 9 units—instead of 12 units—may be certified as eligible for the California College Promise, at the discretion of the institution if the student has been certified as eligible, based on commitment by the student that is analogous to an eligible workload, by a staff person in the disabled student services program at the institution who is qualified to make such a designation.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** The author states, “I am proud to lead the fight to expand the California College Promise program to help our neediest students by expanding the ability of our community colleges to waive the fees for part-time students for two years. Existing law requires that a student be full time in order to receive a fee waiver through the program, which erroneously locks out our least advantaged students and perpetuates inequity and inequality at our community colleges.”
- 2) ***Statutory fees and fee waivers for the CCC system.*** At \$46 per unit, and with an annual average tuition of \$1,380 for full-time California resident students, the CCC system offers the lowest tuition in the nation, as of February 2026. Enrollment fees are waived for CCC students demonstrating financial need, which was almost half of CCC students, or over 1 million students, in 2024-25. For decades, this waiver was known as the BOG fee waiver and has existed since CCC enrollment fees were established in 1984. The fee waiver has since been renamed the California College Promise Grant—not to be confused with the separate California College Promise Program. A CCC student meeting specified income standards may qualify and may receive the waiver, so long as they are eligible to take courses; there is no minimum unit requirement, and the fee waiver is applied to any course for which a student must pay the enrollment fee.
- 3) ***The California College Promise was initially framed as “Free College” for first-time, full-time students.*** The California College Promise was established by AB 19 (Santiago, Chapter 735, Statutes of 2017). The program, broadly marketed as providing “free college”, allowed participating CCCs to waive some or all enrollment fees for one academic year for first-time, full-time community college students who completed and submitted a FAFSA or CADAA. Unlike the statutory fee waivers for CCC students demonstrating financial need, the California College Promise allowed CCCs to waive fees for students who did not demonstrate financial need but met other program criteria. Though some have critiqued the California College Promise for not being a means-tested program, others have indicated that the “free college” marketing have created interest and enthusiasm in CCCs that exceeds the costs of the program. In addition, program eligibility for the California College Promise focused on students who are enrolled full time, with the intent to expedite the time to degree for students in exchange for paying for a student’s tuition.
- 4) ***Student eligibility for the program’s fee waivers has expanded over time.*** The California College Promise is a CCC categorical program and has received an appropriation of roughly \$91.2 million for the last five years. Though the initial statute intended for California College Promise cohorts to be comprised of first-

time, full-time community college students, subsequent legislation has gradually expanded student eligibility for the program:

- AB 2 (Santiago, Chapter 509, Statutes of 2019) authorized for a student enrolled in fewer than 12 units to be deemed as full time at the discretion of the institution if the student has been certified as full time by a staff person in the disabled student services program.
- AB 3137 (Voepel, Chapter 226, Statutes of 2020) required that a student who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, and is called to duty, may withdraw from participation in the California College Promise and resume program participation upon the student's return from duty without losing eligibility for the benefits of the program, including fee waivers.
- AB 183 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 54, Statutes of 2022) made returning students, defined as a student who has taken a break of one or more semesters (or the quarterly equivalent), eligible for the program.
- AB 1342 (Megan Dahle, Chapter 102, Statutes of 2023) clarified that a high school pupil who enrolls in community college as part of dual enrollment programs are required to be considered a first-time community college student for purposes of the California College Promise upon the student's enrollment in community college after high school graduation.

- 5) ***The California College Promise incentivizes full-time enrollment, which can help students save money over time.*** Since the program's inception, the California College Promise has required most students receiving fee waivers to be enrolled full time. According to a 2014 report from the Campaign for College Opportunity called "The Real Cost of College: Time and Credits to Degree in California," a student who takes four years to earn an associate degree can spend as much as \$15,200 more on fees and other expenses, and will earn \$33,500 less, compared to someone who graduated in two years. As a result of these additional years, this student would incur \$48,700 in extra expenses and lost wages.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office's 2024 report called "Trends in Higher Education: Student Outcomes," CCC completion rates have ticked up over time but remain very low. It finds that the three-year completion rate has increased steadily over time, rising from 12% in 2011-12 to around 18% by 2017-18; the two-year completion rate also shows a gradual increase from roughly 5% in 2011-12 to around 9% by 2018-19. Despite improvement over time, overall completion rates remain low. It is unclear to what extent reducing the unit requirement for this specific program may have on completion rates for students.

- 6) ***2025 report on California College Promise program.*** AB 2 (Santiago, Chapter 509, Statutes of 2019) required the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to submit a report, by July 1, 2024, to the Legislature evaluating the use of funding for the California College Promise to waive student fees, and for the report to determine whether the program was supporting the CCCs in

accomplishing certain goals outlined in program statute. The CCCCCO submitted the report on July 1, 2025, with the following findings:

- Use of funds. The report indicated that from 2018-19 to 2022-23, 70% of the participating CCCs used some of their program funds to waive student fees, 48% of participating CCCs used some funds on book vouchers, and 24% of participating CCCs used some funds on emergency grants.
- Completion rates. The report indicated that three-year associate's degree or career technical education certification completion rates for first-time students declined from 34% for the 2018 cohort to 28% for the 2020 cohort. This decline may be attributed to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which negatively impacted retention.
- Transfer rates. The report indicated that transfer rates to the University of California and the California State University were 37% for the 2018 cohort to 36% for the 2020 cohort—essentially unchanged.

- 7) ***Impact of reducing minimum unit requirements for a 2-year fee waiver program.*** This bill is substantially similar to AB 537 (Ahrens, 2025), which was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee, and this bill revises the requirement that students must be enrolled full time—defined as 12 or more units, and instead requires students to be enrolled in at least 9 units to receive fee waivers. Current law allows, but does not require, CCCs to waive fees for full-time students for two academic years using program funds, and applicants are not required to demonstrate their financial need to qualify for a waiver.

A primary mission of the CCCs is to award associate degrees, which are typically composed of 60 semester units. A student enrolled in 12 units per semester can complete the degree in 2.5 years, while a student taking 9 units per semester would take approximately 3.5 years. Current law limits eligibility for the California College Promise waiver program to two years. The bill's proposed change to reduce the minimum unit requirement from 12 to 9 units could potentially extend the time needed to finish an associate degree to be significantly beyond the waiver's expiration date. This gap could leave students without financial aid or needing to rely on other aid programs for additional semesters. *The Committee will need to consider the tradeoff of making changes to the California College Promise that could provide additional support services for students who are taking fewer units against encouraging students to take additional units so that they could potentially complete their programs more quickly.*

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

AB 537 (Ahrens, 2025) would have reduced the minimum unit requirement for CCC students to qualify for a California College Promise fee waiver from full time (12 or more units) to 9 units. AB 537 (Ahrens, 2025), which is substantially similar to SB 632 (Arreguín, 2026), was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

-- END --