
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 197 **Hearing Date:** June 19, 2019
Author: Weber
Version: May 17, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: Full-day kindergarten.

SUMMARY

This bill requires every school within a school district or charter school to implement at least one full-day kindergarten program.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Specifies that children between the ages of 6 and 18 years, unless otherwise exempted, are subject to compulsory full-time education.
- 2) Prohibits a pupil in a kindergarten from being kept in school for more than four hours per day, exclusive of recesses, subject to specified exceptions.
- 3) Specifies that the kindergarten schoolday may exceed four hours, exclusive of recesses, if both of the following conditions are met:
 - a) The governing board of a school district declares that the extended-day kindergarten program does not exceed the length of the primary schoolday.
 - b) The extended-day kindergarten program takes into account ample opportunity for both active and quiet activities within an integrated, experiential, and developmentally appropriate educational program.
- 4) Specifies that a school district that is implementing an early primary program may maintain kindergarten or transitional kindergarten classes for different lengths of time during the schoolday, either at the same or a different schoolsite.
- 5) Defines "early primary program" as an integrated, experiential, and developmentally appropriate educational program for children in preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 3, that incorporates various instructional strategies and authentic assessment practices, including educationally appropriate curricula, heterogeneous groupings, active learning activities, oral language development, small group instruction, peer interaction, use of concrete manipulative materials in the classroom, planned articulation among preschool, kindergarten, and primary grades, and parent involvement and education.

- 6) Defines “integrated, experiential, and developmentally appropriate educational program” as a program that is designed around the abilities and interests of the children in the program and one in which children learn about the various subjects simultaneously, as opposed to segmented courses, and through “hands-on” or “active learning” teaching methods that are more appropriate for young children than the academic “textbook” approach.
- 7) Specifies that the minimum schoolday for pupils in kindergarten is 180 minutes inclusive of recesses.
- 8) Requires single session part-day kindergarten classes to meet all of the following:
 - a) The class is maintained for a minimum of 180 minutes per schoolday.
 - b) The kindergarten class teacher is assigned to only one session of kindergarten daily as a principal teacher.
 - c) The kindergarten teacher is a full-time certificated employee.
 - d) The kindergarten teacher shall be available for assistance or assignment in the instructional program of the primary grades when not involved in the kindergarten program.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires each school serving pupils in early primary grades within a school district and charter school to implement at least one full-day kindergarten program, beginning in the 2022-23 school year, subject to specified exemptions.
- 2) Defines "full-day kindergarten" as instruction provided for the same number of minutes per schoolday that is offered to pupils in first grade.
- 3) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that first priority for implementation of full-day kindergarten before July 1, 2022, go to any school receiving Title I funds.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Full-day kindergarten programs close achievement gaps between young children from minority and low-income families and their peers who reside in more affluent areas. By providing a solid foundation of learning to children from all backgrounds, full-day kindergarten programs ensure all students' academic, social, and emotional success.”
- 2) ***Research on the impact of full-day kindergarten is mixed.*** While many argue that a large body of research demonstrates that full-day kindergarten programs benefit children, a 2009 Public Policy Institute of California study states that “research to date...has provided little evidence of long-term academic benefits

beyond kindergarten or first grade.” Further, an analysis done by the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation titled “Ready for School: Can Full-Day Kindergarten Level the Playing Field” found that “This study reinforces the findings of earlier studies that suggest full-day kindergarten programs may not enhance achievement in the long term. Furthermore, this study raises the possibility that full-day kindergarten programs may actually be detrimental to mathematics performance and to nonacademic readiness skills.”

- 3) ***Most school districts already operate full-day kindergarten programs.*** According to the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), as of 2017-18, 71 percent of school districts in California ran only full-day kindergarten programs, 19 percent ran only part-day programs, and 10 percent ran a mix of full-day and part-day programs. The LAO estimates that approximately 70 percent of kindergarten students attend a full-day program and roughly 30 percent attend a part-day program. Enrollment in full-day programs has grown significantly since 2007-08 when 43 percent of students were attending full-day kindergarten programs. A recent study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), on behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE) found that the average full-day kindergarten session was 5.6 hours and the part-day sessions averaged 3.5 hours.
- 4) ***Why do some districts not offer full-day kindergarten?*** School districts determine the length of their kindergarten programs. Part-day programs operate between three to four hours per day, and full-day programs operate for more than four hours per day. Schools operating part-day programs typically run a morning session and afternoon session in the same classroom using two teachers—one teacher in the morning and another in the afternoon. Full-day programs, in contrast, require a separate classroom and are typically assigned one full-time teacher who leads the class throughout the day. The state funds kindergarten through the Local Control Funding Formula, which provides districts the same per-student funding rate for part-day and full-day programs (\$8,235 per student in 2018-19).

When surveyed by the LAO for their reasons for not operating full-day kindergarten programs, school districts reported a variety of reasons, including limited classroom space, teachers preferring part-day programs because they receive additional support from another teacher throughout the day, and parent preference for a shorter school day for their children.

- 5) ***Related budget activity.*** During budget deliberations last year, the Legislature indicated that increasing the number of full-day kindergarten programs throughout the state was a priority. The 2018-19 budget package accordingly provided \$100 million in one-time General Fund to help districts cover the facility costs associated with converting part-day kindergarten programs into full-day programs. This year, the budget conference committee approved an additional \$300 million in one-time General Fund for this purpose.
- 6) ***Arguments in support.*** The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees states “Attending full-day kindergarten is essential in closing the achievement gap early in a child’s education. In particular, low-

income children who may not have had previous access to an early childhood development program would be able to benefit from a full-day kindergarten program. California's education system is in dire need of an overhaul, and creating changes in early childhood education is a strong first step towards fixing a lagging academic curriculum and system."

SUPPORT

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
California Alternative Payment Program Association
California State PTA
First 5 California
National Association of Social Workers

OPPOSITION

None received

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