
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair

2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: SB 311
Author: Beall
Version: April 6, 2015
Urgency: Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Hearing Date: April 15, 2015
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Child Care and Development Services Act: preschool: Alum Rock Union Elementary School District: pilot project

SUMMARY

This bill, an urgency measure, authorizes a pilot project at Alum Rock Union Elementary School District (ARUESD), located in Santa Clara County, that allows the district to create a part-day pre-school subsidy plan to meet the particular needs of families in the school district until January 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes several programs providing subsidized child care and development services that service low-income families who are working, seeking work, in training, or providing community service. Existing law requires those programs to include, but not be limited to, part-day age and developmentally appropriate programs designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children in educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education and parent participation, evaluation, and staff development. These programs are administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) and require the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to adopt rules and regulations on eligibility, enrollment, family fees, provider rates, and priority services.
(Education Code § 8235 and 8263)

Existing law authorizes a pilot project in San Mateo County (since 2004) and San Francisco City and County (since 2006) that allows the counties to develop and implement an individualized county child care subsidy plan in recognition of the high-cost of living in those counties.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

1. Authorizes the ARUESD, located in Santa Clara County, to implement an individualized eligibility part-day preschool subsidy plan as a pilot project. Specifically it:
 - A. Requires the development of a plan that:

- i) Bases participation on either eligibility for free or reduced meals, or foster youth status.
 - ii) Authorizes admission of students up to the age of admission into first grade
 - B. Requires submission to, and approval of the plan by, the Santa Clara County Local Child Care Planning Council and the Early Education and Support Division of the Department of Education.
 - C. Requires annual reports to the Legislature summarizing the success of the pilot project, with submission of a final report by December 31, 2022 to include recommendations regarding the continuance of the pilot as a permanent program.
 - D. Sunsets the pilot project by January 1, 2022 and thereafter reverts to current law regarding preschool eligibility.
2. Provides definitions for various terms for the purpose of this bill.
 3. Specifies the unique circumstances of the school district, including a high level of children who live in poverty, that condition the need for a special law.
 4. Makes the bill an urgency measure in order to remove the paperwork burden on families and agencies in time for the new school year.

STAFF COMMENTS

1. ***Why ARUESD?*** According to the author, Alum Rock Union Elementary School District (ARUESD) located in San Jose, has one of the highest numbers of low income families and a high violence rate within the East of San Jose. As a result, academic performance among children and youth residing in the Alum Rock community has been impacted. For this reason, several of the anticipated outcomes for this pilot project include: effective transition of children between preschool and transitional Kindergarten through 8, parent and community engagement, decrease in use of the Juvenile Justice System competency in speaking and reading English while maintaining their home language, special education eligible children referred for services earlier and with a shorter need for intensive services. Additionally, the author asserts that the existing program presents administrative barriers that may discourage new families from participating in part-day preschool. This bill seeks to extend the hours of preschool and provide an efficient eligibility process for families.

Existing law has authorized two other Bay Area pilot projects in recognition of the high-cost of living in those counties. In addition to the high cost of living in Santa Clara County, this pilot project seeks to address unique issues relative to the high level of children who live in poverty, are English Language Learners and who are exposed to violence in the community.

2. ***Part-Day State Preschool.*** The California State Preschool Program – Part Day is a three-hour educational program for children ages three- and four-years of age that operates for a minimum of 3 hours daily for a minimum of 175 days per year. These programs are located at elementary schools and provide personalized learning experiences before children enter kindergarten.

Children are eligible for the program if the family currently receives aid, meets specified income eligibility requirements, is homeless, or if the child is the recipient of protective services, or has been identified as neglected, abused or exploited (or at risk of such). In addition, the family must have need of the child care services due to specified social service circumstances, employment training, or other specified needs.

3. ***Related Budget Action.*** The Budget Act of 2013 augmented funding for existing California State Preschool Program contracts, thereby allowing these contractors to provide additional services during fiscal year 2013-2014. This additional funding was included in the base funding for part-day preschool for fiscal year 2014-2015. According to the author, it is the intent that this pilot project will be funded within the existing resources provided to the district in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

4. ***Related and prior legislation.***

PRIOR LEGISLATION

AB 260 (Gordon, CH. 731, 2013) extends the individualized county child care subsidy pilot plans (pilot) for San Mateo County July 1, 2018 and San Francisco County July 1, 2016.

AB 1326 (Simitian, CH. 691, 2003) created a five-year child care subsidy pilot program in San Mateo County that permitted the county to revise their local child care system to meet the particular needs of San Mateo County residents.

SUPPORT

Alum Rock Union Elementary School District
 First 5 Santa Clara County
 Kidango
 PTA Adelante Dual Language Academy
 Santa Clara County Office of Education
 Numerous individuals

OPPOSITION

None received.

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