

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 842 (Gipson) – As Amended March 23, 2017

**SUBJECT:** California community schools

**SUMMARY:** Requires the California Department of Education (CDE), contingent upon an appropriation for this purpose, to establish an Office of Community Schools, and to allocate planning and five-year operational grants to local education agencies (LEAs) to plan and operate community schools. Specifies the elements of a community school plan as well as the composition of the community school leadership team, and requires annual reporting by the community schools, as well as by the CDE on a statewide basis. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Expresses legislative findings and declarations regarding the effectiveness of community schools in addressing the consequences of poverty and providing all children with an opportunity to thrive by creating opportunities for LEAs to collaborate with parents, school staff, community members and local agencies.
- 2) Defines a community school as a school that includes all of the following elements:
  - a) A curriculum that is engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging, including a robust selection of classes and after school programs, as well as services to support English learners and special education pupils, high school equivalency test preparation, career technical education, and job training;
  - b) An emphasis on high-quality teaching and not on high-stakes testing;
  - c) Wraparound supports such as health care, eye care, and social and emotional services that support academics that are available before, during, and after school, year-round, to the community with providers who are accountable and culturally competent;
  - d) An emphasis on positive discipline practices, such as restorative justice and social and emotional learning supports. Suspensions and harsh punishments are eliminated or greatly reduced;
  - e) Promotion of parent and community engagement so the community actively participates in planning and decision-making;
  - f) Leadership that is committed to making the community school integral to the school's educational mandate and functioning and ensures that the community school coordinator is part of the leadership team.
- 3) Requires the CDE to implement a process to make grants available to LEAs to plan and operate community schools within the geographic boundaries of the LEA.
- 4) Specifies that a qualified LEA schoolsite is a school deemed by the LEA to be a high-needs school that benefit from the community school strategy OR is a school that serves a higher than average share of high-needs pupils.

- 5) Requires the CDE to establish and enforce a policy prohibiting discrimination, on the basis of specified characteristics, in the development and administration of community schools.
- 6) Requires the CDE to establish an Office of Community Schools and to provide technical assistance to LEAs, directly or through contract with a nonprofit organization with expertise in community schools. Allocates \$5,000,000 to the CDE for the provision of technical assistance, subject to an appropriation by the Legislature.
- 7) Requires an LEA, upon receipt of a community school planning grant, to hire a full-time certificated community school coordinator, and requires that this individual's role be limited to the work identified in the community school plan.
- 8) Requires the CDE to provide a \$300,000 planning grant to each successful applicant, who is responsible to complete a community school plan within one year.
- 9) Requires the provision of five-year grants of \$750,000/year to those applicants who have submitted a completed community school plan to the LEA and CDE, and demonstrated readiness to begin operation of a community school. Grants are renewable at the discretion of the CDE.
- 10) Requires the LEA to approve or deny an applicant's community school plan within 45 days and the CDE to approve or deny the plan within 45 days.
- 11) Requires each grantee to establish a community school leadership team and specifies that an existing locally bargained schoolsite leadership body may assume the roles and responsibilities of this team.
- 12) Requires the community school leadership team to be comprised of between 12-16 people, with specified numbers of parents, teachers, certificated non-classroom employees, classified employees, principals, community members, and representatives of community partners. A high school team must also include two pupils.
- 13) Requires development of a baseline analysis of assets and needs at the schoolsite and in the community, including the following elements:
  - a) Needs assessment developed through surveys, forums, and focus groups with key stakeholders;
  - b) Composition of the student body, including numbers of pupils with disabilities, or those who are English learners, foster youth, homeless, receiving free and reduced-price meals;
  - c) Suspension and expulsion data, including analyses by sub-group;
  - d) Disaggregated school achievement data;
  - e) Success of current parent engagement strategies;
  - f) Need for, and availability of wraparound services to meet pupils' social, emotional, and physical health needs; strategies to create safe school environments; and professional development;

- g) Availability of community assets, including individuals, faith-based organizations, community associations, colleges, hospitals, libraries, businesses and social service agencies;
  - h) Needs in the surrounding community for child care, physical and mental health care services, job training and adult education, after school programs, and summer learning opportunities.
- 14) Requires each grantee to provide the CDE with their community plan, which must specify how the following elements are being addressed:
- a) Positive discipline practices such as restorative justice;
  - b) Curricula that is engaging, culturally and socially relevant, and academically rigorous;
  - c) Wraparound supports such as physical and mental health services, social services, and academic enrichment programs;
  - d) An emphasis on high-quality teaching, not on high-stakes testing;
  - e) Parent and community engagement plans so the full community actively participates in decision-making processes;
  - f) Inclusive school leadership that is committed to making the community school strategy integral to the school's mandate and functioning and ensuring that the community school coordinator is a part of the leadership team.
- 15) Specifies allowable uses of community school implementation grants, including hiring of community school coordinators, program directors, other program staff, as well as funding for nonprofit organizations to increase parent and community outreach, ongoing consultation with institutional and community partners, professional development for school staff, ongoing monitoring of the impact of the community school, development of alternative funding strategies, and ongoing operations.
- 16) Requires each community school grantee to provide to the CDE, and make available at the school and online, an annual report identifying the impact of the transition to a community school on participating children and adults, and including specified elements, including any improvements in retention of pupils, academic achievement, pupil health, school readiness, family engagement, access to services and community/institutional partner satisfaction. The CDE is to evaluate such reports utilizing specified criteria.
- 17) Requires the CDE to submit a report annually, beginning no later than August 30<sup>th</sup> following the first full year of operation of the program, to the Governor and the Legislature outlining the impact of the program, based upon aggregate data, interviews with stakeholders, consultation with school leadership teams, and including analyses and recommendations on best practices, as well as estimated budget savings at the state, local and federal levels in the areas of public health, public safety, and education arising from investments in community schools.

18) States that the implementation of the community school grant program is subject to an appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the Learning Communities for School Success Program to implement the K–12 education portion of the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act (Proposition 47) as approved by the voters at the November 4, 2014 statewide general election. Requires the CDE to administer grants and coordinate assistance to LEAs in identifying and implementing evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices designed to keep the most vulnerable pupils in school. (EC 33430 - 33436)
- 2) Federal law, H.R. 5168 of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, establishes the Full Services Community Schools Act of 2014, which encourages coordination of academic, social, and health services through partnerships among public elementary and secondary schools, LEAs, and community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and other public or private entities.
- 3) Federal law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part D, Subpart 1, authorizes the Fund for the Improvement of Education. Under this authority the Department of Education has established the Promise Neighborhoods, as a competitive grant program.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “in California and across the nation, the education system has time and time again had serious challenges with effectively educating poor and minority communities. The key to the issue is that the challenges often lie outside of the classroom, and are direct reflections of the environments and communities that youth come from. Many are exposed to gang violence, street crime, domestic abuse, drug abuse, poor health and a number of ills that become impediments to achievement in the classroom. These factors suggest that in order to effectively education a child, one must bring together a holistic community-based solution.”

***High rate of childhood poverty in California.*** According to the Public Policy Institute of California, 21.2% of children in California lived in families without enough resources to make ends meet in 2015, up from 17.3% in 2007. Additionally, 5.2% of California’s children were in deep poverty as they live in families with less than half of the resources needed to make ends meet. The rates of child poverty vary by region and by ethnicity. The poverty rate for Latino children (31.6%) was more than double that of Asian American (13.5%) and white (11.9%) children in California in 2014.

The achievement gap between low-income children and youth and their higher-income peers has been well-documented. This gap is present when children enter school and often widens as the child progresses through the education system. Research has shown that children living in poverty are five times more likely to drop out of high school than their higher-income peers, and only 9% will obtain a college degree. A 2012 study, by the Annie Casey Foundation, noted that “children who spend a year or more in poverty account for 38% of all children, but they account for 70% of all children who do not graduate from high school.”

Children living in poverty often fail to receive adequate medical care. Lack of preventative care and treatment for chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes leads to frequent absences from school. Chronic absenteeism in the early school years has been proven to be a strong indicator of failure to graduate from high school or to attend college.

Students living in poverty may also lack access to enrichment opportunities through after-school programs or summer learning, further widening the achievement gap.

***What is a community school?*** According to the Coalition for Community Schools, “a community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. Community schools offer a curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings, and weekends.”

A paper by the Partnership for Children and Youth, and others, *Leveling the Playing Field: Community Schools Confront Poverty to Improve Student Success*, identifies the key ingredients of successful community schools as health services, mental health services, family engagement, and after-school programs. Although each service on its own has the power to improve student achievement, in community schools these services are brought together and integrated into a single, reframed educational experiences that has the power to clear the path to success for children in poverty.

***Research shows positive impacts of community schools.*** The Coalition for Community Schools identifies research showing that students attending community schools:

- Enter school more fully prepared to learn as a result of participation in high quality early care and education programs;
- Have improved work habits, efforts and attitudes toward learning through participation in extended learning opportunities and other support services;
- Experience improved grades and test scores, and are more likely to graduate from high school, due in part, to access to tutoring, mentoring, and after school activities;
- Are healthier due to access to health services including nurses, dentists, and mental health practitioners at school;
- Have families who are more engaged with the school and their children’s education;
- Are less likely to be absent from school;
- Face fewer discipline referrals and are less likely to be suspended from school.

***How community schools are funded.*** A 2013 brief by the Partnership for Children and Youth, “*Community Schools: Aligning Local Resources for Student Success*”, notes that a community school is not a program, but is a way of doing business in a collaborative manner to support student success. This involves a partnership between local agencies to align and redeploy resources. Through a coordinated delivery stem, a community school is able to offer more effective programs and services than any one of the partners could offer in isolation. The base funding for community schools comes from its partners, not from a specific grant or funding stream and a community school can be started and sustained without new funding.

***Federal funding for community schools.*** The federal Department of Education has two programs offering funding to schools and communities to establish partnerships to deliver integrated services to children and families.

- 1) The Full-Service Community Schools program has provided \$55 million in funding since 2009 to encourage coordination of academic, social, and health services through partnerships among public elementary and secondary schools, the schools’ LEAs, and community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other public or private entities. California agencies in Los Angeles, Oakland, and Long Beach received \$2.5 million grants through this program in 2014 and 2015. These grants are to be expended over a five-year period.
- 2) In 2010, the Obama Administration launched the Promise Neighborhood Initiative, which is modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone. In the first year, the Promise Neighborhoods program awarded one-year grants to support the development of a plan to implement a Promise Neighborhood in 21 communities across the country. At the conclusion of the planning grant period, grantees were expected to have a feasible plan to implement a continuum of solutions that will significantly improve results for children in the community being served. California communities which received these planning grants of approximately \$500,000 in 2010 through 2012 included Hayward, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno, Chula Vista, and Corning.

A number of California agencies have also received implementation grants under this program between 2011 and 2016 in amounts ranging from \$15 million to \$30 million. These include: Hayward Promise Neighborhood, Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood, Chula Vista Promise Neighborhood, Mission Promise Neighborhood, Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood, and the Everett Freeman Promise Neighborhood.

***California funding for community schools.*** At this time, there is no dedicated education funding stream specifically designated for community schools. School districts have the discretion to use their Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), including supplemental and concentration funds, to serve the best interests of students, particularly high-needs students, and this could include the establishment of community schools.

California voters passed Proposition 47, the Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act (SNSA), in November 2014. The SNSA reduced the penalties for certain non-violent, non-serious drug and property crimes. 25% of the monies available through criminal justice system savings are to be allocated to the CDE for administration of a grant program to reduce truancy and support pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime. The CDE will administer the *Learning Communities for School Success Program*. Fiscal Year 2017-18 will be the first year of funding for the program's three-year LEA competitive grants. The grants are to be

annually awarded using continuously appropriated funds arising out of the annual savings resulting from Proposition 47.

Existing law further specifies that a LEA that receives a grant through this program shall use the grant funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities in support of evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices to keep the state's most vulnerable pupils in school, and that this may include, the establishment of a community school.

***The committee may wish to consider,*** given that there is no prohibition on schools using existing LCFF funds or partnering with community agencies to establish a community school, whether it is reasonable to provide individual schools with both planning grant of \$300,000 and \$3.75 million five-year operational grants, or whether the program should be focused on incentivizing the planning and initial operation of community schools for a wider number of schools, rather than providing longer-term five year grants to a smaller number of schools?

***Arguments in support.*** Supporters contend that this bill would provide grants to district-run schools with community school elements that are supported by research and consistent with best practices in this field. These range from culturally relevant curriculum to deeper parent engagement strategies and wraparound services that serve the whole child. They also note that establishing an Office of Community Schools, within the CDE, would allow for the provision of technical assistance to help ensure the law is implemented with fidelity. Schools who form real partnerships with non-profit organizations, businesses, local and federal governments, universities, hospitals, and other organizations will be better able to meet the core unmet needs of our students.

***Prior legislation.*** AB 1014 (Thurmond), Chapter 397 and SB 527 (Liu), Chapter 533, Statutes of 2016 establish a grant program to implement the Proposition 47 (2016) requirement to direct 25% of the funds to K-12 schools to reduce truancy and support students who are at risk of dropping out of school or are victims of crime. School districts, COEs and charter schools are eligible to apply for three years of grant funding for planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities in support of evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices to keep students in school, consistent with the LEA's goals established in their local control and accountability plan (LCAP).

These bills authorize funds to be used to establish a community school, implement activities or programs to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism, implement restorative justice models to keep students in school and reduce referrals to law enforcement agencies, implement activities that promote social-emotional and positive learning environments, establishing partnerships with community-based organizations to support implementation of evidence-based, non-punitive approaches, and adding or increasing staff whose primary purpose is to address attendance issues.

SB 403 (Liu) of the 2015-16 Session would have authorized a LEA or schools, in collaboration with community partners, to form a community consortium to establish a California community school to coordinate academic, social, and health services for students, families, and community members. Would also have required the SPI to make grants available to fund community schools, to the extent that funds were allocated for this purpose. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2555 (Bocanegra) of the 2013-14 Session would have required the SPI, in collaboration with various other state agencies and private organizations, to develop a five-year plan for expanding cradle-to-career initiatives in California including full-service community schools, promise neighborhoods, wraparound programs, wellness centers, and healthy communities efforts. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations committee.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California Federation of Teachers  
Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)  
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)

**Opposition**

California Right to Life Committee, Inc.

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