

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 378 (Valencia) – As Introduced February 3, 2025

[Note: This bill is double referred to the Public Employee Retirement Committee and was heard by that Committee as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: Education finance: Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program

SUMMARY: Authorizes employees of Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs) to participate in the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP).

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes employees at school districts or county offices of education to participate in the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP). (Education Code (EC) 45500)
- 2) Authorizes a local educational agency (LEA) to elect to participate in the CSESAP. States that a participating LEA shall notify classified employees by January 1 that the local educational agency has elected to participate in the program for the next school year. (EC 45500)
- 3) Requires a classified employee who elects to participate in the program to notify the LEA in writing, by March 1, on a form developed by the department that the classified employee wishes to participate in the program for the applicable school year. Requires the program to provide a participating classified employee up to one dollar (\$1) for each one dollar (\$1) that the classified employee has elected to have withheld from the classified employee's monthly paychecks. A participating classified employee may elect to have up to 10 percent of the classified employee's monthly pay withheld during the applicable school year. (EC 45500)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “AB 378 ensures that the hardworking employees in joint powers authorities that provide essential services to our students have an equal opportunity to participate in the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP). By establishing uniform access to CSESAP, we can ensure that all kinds of Local Education Agencies can attract and retain workers vital to the daily operations of our schools.”

What is the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program? CSESAP allows low-wage classified school employees working for TK-12 districts and county offices of education to set aside a small portion of their paychecks during the school year to receive up to a dollar-for-dollar match from the state during the summer when work is not available. Since its inception, CSESAP has provided critical funding to classified school employees, helping with financial assistance through periods of summer unemployment. CSESAP has proven to be an effective tool

for classified school employees who otherwise would be left without a source of income when the school year has ended.

Classified employee work schedules. Many classified school employees work less than 12 months due to the length of a typical school year, averaging around 9 or 10 months of employment per year. For those classified employees, it is often difficult for them to find short-term employment during the summer. Additionally, Unemployment Insurance Code section 1253.3 (b) prohibits school employees from qualifying for unemployment benefits during the summer unless they are laid off.

Why is it important to include JPAs in the CSESAP? School districts and county offices of education form JPAs for various purposes to serve the needs of their communities. JPAs are legally created entities that allow two or more public agencies to jointly exercise common power to provide services. For instance, the Southwest Transportation Agency offers services for 13 school districts in Fresno County to provide safe and cost-effective transportation for 7000 students. Approximately 78 JPAs in California include school districts. Unfortunately, employees of JPAs are currently excluded from the statutory definition of ‘local educational agency’ in the Education Code, creating an inequity for those working under JPAs as they do not have the same financial safeguards as their counterparts in traditional school districts.

Arguments in support. The California School Employees Association states, “This legislation extends eligibility to participate in the Classified School Employees Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP) to employees of Joint Powers Authorities. This legislation is critical to our members who rely on the (CSESAP) to afford basic necessities during the summer months when school is not in session.”

Related legislation. SB 75 (Chapter 51, Statutes of 2019) established the CSESAP.

AB 114 (Chapter 413, Statutes of 2019) made changes to the CSESAP for the 2020-21 through 2022-23 school years.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Afl-cio
California Federation of Labor Unions, Afl-cio
California Federation of Teachers - a Union of Educators and Classified Professionals, Afl-cio
California School Employees Association
Service Employees International Union, California

Opposition

None on file

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