

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1684 (Maienschein) – As Amended March 28, 2019

SUBJECT: Pupil literacy: grant program

SUMMARY: Establishes an ongoing program for the purpose of building a love of reading in schools, families, and communities, and establishes the Literacy Academy for California Educators as a statewide professional learning infrastructure to support educators in teaching reading and literacy across grades and across the content areas. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Supporting Literacy in Schools, Families, and Communities Grant Program for the purpose of building a love of reading in schools, families, and communities for all pupils in California.
- 2) Requires, upon appropriation by the Legislature for this purpose, the California Department of Education (CDE) to award competitive grants to local educational agencies (LEAs).
- 3) Requires that a grant application include, at minimum, the particular context in which the LEA is operating, including the assets and challenges of the LEA, and the number of pupils that would be impacted by the program, resources, or activities funded by the grant.
- 4) States that an LEA may apply to the CDE for a grant for one or more of the following purposes:
 - a) To promote a culture of reading in the community, and within families in the community of the LEA.
 - i. Requires an LEA to use grant funds to promote a reading culture in the LEA and the community through activities such as events and collaboration with community partners.
 - ii. States that multiple LEAs may apply for a grant as a consortium.
 - iii. Requires that an application for a grant include, at minimum, all of the following:
 1. The partnerships that the LEA will foster
 2. How the partnerships will build a positive reading culture throughout the LEA and community, including how the LEA will target the specific needs of pupils and communities of varied demographics within the LEA
 3. The roles, responsibilities, and commitments that will be assigned to each participating partner
 - b) To purchase books for school and classroom libraries.

- i. Grants priority for a grant to be given to LEAs without an existing school library for the purpose of building a book collection for a new school library.
 - ii. Requires that an application for a grant include, at minimum, both of the following:
 - 1. How the LEA will ensure that the books purchased reflect the diversity within its schools and the state
 - 2. How the LEA will consult with teachers, librarians, and pupils and their families to purchase books that will have the greatest impact on pupils and inspire a love of reading
- c) To support early literacy from birth to kindergarten.
- i. States that an LEA may use grant funds to provide books to families with young children and conduct events to support reading in families. States that multiple LEAs may apply for a grant as a consortium.
 - ii. States that an application for a grant must include, at minimum, all of the following:
 - 1. The partnerships that the local educational agency will foster
 - 2. How the partnerships will support early literacy, with a focus on providing parents in the community with books and support in reading to their children
 - 3. The roles, responsibilities, and commitments that will be assigned to each participating partner
- d) To support reading intervention programs at the schoolsite level.
- i. Requires an application for a grant to include, at minimum, all of the following:
 - 1. How the LEA will use stipends for reading teachers
 - 2. How the LEA will foster partnerships with master teachers through the Instructional Leadership Corps and other organizations
- e) To support a professional development program for teacher librarians to increase the number of teachers who obtain a teacher librarian credential and to hire at least one teacher librarian.
- i. Requires an application for a grant to include, at minimum, all of the following:
 - 1. The partnerships that the LEA will foster
 - 2. How the partnerships will support teachers and prospective teachers in obtaining a teacher librarian credential

3. The roles, responsibilities, and commitments that will be assigned to each participating partner
 4. A commitment from the LEA to hire at least one teacher librarian and a plan for how to fund these positions beyond the grant cycle
 5. A description of how hired teacher librarians will be able to adequately serve pupils and teachers
 6. A description about how the program will be sustainable and replicable
- 5) Requires the CDE to develop and implement the Literacy Academy for California Educators as a statewide professional learning infrastructure to support educators in teaching reading and literacy across grades and across the content areas identified in the state's English Language Arts/English Language Development (ELA/ELD) Framework by doing all of the following:
- a) Build instructional capacity and increase accountability to ensure that the work done permeates to the classroom teacher level.
 - i. Facilitate statewide events in the northern, central, and southern regions of the state for approximately 1,000 attendees each.
 - ii. Provide webinars and regional and local events, as follow up to the statewide events, with ongoing professional learning that delves deeper into specific content within the ELA/ELD Framework.
 - iii. Identify and support a cohort of teachers and instructional coaches to lead and support professional learning in local contexts and share promising practices statewide.
 - b) Adhere to guidance in the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework and promote literacy across the content areas.
 - c) Provide dedicated funds to LEAs to build out literacy-based professional learning systems to build the capacity of staff to understand and implement the ELA/ELD Framework, including collaboration with other LEAs and state-level partners to incorporate research-based practices for children from birth to 16 years of age, and plan for sustainability after the funds have been used.
 - d) Provide specific resources and professional learning on culturally relevant instruction so that educators can best serve their diverse pupils.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the state's assessment system as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP) and includes, beginning with the 2013-14 school year, a consortium summative assessment in English language arts for grades 3-8 and 11 that measures content standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

- 2) Establishes the statewide system of support, for providing support to LEAs and schools pursuant to this article and for federal programs pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), States that the purpose of this system is to build the capacity of LEAs to do all of the following:
 - a) Support the continuous improvement of pupil performance within the state priorities
 - b) Address the gaps in achievement between pupil subgroups
 - c) Improve outreach and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that goals, actions, and services as described in school district and county office of education (COE) local control and accountability plans (LCAPs) reflect the needs of pupils and the community, especially for historically underrepresented or low-achieving populations. (EC 52059.5)
- 3) Requires the governing board of each school district to adopt an LCAP using a template adopted by the SBE. Requires each LCAP, to include, for the school district and each school within the school district, both of the following:
 - a) A description of the annual goals, for all students and each subgroup, to be achieved for each of the state priorities and for any additional local priorities identified by the governing board of the school district.
 - b) A description of the specific actions the school district will take during each year to achieve the goals, including the enumeration of any specific actions necessary for that year to correct any deficiencies in regard to the state priorities.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “Literacy is about more than just the ability to read and write. Good literacy education creates a foundation that enables our students to grow into informed citizens, be successful and productive members of society, and contribute to the economic vitality of the state. Further, early education in literacy is essential in building future academic success and teachers play a profound role in this process. Providing support and resources for teachers, schools and districts to invest in literacy educational infrastructure is necessary in order for our students to have the best chances at success.”

How are California students scoring in English language arts? According to data from the CDE, in 2018, nearly 50% of California students met or exceeded standards in ELA. This represents an increase of nearly 6% since 2015. Achievement gaps remain for students with disabilities, students who come from low income families, and students who are English learners. Gains also vary significantly by grade level, with third grade, the first year in which students take the state assessment, showing significant gains in the last three years, as shown below.

Grade/Student Group	Percent meeting or exceeding standards in ELA, 2018	Percentage Change 2015-2018
All Students	49.88	5.88
Grade 3	48.22	10.22
Grade 4	48.67	8.67
Grade 5	49.43	5.43
Grade 6	47.84	5.84
Grade 7	50.15	6.15
Grade 8	49.12	4.12
Grade 11	55.96	-0.04
Females	55.29	6.29
Males	44.71	6.71
American Indian or Alaska Native	37.42	4.42
Asian	76.41	4.41
Black or African American	32.27	4.27
Filipino	71.2	6.2
Hispanic or Latino	39.16	7.16
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	43.16	5.16
White	64.86	3.86
Two or More Races	64.75	5.75
Economically Disadvantaged	37.69	6.69
English Learner	12.62	1.62
Reclassified-Fluent English Proficient	58.39	6.4
Students with Disability	14.98	2.98

Source: CDE, 2018

New statewide system of support provides infrastructure for improvement under state's accountability system. This bill requires that the state provide dedicated funds to LEAs to build out literacy-based professional learning systems to build the capacity of staff to understand and implement the ELA/ELD) Framework, including collaboration with other LEAs and state-level partners to incorporate research-based practices for children from birth to 16 years of age, and plan for sustainability after the funds have been used. The author wishes to specify that the LEAs receiving funds will be those identified for comprehensive support and improvement under ESSA.

State law, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and federal law (ESSA), require that poorly performing school districts, and in the case of ESSA, schools, receive additional targeted support. California's ESSA State Plan, which the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) approved in July 2018, aligned California's approach to meet federal requirements to the greatest extent possible with state law.

Under the state's accountability system, COEs must provide additional support to LEAs that have one or more student group in the lowest performance level for indicators in two or more LCFF state priority areas. The state is engaged in building a single Statewide System of Support

for LEAs and schools, with three levels of assistance: Support for All, Differentiated Assistance, and Intensive Intervention.

Under California’s ESSA state plan, schools (not school districts) are identified on the basis of poor performance (discussed below). LEAs are required to provide support to improve performance at these schools. There are three levels of identification, as shown below:

- *Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)*: Includes at least the lowest performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I funds. In addition, any public high school whose graduation rate has fallen below 67 percent for three consecutive years is automatically eligible for CSI, regardless of its Title I status.
- *Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)*: Schools that are not eligible for CSI will be eligible for TSI regardless of their Title I funding status if they have one or more student groups(s) that, for two consecutive years, meet the criteria applied to identify the lowest performing five percent of Title I schools. Normally, TSI eligibility will be determined annually.
- *Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*: School identification for ATSI occurs on a three-year cycle. The criteria used to identify schools for TSI and ATSI are essentially identical. Since California’s ESSA State Plan also states that schools will be identified for ATSI in the 2018–19 school year, all schools that met the criteria for TSI in 2018 have been moved into the ATSI category.

The 2018–19 school year is the first time that the state must determine which schools are eligible for CSI based on the criteria in the State Plan. As shown below, 781 schools were identified during the 2018-19 school year as qualifying for CSI. Notably, 82% of non-charter schools identified for CSI are located in LEAs that are also identified for differentiated assistance. It is unclear how many of these schools were identified on the basis of poor performance in ELA.

Identification Status	Number of Non-Charter Schools	Number of Charter Schools	Total
CSI (Based on State Indicator Results; Title I Schools Only)	447	34	481
CSI (Based on Graduation Rate Only; Title I and non-Title I Schools)	206	94	300
Total	653	128	781

Source: CDE, 2019

The Committee may wish to consider that this makes it likely that, though under the ESSA State Plan schools are to receive support from their LEA, these LEAs will be receiving support from their county offices of education, both schools and districts will receive support through the Statewide System of Support. *Staff recommends that the bill be amended*, as shown in the list of recommended amendments below, that the professional learning infrastructure required by this bill be established through the Statewide System of Support.

What does research say about effective professional development? This bill is intended to improve the skills of teachers in literacy instruction, through the establishment of a professional learning infrastructure, which would include, among other activities, statewide, regional, and local events.

The Learning Policy Institute's (LPI) 2017 report, "Effective Teacher Professional Development (PD)," notes "a growing number of rigorous studies establish that well-designed PD can, when effectively implemented, lead to desirable changes in teacher practice and student outcomes," but it's also "certainly true that PD does not always lead to professional learning, despite its intent." LPI notes that "research on PD in the United States found that most teachers receive PD of short duration (less than eight hours on a topic, usually in afterschool workshops) and that, during the No Child Left Behind Era, there was an increase in this short-term approach and a decline in access to more sustained professional learning approaches." LPI cites research suggesting that external approaches to instructional improvement are rarely "powerful enough, specific enough, or sustained enough to alter the culture of the classroom and school."

In this report, LPI identifies seven features of effective professional development. LPI reviewed 35 studies from the last three decades that featured a careful experimental or comparison group design, or analyzed student outcomes with statistical controls for context variables and student characteristics, and found seven widely shared features of effective professional development. LPI found that effective professional development:

- 1) Is content-focused
- 2) Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
- 3) Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
- 4) Uses models and modeling of effective practice
- 5) Provides coaching and expert support
- 6) Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- 7) Is of sustained duration

Given this evidence, the ***Committee may wish to consider*** whether statewide and local events are an effective use of state resources for professional development.

What does research say about how to improve reading skills? The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) maintains the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which reviews the existing research on different programs, products, and practices, and policies in education, with the goal of providing educators information they need to make evidence-based decisions. The WWC identifies interventions in different content and skills areas, including literacy.

In 2010 the WWC published a practice guide entitled, "Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades." This guide shared four recommendations to help educators identify struggling readers and implement evidence-based strategies to promote their reading achievement:

- 1) Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities. (Moderate Evidence)

- 2) Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students' current reading levels. (Minimal Evidence)
- 3) Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20–40 minutes. (Strong Evidence)
- 4) Monitor the progress of Tier 2 students [students who need extra support] at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a tier 3 intervention plan. (Minimal Evidence)
- 5) Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in Tier 2 small group instruction. (Minimal Evidence)

In 2016 the WWC published a practice guide entitled “Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade,” which shared four recommendations:

- 1) Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge. (Minimal Evidence)
- 2) Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters. (Strong Evidence)
- 3) Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words. (Strong Evidence)
- 4) Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. (Moderate Evidence)

Recommended amendments. Staff recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Delete the first section of the bill, which proposes establishing a new program for the purpose of building a love of reading in schools, families, and communities.
- 2) Require that the professional learning infrastructure in literacy required by the bill be established through the Statewide System of Support, in collaboration with the California Collaborative for Education Excellence, and provide support for evidence-based professional development, tiered interventions, universal design, and early intervention and inclusion for students with disabilities. Require that the CDE identify, through a competitive process, a lead county office of education for the professional learning infrastructure. Delete the name Literacy Academy for California Educators.
- 3) Specify that the dedicated funds for literacy-based professional development be allocated to LEAs with schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement pursuant to ESSA on the basis of poor pupil performance in English language arts, and that support be provided through the Statewide System of Support, in collaboration with the California Collaborative for Education Excellence.
- 4) Make charter schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement pursuant to ESSA on the basis of poor pupil performance in English language arts eligible for funding in the same manner as LEAs
- 5) Clarify that the funding made available by the act is one-time in nature.
- 6) Other technical and conforming changes as necessary.

Prior and related legislation. AB 1808 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018 established the statewide system of support, for providing support to LEAs and schools identified for support through state and federal accountability systems.

SB 494 (Hueso) of the 2017-18 Session would have established the Golden State Reading grant program for the purpose of assisting LEAs in ensuring that all students meet reading standards and language progressive skills by the end of grade 3. This bill was vetoed by Governor Brown, who stated:

Local educational agencies already have the flexibility under the Local Control Funding Formula to provide students the support they need to ensure that appropriate reading and language skills are achieved.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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