

Date of Hearing: June 21, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Patrick O'Donnell, Chair

SB 140 (Allen) – As Amended March 21, 2017

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Education finance: Learning Communities for School Success Program

SUMMARY: Expands priority for the selection of local educational agencies to receive a grant from the Learning Communities for School Success Program to include Promise Neighborhoods.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act (SNSA), through passage of Proposition 47 in November 2014, which reduces the penalties for certain non-violent, non-serious drug and property crimes.
- 2) Requires 25 percent of the resulting savings to be deposited in the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund to fund a grant program administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) to reduce truancy and support students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime.
- 3) Establishes a grant program, the Learning Communities for School Success Program, to be administered by the CDE that furthers the purpose of Proposition 47 in reducing truancy and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime.
- 4) Authorizes grant funds to be utilized for activities that include but are not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Establishing a community school, as defined;
 - b) Implementing activities or programs to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to, early warning systems or early intervention programs;
 - c) Implementing restorative practices, restorative justice models, or other programs to improve retention rates, reduce suspensions and other school removals, and reduce the referral of students to law enforcement agencies;
 - d) Implementing activities that advance social-emotional learning, positive behavior interventions and supports, culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed strategies;
 - e) Establishing partnerships with community-based organizations or other relevant entities to support the implementation of evidence-based, non-punitive approaches to further the goals of the program; and
 - f) Adding or increasing staff within a local educational agency (LEA) whose primary purpose is to address ongoing chronic attendance problems, including but not limited to, conducting outreach to families and children currently, or at risk of becoming, chronically truant.

- 5) Requires the CDE, in selecting grant recipients, to give priority to an LEA that meets any of the following criteria:
- a) Has a high rate of chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspension, or school dropouts for the general pupil population or for a numerically significant pupil subgroup, as identified in a local control and accountability plan pursuant;
 - b) Is located in a community with a high crime rate; or
 - c) Has a significant representation of foster youth among its pupil enrollment.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act. California voters passed Proposition 47, the SNSA, in November 2014. The SNSA reduced the penalties for certain non-violent, non-serious drug and property crimes. State savings resulting from these changes are to be spent on mental health and drug programs, kindergarten through twelfth-grade students, and crime victims.

The SNSA requires that 25 percent of the monies available through criminal justice system savings are to be allocated to the California Department of Education (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. Legislation in 2016, Assembly Bill 1014 (Thurmond, Chapter 397, Statutes of 2016) and Senate Bill 527 (Liu, Chapter 533, Statutes of 2016) established the Learning Communities for School Success Program, a competitive grant program to expend the K-12 share of the SNSA savings.

The CDE administers the Learning Communities for School Success Program. Fiscal Year 2016-17 is the first year of funding for the program's three-year local educational agency competitive grants. The grants are to be annually awarded using continuously appropriated funds identified by the California Department of Finance as the annual savings resulting from Proposition 47. In 2016-17, 34 LEAs received SNSA grants, including Los Angeles Unified School District and Hayward Unified School District, which serve Promise Neighborhood communities.

Promise Neighborhoods. Promise Neighborhoods is a federal program that provides funding to support eligible entities, including (1) nonprofit organizations, which may include faith-based nonprofit organizations, (2) institutions of higher education, and (3) Indian tribes. The vision of the program is that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. The purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities by:

- Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood;
- Building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center;

- Integrating programs and breaking down agency “silos” so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies;
- Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood; and
- Learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program.

The following communities in California have received Promise Neighborhood grants:

- Corning
- Los Angeles*
- San Francisco
- Chula Vista
- Hayward*
- Fresno

*School districts serving these cities have also received SNSA grants.

Purpose of the bill. Funding for the Promise Neighborhood Program will not be continued under the new Administration, so new grants will not be awarded and existing grants will not be renewed. Because the Promise Neighborhood Program and SNSA serve the same general purposes and population, it is the author's intent that this bill will help ensure the continuation of programs and activities that have been started under the Promise Neighborhood Program with SNSA funds after the federal funding runs out. The author's office states, "While Promise Neighborhoods are able to meet any of the Learning Communities for School Success Program grant funding priorities, they are not explicitly named as a funding priority. By explicitly stating that funding should be prioritized for applicants that are part of the Promise Neighborhoods program, the state can ensure that the existing gains and improvements made will not be lost."

However, it is not clear how bill would ensure continued funding for existing Promise Neighborhood Programs, because Promise Neighborhood status would be just one of four criteria that are considered for funding priority. Moreover, school districts that are part of a Promise Neighborhood already meet at least one of the other three criteria for priority, as evidenced by the fact that two such districts have already received SNSA grants. Finally, the federal and state grants are awarded to different entities. Specifically, federal grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and Indian tribes, but not school LEAs. By contrast, state grants are awarded only to LEAs. It is not clear how awarding a grant to an LEA would ensure the continuation of programs and activities funded by different entities.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Common Sense Kids Action

Opposition

None received

Analysis Prepared by: Rick Pratt / ED. / (916) 319-2087