

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 9, 2008

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 15, 2008

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 7, 2008

SENATE BILL

No. 1475

Introduced by Senator Torlakson
(Principal coauthor: Senator Steinberg)
(Coauthor: Senator Alquist)
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Huffman)

February 21, 2008

An act to add and repeal Article 8 (commencing with Section 4698) to Chapter 6 of Division 4.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to autism.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1475, as amended, Torlakson. Autism pilot program.

Under existing law, the State Department of Developmental Services, the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, the State Department of Mental Health, and the State Department of Social Services collaborate to provide early intervention for children with disabilities or at risk of having disabilities. Under existing law, the State Department of Developmental Services contracts with private nonprofit regional centers to provide or purchase services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The State Department of Education and school districts also provide services in the schools for children with ASD.

This bill would require the State Department of Developmental Services to establish a 2-year pilot project to, among other things,

provide methods, instruments, and systems of care between regional centers and school districts for the early identification and assessment of children with ASD from birth to 5 years of age. This bill would also require the department, no later than June 1, 2012, to report to the Legislature and the Governor on the pilot project containing specified information. This bill would require the department to apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding for the pilot program and would condition the reestablishment of the pilot program upon the department obtaining those funds *from the commission or other sources*. This bill would make its provisions inoperative on July 1, 2012, and repeal them on January 1, 2013.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) The number of children diagnosed with ~~an~~ Autism Spectrum
- 4 ~~Disorder Disorders~~ (ASD) has grown dramatically in recent years
- 5 and is a serious public health crisis that must be addressed.
- 6 (b) Currently, children with ASD receive services from regional
- 7 centers through the Early Start Program, but must transition to
- 8 services provided by school districts when they are between three
- 9 to five years of age.
- 10 (c) This transition currently presents a severe crisis to many
- 11 families because it disrupts the continuity of programs and
- 12 interventions that have already been implemented and are proving
- 13 efficient in overcoming ASD and improving developmental
- 14 outcomes.
- 15 (d) The transition is often inefficient and not cost effective
- 16 because the regional centers and the school districts are not
- 17 coordinated with regard to programs, services, and interventions.
- 18 (e) In many cases this transition is also disruptive because the
- 19 programs, professionals, and providers who contract to provide
- 20 services to regional ~~services~~ *centers* and school districts are
- 21 different.
- 22 (f) The transition is not cost effective because the school
- 23 districts, despite lacking the resources and administrative supports,

1 must duplicate complex assessments that have already been
2 performed by the regional centers.

3 (g) Crucial services and interventions for children with ASD
4 are often delayed while regional centers and school districts quarrel
5 over the financial responsibilities of implementing the services.

6 (h) The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on
7 Autism noted that there are models of voluntary collaboration
8 between regional centers and school districts that provide
9 comprehensive, integrated, and seamless services to children with
10 ASD and that these models have increased family and consumer
11 satisfaction and have produced more effective outcomes than the
12 traditional model.

13 SEC. 2. Article 8 (commencing with Section 4698) is added
14 to Chapter 6 of Division 4.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code,
15 to read:

16
17 Article 8. Early Autism Intervention and Transition Pilot
18 Program
19

20 4698. (a) As used in this article “ASD” means Autism
21 Spectrum ~~Disorder~~ Disorders.

22 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to implement a two-year
23 pilot project in key geographic areas around the state that will
24 identify solutions to significantly improve the transition of children
25 with Autism Spectrum ~~Disorder~~ Disorders from receiving services
26 from regional centers to the school system and, thereby, improve
27 the quality of early intervention and educational programs for
28 children with ASD from birth to five years of age.

29 (c) The intent of the pilot program is to identify and implement
30 existing models of excellence and best practices and to identify
31 and reduce barriers to effective collaboration in order to establish
32 a seamless, comprehensive, and integrated service delivery model
33 between regional centers and school districts for children with
34 ASD and their families, particularly in culturally, linguistically,
35 and geographically diverse or underserved populations.

36 4698.1. (a) The department, in partnership with one or more
37 regional centers, shall establish and administer a pilot project which
38 shall be called The Centers of Excellence for Early Autism
39 Intervention and Transitional Services.

(b) At least three pilot locations shall be established for a period of two years. Each location shall require a collaborative, integrated proposal between at least one regional center and at least one school district or local educational agency.

(c) Pilot project proposals may include the participation of other agencies, organizations, foundations, stakeholder groups, or other providers as long as the participation is approved by the department.

(d) The pilot project shall do all of the following:

(1) Establish innovative, collaborative, integrated, and seamless methods, instruments, and systems of care between regional centers and school districts for the early identification and assessment of children with ASD from birth to five years of age.

(2) Establish innovative fiscal models using pooled funding and resources that have demonstrated cost-effective benefits and outcomes.

(3) Determine how the use of telehealth, telemedicine, and other innovative web-based technology strategies may improve the professional development, outreach, and training of families, consumers, professionals, and staff who are affiliated with, or served by, regional centers, school districts, or local educational agencies.

4698.2. No later than June 1, 2012, the department shall provide the Legislature and the Governor with a report on the pilot program. The report shall make legislative, regulatory, and fiscal recommendations that would further the goal of providing a seamless, integrated, and coordinated system of care for the early identification and treatment of ASD between the regional centers and school districts and local educational agencies.

4698.3. No state general funds shall be used to fund the pilot program. The department shall apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding to cover the costs of the pilot program. The pilot program shall be established only after the department applies to and obtains funds from the California Children and Families Commission *or other sources*.

4698.4. This article shall become inoperative on July 1, 2012, and, as of January 1, 2013, is repealed unless a later enacted statute,

- 1 that is enacted before January 1, 2013, deletes or extends the dates
- 2 on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

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