

## Assembly Bill No. 625

### CHAPTER 331

An act to amend Section 41320.1 of the Education Code, relating to school finance.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2015. Filed with  
Secretary of State September 28, 2015.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 625, Bonta. School finance: emergency apportionments: compliance audits.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of a school district to request an emergency apportionment through the Superintendent of Public Instruction if the governing board of the school district determines during a fiscal year that its revenues are less than the amount necessary to meet its current year expenditure obligations. Under existing law, if a school district accepts an emergency apportionment, that acceptance constitutes agreement by the school district to numerous conditions, among which is an agreement that the Controller, or his or her designee, or an auditor selected by the school district and approved by the Controller shall conduct an annual audit of the books and accounts of the school district, as specified. This provision requires these audits to continue until the Controller determines, in consultation with the Superintendent, that the school district is financially solvent, but in no event earlier than one year following the implementation of the school district's fiscal plan or later than the time the apportionment is repaid, including interest.

This bill, for an audit conducted by the Controller, or his or her designee, would require the Controller, the Superintendent, and the school district superintendent, or their respective designees, to meet before the audit to discuss the terms of the audit and the timeline under which it will proceed.

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

SECTION 1. Section 41320.1 of the Education Code, as amended by Section 34 of Chapter 19 of the Statutes of 2015, is amended to read:

41320.1. Acceptance by the school district of the apportionments made pursuant to Section 41320 constitutes the agreement by the school district to all of the following conditions:

(a) The Superintendent shall appoint a trustee who has recognized expertise in management and finance and may employ, on a short-term basis, staff necessary to assist the trustee, including, but not limited to, certified public accountants, as follows:

(1) The expenses incurred by the trustee and necessary staff shall be borne by the school district.

(2) The Superintendent shall establish the terms and conditions of the employment, including the remuneration of the trustee. The trustee shall serve at the pleasure of, and report directly to, the Superintendent.

(3) The trustee, and necessary staff, shall serve until the school district has adequate fiscal systems and controls in place, the Superintendent has determined that the school district's future compliance with the fiscal plan approved for the school district under Section 41320 is probable, and the Superintendent decides to terminate the trustee's appointment, but in no event for less than three years. The Superintendent shall notify the county superintendent of schools, the Legislature, the Department of Finance, and the Controller no less than 60 days before the time that the Superintendent expects these conditions to be met.

(4) Before the school district repays the loan, including interest, the recipient of the loan shall select an auditor from a list established by the Superintendent and the Controller to conduct an audit of its fiscal systems. If the fiscal systems are deemed to be inadequate, the Superintendent may retain the trustee until the deficiencies are corrected. The cost of this audit and any additional cost of the trustee shall be borne by the school district.

(5) Notwithstanding any other law, all reports submitted to the trustee are public records.

(6) To facilitate the appointment of the trustee and the employment of necessary staff, for purposes of this section, the Superintendent is exempt from the requirements of Article 6 (commencing with Section 999) of Chapter 6 of Division 4 of the Military and Veterans Code and Part 2 (commencing with Section 10100) of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code.

(7) Notwithstanding any other law, the Superintendent may appoint an employee of the department to act as trustee for up to the duration of the trusteeship. The salary and benefits of that employee shall be established by the Superintendent and paid by the school district. During the time of appointment, the employee is an employee of the school district, but shall remain in the same retirement system under the same plan as if the employee had remained in the department. Upon the expiration or termination of the appointment, the employee shall have the right to return to his or her former position, or to a position at substantially the same level as that position, with the department. The time served in the appointment shall be counted for all purposes as if the employee had served that time in his or her former position with the department.

(b) (1) The trustee appointed by the Superintendent shall monitor and review the operation of the school district. During the period of his or her service, the trustee may stay or rescind an action of the governing board of the school district that, in the judgment of the trustee, may affect the financial condition of the school district.

(2) After the trustee's period of service, and until the loan is repaid, the county superintendent of schools that has jurisdiction over the school district

may stay or rescind an action of the governing board of the school district that, in his or her judgment, may affect the financial condition of the school district. The county superintendent of schools shall notify the Superintendent, within five business days, if he or she stays or rescinds an action of the governing board of the school district. The notice shall include, but not be limited to, both of the following:

(A) A description of the governing board of the school district's intended action and its financial implications.

(B) The rationale and findings that support the county superintendent of school's decision to stay or rescind the action of the governing board of the school district.

(3) If the Superintendent is notified by the county superintendent of schools pursuant to paragraph (2), the Superintendent shall report to the Legislature, on or before December 30 of every year, whether the school district is complying with the fiscal plan approved for the school district.

(4) The Superintendent may establish timelines and prescribe formats for reports and other materials to be used by the trustee to monitor and review the operations of the school district. The trustee shall approve or reject all reports and other materials required from the school district as a condition of receiving the apportionment. The Superintendent, upon the recommendation of the trustee, may reduce an apportionment to the school district in an amount up to two hundred dollars (\$200) per day for each late or unacceptable report or other material required under this part, and shall report to the Legislature a failure of the school district to comply with the requirements of this section. If the Superintendent determines, at any time, that the fiscal plan approved for the school district under Section 41320 is unsatisfactory, he or she may modify the plan as necessary, and the school district shall comply with the plan as modified.

(c) At the request of the Superintendent, the Controller shall transfer to the department, from an apportionment to which the school district would otherwise have been entitled pursuant to Section 42238.02, as implemented by Section 42238.03, the amount necessary to pay the expenses incurred by the trustee and associated costs incurred by the county superintendent of schools.

(d) For the fiscal year in which the apportionments are disbursed and every year thereafter, the Controller, or his or her designee, shall cause an audit to be conducted of the books and accounts of the school district, in lieu of the audit required by Section 41020. At the Controller's discretion, the audit may be conducted by the Controller, his or her designee, or an auditor selected by the school district and approved by the Controller. The costs of these audits shall be borne by the school district. These audits shall be required until the Controller determines, in consultation with the Superintendent, that the school district is financially solvent, but in no event earlier than one year following the implementation of the plan or later than the time the apportionment made is repaid, including interest. For an audit conducted by the Controller, or his or her designee, the Controller, the Superintendent, and the school district superintendent, or their respective

designees, shall meet before the audit to discuss the terms of the audit and the timeline under which it will proceed. In addition, the Controller shall conduct quality control reviews pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 14504.2.

(e) For purposes of errors and omissions liability insurance policies, the trustee appointed pursuant to this section is an employee of the local educational agency to which he or she is assigned. For purposes of workers' compensation benefits, the trustee is an employee of the local educational agency to which he or she is assigned, except that a trustee appointed pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (a) is an employee of the department for those purposes.

(f) Except for an individual appointed by the Superintendent as trustee pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (a), the state-appointed trustee is a member of the State Teachers' Retirement System, if qualified, for the period of service as trustee, unless the trustee elects in writing not to become a member. A person who is a member or retirant of the State Teachers' Retirement System at the time of appointment shall continue to be a member or retirant of the system for the duration of the appointment. If the trustee chooses to become a member or is already a member, the trustee shall be placed on the payroll of the school district for the purpose of providing appropriate contributions to the system. The Superintendent may also require that an individual appointed as trustee pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (a) be placed on the payroll of the school district for purposes of remuneration, other benefits, and payroll deductions. For purposes of workers' compensation benefits, the state-appointed trustee is deemed an employee of the local educational agency to which he or she is assigned, except that a trustee who is appointed pursuant to paragraph (7) of subdivision (a) is an employee of the department for those purposes.