

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 4, 2015
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 26, 2015
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1014

Introduced by Assembly Member Thurmond
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Bonta)

February 26, 2015

An act to add *and repeal* Section 48270-~~to~~ of the Education Code, relating to pupils, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1014, as amended, Thurmond. Pupils: truancy: Our Children's Success—The Early Intervention Attendance *Pilot* Grant Program.

Existing law requires a pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse 3 full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the schoolday without a valid excuse on 3 occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, to be classified as a truant. Existing law requires, upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, a school district to notify the pupil's parent or guardian of specified information using the most cost-effective method possible.

This bill would make various findings and declarations regarding truancy. The bill would establish ~~Our~~ *the Our Children's Success—The Early Intervention Attendance Pilot Grant Program* under the administration of the State Department of Education. The program would provide grants to applicant public schools seeking to resolve the attendance problems of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3,

inclusive. The bill would provide that public schools maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 3, inclusive, could apply for grants under the program. The bill would ~~require~~ *authorize* the applications for grants submitted by *public* schools to the department to reflect a plan including specified components.

The bill would require the department to give priority *in awarding grants under this bill* to applicant *public* schools that have ~~prioritized pupil engagement in their local control and accountability plans~~. *The highest truancy rates in urban areas, rural areas, and suburban areas, respectively. The bill would require the grants to be awarded for 3 years and to be used to address attendance problems of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, pursuant to the plans submitted by the applicant public school. The bill would require public schools receiving a grant to submit a report, containing specified data, to the department at the conclusion of the grant. The bill would require the department to submit a report, on or before January 1, 2021, to the respective appropriations committees and education committees of the Assembly and the Senate, and would require this report to include a recommendation on whether the grant program established under the bill should continue. These provisions would be repealed on January 1, 2022.*

The bill would appropriate an unspecified sum from an unspecified source to the department for purposes of implementing the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. 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~~ of
- 2 the following:
- 3 (a) Only 17 percent of chronically absent kindergartners and
- 4 first graders in California read proficiently by grade 3 and pupils
- 5 who do not read proficiently by grade 3 are four times more likely
- 6 to drop out of school. Children who drop out of school cost the
- 7 state more than \$46 billion each year, including more than \$1
- 8 billion in juvenile crime costs alone.
- 9 (b) Ninety percent of elementary school pupils with severe
- 10 attendance problems, missing 36 or more days in the school year,
- 11 are estimated to be from low-income families.

1 (c) In the 2013–14 school year, 250,000 elementary school
2 pupils and 1 in 10 pupils from low-income families were
3 chronically absent, missing 10 percent or more of the school year.

4 (d) In the 2013–14 school year, African American elementary
5 school pupils were the highest subgroup, including homeless pupils,
6 to be truant and these pupils are chronically truant at four times
7 the rate of all other pupils.

8 (e) In the 2012–13 school year, one in five, or 744,085,
9 elementary school pupils were truant, an increase of 1.2 percent
10 from the 2011–12 school year.

11 (f) In the 2010–11 school year, California schools lost \$1.4
12 billion in average daily attendance funding due to pupil absences
13 and California school districts have lost over \$3.5 billion between
14 the 2010–11 and 2013–14 school years.

15 SEC. 2. Section 48270 is added to the Education Code, to read:

16 48270. (a) Our Children’s Success–The Early Intervention
17 Attendance *Pilot* Grant Program is hereby established under the
18 administration of the department. This grant program is established
19 for the purpose of helping public schools resolve the attendance
20 problems of pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive.
21 This grant program shall be implemented upon the appropriation
22 of sufficient funding under Section 3 of the act that added this
23 section.

24 (b) A public school maintaining kindergarten or any of grades
25 1 to 3, inclusive, seeking to participate in the grant program
26 established by this section may apply to the department for a grant
27 pursuant to this section. An application submitted by a public
28 school to the department under this subdivision ~~shall~~ *may* reflect
29 a plan that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all of the
30 following components:

31 (1) Establishment of a training program for key school officials
32 and attendance staff to identify pupils with chronic attendance
33 problems upon their second occurrence of tardiness or absence in
34 a school year, and the mailing of attendance letters to the pupil’s
35 home in a timely manner.

36 (2) Establishment of a phone call outreach program, including
37 a minimum of two calls from a school official, not limited to a
38 recording, to follow up on those pupils whose attendance problems
39 continue during that school year after the attendance letters are
40 mailed.

1 (3) Establishment of a parent advocate position or positions,
2 designated for ongoing ~~follow-up~~ *followup* with the pupil and the
3 parent throughout the school year to ensure the pupil's continued
4 consistent school attendance. The number of these parent advocate
5 positions may vary according to the school's needs, resources, and
6 the parent advocate's ability to manage the workload.

7 (4) Establishment of an outreach worker position or positions
8 whose primary job is assisting families with a child or children
9 who have ongoing chronic attendance problems. The duties of an
10 outreach worker include sending letters, making phone calls and
11 home visits, and helping to connect the family to the appropriate
12 local, state, or federal programs in order to resolve issues that are
13 creating impediments to the child's consistent attendance in school.
14 The number of these outreach worker positions can vary according
15 to the school's needs, resources, and the outreach worker's ability
16 to manage the workload.

17 (5) Determining that the applicant school's plan is instituted,
18 to the best of the school's ability, before a pupil enters the school
19 attendance review board process.

20 (6) Establishment of a plan for teacher ~~follow-up~~ *followup* with
21 pupils with chronic attendance problems to make up for lost
22 instructional time.

23 (7) Establishment of a plan to track pupil attendance and
24 aggregate data on tardiness and attendance throughout the school
25 year to determine whether improvement has been made.

26 ~~(e) In evaluating applications for grants under this section, the
27 department shall give priority to applicant schools that have
28 prioritized pupil engagement in their local control and
29 accountability plans adopted pursuant to Section 52060.~~

30 ~~(e)~~

31 (c) The grant program established by this section shall not be
32 construed as a replacement of, or a substitution for, the school
33 attendance review board process as described in this article.

34 (d) (1) *The department shall award grants under this section
35 based on the selection criteria in paragraph (2).*

36 (2) *The department shall give priority to applicant public
37 schools with the highest truancy rates in each of the following
38 areas:*

39 (A) *Urban areas.*

40 (B) *Rural areas.*

1 (C) *Suburban areas.*

2 (e) *Grants under this section shall be awarded for three years,*
3 *and shall be used to address the attendance problems of pupils in*
4 *kindergarten and in grades 1 to 3, inclusive, pursuant to the plans*
5 *submitted by the applicant public school under subdivision (b).*

6 (f) *A public school that receives a grant under this section shall*
7 *submit a report to the department at the conclusion of the grant.*
8 *This report shall specify how the grant funds were used and the*
9 *strategies employed to address pupil attendance problems. The*
10 *report shall also include pupil attendance data measured both*
11 *before and after the implementation of the grant.*

12 (g) *On or before January 1, 2021, the department shall submit*
13 *a report to the respective committees on appropriations and*
14 *committees on education of the Assembly and the Senate. This*
15 *report shall evaluate the strategies and the attendance data of the*
16 *public schools that received funds from the grant program*
17 *established under this section. The report shall include, but not*
18 *necessarily be limited to, a recommendation on whether the grant*
19 *program should continue.*

20 (h) *This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2022,*
21 *and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that*
22 *is enacted before January 1, 2022, deletes or extends that date.*

23 SEC. 3. The sum of ____ dollars (\$____) is hereby
24 appropriated to the State Department of Education for purposes
25 of implementing Our Children’s Success–The Early Intervention
26 Attendance Grant Program, as established in Section 48270 of the
27 Education Code. It is the intent of the Legislature that the funds
28 appropriated under this section be drawn from sources that may
29 include, but are not necessarily limited to, the General Fund, the
30 Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund established by Proposition
31 47 on the November 2014 statewide general election ballot, federal
32 and local government funds, and contributions from nonprofit
33 organizations and other private entities.

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