

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 7, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2410

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonta

February 19, 2016

An act to amend Section 8203.3 of, ~~and to add Sections 8203.6 and 8203.7 to,~~ *Section 8203.6 to, and to add and repeal Section 8203.7 of,* the Education Code, relating to early learning.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2410, as amended, Bonta. Early learning: Local Control School Readiness Act of 2016.

Existing law, the Child Care and Development Services Act, among other things, requires the State Department of Education to develop prekindergarten learning development guidelines in accordance with specified criteria. The act also requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that all contracts for child care and development programs include a requirement that each public or private provider maintain a developmental profile to appropriately identify the emotional, social, physical, and cognitive growth of each child in order to promote the child's success in the public schools.

This bill would enact the Local Control School Readiness Act of 2016. The bill would require the department to develop prekindergarten learning development guidelines, focused on preparing 4- and 5-year-old children for kindergarten, based on current science that reflects how publicly funded programs can close the school readiness gap. The bill would authorize a local educational agency, as defined, in partnership with community-based organizations, to apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver from the department's Desired Results Quality

Improvement System. The bill would specify material to be submitted with such a waiver request.

The bill would require the ~~department to~~ *California Committee for Kindergarten Readiness, created by this bill, to convene on or before March 1, 2017, and to submit to the state board, by July 1, 2018, on or before January 1, 2018,* a kindergarten readiness definition that has clear benchmarks for skills that are predictive of later success in academics and ~~social-emotional, health,~~ *social-emotional* and executive functioning skills as evidenced by current research. *The bill would specify the membership of the committee and would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2019.*

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. (a) This act shall be known, and may be cited,
2 as the Local Control School Readiness Act of 2016.
- 3 (b) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:
4 (1) High-quality, early learning experiences have been shown
5 to produce substantial short-term gains in children's early language,
6 literacy, mathematics, and social skills as well as long-term effects
7 on a wide range of school, health, and behavioral outcomes that
8 persist into adulthood, as has been demonstrated in studies
9 produced by numerous scholars.
- 10 (2) California's investments in early learning should focus on
11 gains in school and behavioral outcomes that support low-income
12 California children, English-language learners, and children of
13 color advancing with their peers.
- 14 (3) One feature of high-quality early learning programs is
15 alignment with the K–3rd grade education that preschoolers will
16 soon enter. Preschool to 3rd grade alignment is critical in the areas
17 of standards, curriculum, instructional practice, professional
18 development, family engagement, and assessments.
- 19 (4) For public K–12 education, in determining what pupils
20 should learn and how they should learn it, the role of the state is
21 to set standards, curriculum frameworks, and standardized
22 assessments for select grade levels. Local educational agencies
23 (LEAs) select curriculum, instructional materials and methods,

1 provide professional development, and monitor pupil progress
2 through ~~diagnostic~~ *formative* assessments.

3 (5) For California's early learning programs, the role of the state
4 extends far beyond its role in K–12 education, and it falls short in
5 one key area. In addition to early learning standards and curriculum
6 frameworks, the State Department of Education develops, adopts,
7 and mandates specific ~~diagnostic~~ *formative* assessments to be used
8 on pupils, specific assessments for classroom environments,
9 specific professional development for instructional staff, and
10 specific parent satisfaction surveys. While these are important
11 components of a high-quality early learning program, LEAs and
12 other local preschool providers cannot tailor these to meet the
13 unique needs of their pupils nor to align with ~~kindergarten–3rd~~
14 ~~grade. K–3rd grade education.~~ Nor do these compliance-focused
15 regulations support an outcome of school readiness for low-income
16 children in California. The state-mandated assessments and
17 professional development are often done for compliance purposes
18 only, do not improve the quality of early learning programs, and
19 are an undue administrative burden on LEAs and preschool
20 providers.

21 (6) Where the state falls short: California does not have a clear
22 definition for what pupils need to know to be ready for
23 kindergarten. Without this definition, the impact of California's
24 early learning programs on school readiness is unknown. California
25 invests over \$1.6 billion in state preschool and transitional
26 kindergarten, and there is no information on what percentage of
27 pupils start school ready for success.

28 (c) Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to accomplish
29 both of the following:

30 (1) Empower LEAs and their nonprofit partners or
31 subcontractors to decide how best to prepare their preschool pupils
32 for success in school and align their preschool programs with
33 ~~K–3rd grade. grade education.~~

34 (2) Begin to shift the role of the state from a compliance-based
35 early learning system to one that focuses on child outcomes. The
36 first step in this process is to mandate the State Department of
37 Education to conduct a study for establishing a kindergarten
38 readiness definition to be considered for adoption by the State
39 Board of Education by July 1, 2018.

1 SEC. 2. Section 8203.3 of the Education Code is amended to
2 read:

3 8203.3. (a) (1) The department shall develop prekindergarten
4 learning development guidelines. The guidelines shall focus on
5 preparing four- and five-year-old children for kindergarten, based
6 on current science that reflects how publicly funded programs can
7 close the school readiness gap.

8 (2) The guidelines developed under this section shall identify
9 appropriate developmental milestones for each age, how to assess
10 where children are in relation to the milestones, and suggested
11 methods for achieving the milestones. In addition, the guidelines
12 shall identify any basic beginning skills needed to prepare children
13 for kindergarten or first grade, and methods for teaching these
14 basic skills. The guidelines shall be articulated with the academic
15 content and performance standards adopted by the state board for
16 kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The department may
17 contract with an appropriate public or private agency to develop
18 the guidelines.

19 (b) In future expenditure plans for quality improvement
20 activities, the department shall include funding for periodically
21 updating the guidelines consistent with academic and performance
22 standards and relevant research, broadly distributing the guidelines,
23 and providing education, outreach, and training services to
24 implement the guidelines.

25 (c) Programs funded by the department under Article 6
26 (commencing with Section 8230), Article 7 (commencing with
27 Section 8235), and Article 8 (commencing with Section 8240)
28 shall use the prekindergarten learning development guidelines
29 developed pursuant to this section.

30 SEC. 3. Section 8203.6 is added to the Education Code, to
31 read:

32 8203.6. (a) A local educational agency, including a school
33 district, charter school, and county office of education, in
34 partnership with community-based organizations, may apply to
35 the state board for a waiver from the department's Desired Results
36 Quality Improvement System, which includes the developmental
37 profile. A Local Control Quality Improvement Plan shall be
38 submitted with the waiver request, and shall include all of the
39 following:

1 (1) At least one ~~diagnostic~~ *formative* assessment tool that is
2 used no less than three times a year to monitor children's
3 developmental progress. This assessment shall be valid, reliable,
4 including inter-rater reliability, and linguistically, ~~culturally~~
5 *culturally*, and developmentally appropriate, and include a
6 benchmark for kindergarten readiness.

7 (2) A regular process for reviewing the assessment data with
8 teachers and adult caregivers.

9 (3) A plan for providing coaching and professional development
10 to support teachers to meet pupil needs.

11 (4) A plan for parent engagement and support that includes at
12 least two parent conferences each year to review children's
13 developmental progress and school-home linkages to support
14 learning, and an annual parent satisfaction survey.

15 (b) Once a waiver is approved under subdivision (a), the local
16 educational agency shall submit an annual continuous quality
17 improvement plan to the ~~department~~. *department, and shall*
18 *participate in a stakeholder group to share data and findings with*
19 *the state.*

20 (c) To enable waiver applicants to continue to participate in the
21 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), they may
22 substitute the developmental profile with their own kindergarten
23 readiness outcomes or ~~diagnostic~~ *formative* assessment tool.

24 SEC. 4. Section 8203.7 is added to the Education Code, to
25 read:

26 8203.7. ~~By July 1, 2018, the department~~ *(a) On or before*
27 *March 1, 2017, the California Committee for Kindergarten*
28 *Readiness, hereby created, shall convene. On or before January*
29 *1, 2018, the committee* shall submit to the state board a
30 kindergarten readiness definition that has clear benchmarks for
31 skills that are predictive of later success in academics and
32 ~~social-emotional, health,~~ *social-emotional* and executive
33 functioning skills as evidenced by current research. ~~The department~~
34 *committee* may contract with an appropriate public or private
35 ~~agency.~~ *agency for purposes of developing a kindergarten*
36 *readiness definition.*

37 (b) *The California Committee for Kindergarten Readiness shall*
38 *be composed of the following 10 members:*

39 (1) *The president of the state board, or his or her designee.*

- 1 (2) *The chair of the California Children and Families*
2 *Commission, or his or her designee.*
3 (3) *The Superintendent, or his or her designee.*
4 (4) *The chair of the State Advisory Council on Early Learning*
5 *and Care, or his or her designee.*
6 (5) *An expert on early childhood brain development, appointed*
7 *by the Speaker of the Assembly.*
8 (6) *An expert on kindergarten readiness standards, appointed*
9 *by the Speaker of the Assembly.*
10 (7) *A preschool or kindergarten teacher, appointed by the*
11 *Speaker of the Assembly.*
12 (8) *An expert on dual language learners, appointed by the*
13 *President pro Tempore of the Senate.*
14 (9) *An expert on family engagement and support, appointed by*
15 *the President pro Tempore of the Senate.*
16 (10) *A preschool or kindergarten teacher, appointed by the*
17 *President pro Tempore of the Senate.*
18 (c) *The members specified in paragraphs (1) to (3), inclusive,*
19 *of subdivision (b) shall be cochairs of the committee.*
20 (d) *This section is repealed on January 1, 2019.*