

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 27, 2016

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, to add 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.~~ *school readiness.*

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, on or before March 1, 2017, to convene the California Committee for Kindergarten Readiness, created by this bill, to convene on or before March 1, 2017, Readiness stakeholder group to evaluate and develop recommendations on what constitutes kindergarten readiness and would require the committee to submit to the state board, board and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature, 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 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~~
4 ~~SECTION 1. (a) The~~ Legislature finds and declares all of the
5 following:
6 (1) High-quality, early learning experiences have been shown
7 to produce substantial short-term gains in children's early language,
8 literacy, mathematics, and social skills as well as long-term effects
9 on a wide range of school, health, and behavioral outcomes that
10 persist into adulthood, as has been demonstrated in studies
11 produced by numerous scholars.
12 (2) *The Desired Results Developmental Profile was implemented*
13 *in 2000 and is a formative assessment instrument developed by*
14 *the State Department of Education for young children and their*
15 *families to be used to inform instruction and program development.*
16 *It is also a requirement for compliance with state preschool*
17 *contracts. The Desired Results Developmental Profile for preschool*
18 *children currently contains 54 areas of inquiry within eight*
19 *domains. Beginning in the 2016–17 fiscal year, the State*

1 Department of Education will require contractors to cover the five
2 “fundamental” domains the department indicates are
3 research-based predictors of school readiness and success and
4 that are consistent with the National Education Goals Panel and
5 the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. The
6 remaining domains may be used by a contractor voluntarily. This
7 “preschool fundamental view” will reduce the number of
8 assessment measures from 54 to 29. The State Department of
9 Education has responded to concerns from the field that the
10 Desired Results Developmental Profile is time consuming and has
11 revised the assessment to ensure that it is a more effective formative
12 assessment for children.

13 (2)

14 (3) California’s investments in early learning should focus on
15 gains in school and behavioral outcomes that support low-income
16 California children, English learners, and children of color
17 advancing with their peers.

18 (3)

19 (4) One feature of high-quality early learning programs is
20 alignment with the K–3rd grade education that preschoolers will
21 soon enter. Preschool to 3rd grade alignment is critical in the areas
22 of standards, curriculum, instructional practice, professional
23 development, family engagement, and assessments.

24 ~~(4) For public K–12 education, in determining what pupils~~
25 ~~should learn and how they should learn it, the role of the state is~~
26 ~~to set standards, curriculum frameworks, and standardized~~
27 ~~assessments for select grade levels. Local educational agencies~~
28 ~~(LEAs) select curriculum, instructional materials and methods,~~
29 ~~provide professional development, and monitor pupil progress~~
30 ~~through formative assessments.~~

31 ~~(5) For California’s early learning programs, the role of the state~~
32 ~~extends far beyond its role in K–12 education, and it falls short in~~
33 ~~one key area. In addition to early learning standards and curriculum~~
34 ~~frameworks, the State Department of Education develops, adopts,~~
35 ~~and mandates specific formative assessments to be used on pupils,~~
36 ~~specific assessments for classroom environments, specific~~
37 ~~professional development for instructional staff, and specific parent~~
38 ~~satisfaction surveys. While these are important components of a~~
39 ~~high-quality early learning program, LEAs and other local~~
40 ~~preschool providers cannot tailor these to meet the unique needs~~

1 of their pupils nor to align with K-3rd grade education. Nor do
2 these compliance-focused regulations support an outcome of school
3 readiness for low-income children in California. The
4 state-mandated assessments and professional development are
5 often done for compliance purposes only, do not improve the
6 quality of early learning programs, and are an undue administrative
7 burden on LEAs and preschool providers.

8 ~~(6) Where the state falls short: California~~

9 (5) *California* does not have a clear definition for what pupils
10 need to know to be ready for kindergarten. Without this definition,
11 the impact of California's early learning programs on school
12 readiness is unknown. California invests over \$1.6 billion in state
13 preschool and transitional kindergarten, and there is no information
14 on what percentage of pupils start school ready for success.

15 (e)

16 (b) Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to accomplish
17 both of the following:

18 ~~(1) Empower LEAs and their nonprofit partners or~~
19 ~~subcontractors to decide how best to prepare their preschool pupils~~
20 ~~for success in school and align their preschool programs with~~
21 ~~K-3rd grade education.~~

22 ~~(2) Begin~~ *begin* to shift the role of the state from a
23 compliance-based early learning system to one that focuses on
24 child outcomes. The first step in this process is to mandate the
25 State Department of Education to conduct a study for establishing
26 a kindergarten readiness definition to be considered for adoption
27 by the State Board of Education by July 1, 2018.

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

30 8203.3. (a) (1) The department shall develop prekindergarten
31 learning development guidelines. The guidelines shall focus on
32 preparing four- and five-year-old children for kindergarten, based
33 on current science that reflects how publicly funded programs can
34 close the school readiness gap.

35 (2) The guidelines developed under this section shall identify
36 appropriate developmental milestones for each age, how to assess
37 where children are in relation to the milestones, and suggested
38 methods for achieving the milestones. In addition, the guidelines
39 shall identify any basic beginning skills needed to prepare children
40 for kindergarten or first grade, and methods for teaching these

1 basic skills. The guidelines shall be articulated with the academic
2 content and performance standards adopted by the state board for
3 kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The department may
4 contract with an appropriate public or private agency to develop
5 the guidelines.

6 (b) In future expenditure plans for quality improvement
7 activities, the department shall include funding for periodically
8 updating the guidelines consistent with academic and performance
9 standards and relevant research, broadly distributing the guidelines,
10 and providing education, outreach, and training services to
11 implement the guidelines.

12 (c) Programs funded by the department under Article 6
13 (commencing with Section 8230), Article 7 (commencing with
14 Section 8235), and Article 8 (commencing with Section 8240)
15 shall use the prekindergarten learning development guidelines
16 developed pursuant to this section.

17 ~~SEC. 3. Section 8203.6 is added to the Education Code, to~~
18 ~~read:~~

19 ~~8203.6. (a) A local educational agency, including a school~~
20 ~~district, charter school, and county office of education, in~~
21 ~~partnership with community-based organizations, may apply to~~
22 ~~the state board for a waiver from the department's Desired Results~~
23 ~~Quality Improvement System, which includes the developmental~~
24 ~~profile. A Local Control Quality Improvement Plan shall be~~
25 ~~submitted with the waiver request, and shall include all of the~~
26 ~~following:~~

27 ~~(1) At least one formative assessment tool that is used no less~~
28 ~~than three times a year to monitor children's developmental~~
29 ~~progress. This assessment shall be valid, reliable, including~~
30 ~~inter-rater reliability, and linguistically, culturally, and~~
31 ~~developmentally appropriate, and include a benchmark for~~
32 ~~kindergarten readiness.~~

33 ~~(2) A regular process for reviewing the assessment data with~~
34 ~~teachers and adult caregivers.~~

35 ~~(3) A plan for providing coaching and professional development~~
36 ~~to support teachers to meet pupil needs.~~

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

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

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

~~SEC. 4.~~

SEC. 3. Section 8203.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

8203.7. (a) On or before March 1, 2017, ~~the department shall convene the California Committee for Kindergarten Readiness, hereby created, shall convene.~~ *Readiness stakeholder group to evaluate and develop recommendations on what constitutes kindergarten readiness.* On or before January 1, 2018, the committee shall submit to the state board ~~and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature~~ a kindergarten readiness definition that has clear benchmarks for skills that are predictive of later success in academics and social-emotional and executive functioning skills as evidenced by current research. ~~The committee~~ *department* may contract with an appropriate public or private agency for purposes of developing a kindergarten readiness definition.

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

- (1) The president of the state board, or his or her designee.
- (2) The chair of the California Children and Families Commission, or his or her designee.
- (3) The Superintendent, or his or her designee.
- (4) The chair of the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care, or his or her designee.
- (5) An expert on early childhood brain development, ~~appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.~~ *development.*
- (6) An expert on kindergarten readiness standards, ~~appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.~~ *standards.*
- (7) A preschool or kindergarten teacher, ~~appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.~~ *teacher.*
- (8) An expert on dual language learners, ~~appointed by the President pro Tempore of the Senate.~~ *learners.*

1 (9) An expert on family engagement and support, appointed by
2 the President pro Tempore of the Senate. *support.*

3 (10) A preschool or kindergarten teacher, appointed by the
4 President pro Tempore of the Senate. *teacher.*

5 (c) The members specified in paragraphs (1) to (3), inclusive,
6 of subdivision (b) shall be cochair of the committee.

7 (d) This section is repealed on January 1, 2019.