

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 360

Introduced by Assembly Member Brownley

February 14, 2011

An act to add Section 47604.1 to the Education Code, relating to charter schools.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 360, as introduced, Brownley. Charter schools.

(1) The Ralph M. Brown Act requires that all meetings of a legislative body, as defined, of a local agency be open and public and all persons be permitted to attend unless a closed session is authorized. The Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requires, with specified exceptions, that all meetings of a state body be open and public and all persons be permitted to attend.

This bill would expressly state that a charter school is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act, unless it is operated by an entity governed by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, in which case the school would be subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

(2) The California Public Records Act requires state and local agencies to make their records available for public inspection and to make copies available upon request and payment of a fee unless they are exempt from disclosure.

This bill would expressly state that a charter school is subject to the California Public Records Act.

(3) Existing law prohibits certain public officials, including, but not limited to, members of governing boards of school districts and citizens' oversight committees, from engaging in specified activities that are inconsistent or incompatible with, or inimical to, their duties as public

officials, including, but not limited to, entering into a contract in which the official or the official's family member has a financial interest, as specified.

This bill would expressly state that a charter school is subject to these provisions.

(4) The Political Reform Act of 1974 requires every state agency and local governmental agency to adopt a conflict-of-interest code, formulated at the most decentralized level possible, that requires designated employees of the agency to file statements of economic interest disclosing any investments, business positions, interests in real property, or sources of income that may foreseeably be affected materially by any governmental decision made or participated in by the designated employee by virtue of his or her position.

This bill would expressly state that a charter school is subject to the Political Reform Act of 1974.

(5) This bill would state various exceptions and clarifications regarding the applicability of the acts described in (1) to (4), inclusive.

(6) Existing law requires a member of the governing board of a school district to abstain from voting on personnel matters that uniquely affect a relative of the member.

This bill would expressly authorize an individual to serve as a member of the governing body of a charter school and be employed in a separate position at that charter school. The bill would require a member of the governing body of a charter school to abstain from voting on any matter affecting his or her own employment or any personnel matter that uniquely affects a relative of the member.

(7) The bill would make these provisions operative on July 1, 2012.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this
- 2 act to do all of the following:
- 3 (a) Establish conflict-of-interest policies for the governing board
- 4 of charter schools that mirror existing conflict-of-interest policies
- 5 followed by the governing board of school districts.
- 6 (b) Provide transparency in the operations of the many charter
- 7 schools that are providing quality educational options for parents

1 and pupils and renew the faith of parents and the community that
2 their local charter school is acting in the best interests of pupils.

3 (c) Continue to provide greater autonomy to charter schools
4 than traditional public schools and provide greater transparency
5 to parents and the public with regard to the use of public funds by
6 the governing board of charter schools for the educational benefit
7 of their pupils.

8 (d) Establish standards and procedures consistent with the
9 Charter Schools Act of 1992 to avoid conflicts of interest in charter
10 schools.

11 SEC. 2. Section 47604.1 is added to the Education Code, to
12 read:

13 47604.1. (a) A charter school is subject to all of the following:

14 (1) The Ralph M. Brown Act (Chapter 9 (commencing with
15 Section 54950) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government
16 Code), except that a charter school operated by an entity governed
17 by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing
18 with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title
19 2 of the Government Code) is subject to the Bagley-Keene Open
20 Meeting Act regardless of the authorizing entity.

21 (2) The California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5
22 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the
23 Government Code).

24 (3) Article 4 (commencing with Section 1090) of Chapter 1 of
25 Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

26 (4) The Political Reform Act of 1974 (Title 9 (commencing
27 with Section 81000) of the Government Code).

28 (b) Notwithstanding Section 1090 of the Government Code or
29 any other provision of law, an individual may serve as a member
30 of the governing body of a charter school and be employed in a
31 separate position at that charter school. A member of the governing
32 body of a charter school shall abstain from voting on all matters
33 affecting his or her own employment.

34 (c) A member of the governing body of a charter school shall
35 abstain from voting on personnel matters that uniquely affect a
36 relative of the member but may vote on collective bargaining
37 agreements and personnel matters that affect a class of employees
38 to which the relative belongs. For purposes of this section,
39 “relative” means an adult who is related to the person by blood or

1 affinity within the third degree, as determined by the common law,
2 or an individual in an adoptive relationship within the third degree.

3 (d) A person who is disqualified by the California Constitution
4 or laws of the state from holding a civil office shall not serve on
5 the governing body of a charter school.

6 (e) To the extent that the governing body of a charter school
7 engages in activities that are not related to the operation of the
8 charter school, this section does not make those unrelated activities
9 subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act, the Bagley-Keene Open
10 Meeting Act, or the California Public Records Act. A meeting of
11 the governing body of a charter school to discuss items related to
12 the operation of the charter school shall not include discussion of
13 any item regarding an activity of the governing body that is not
14 related to the operation of the charter school.

15 (f) The governing body of a charter school may meet within the
16 physical boundaries of the county or counties in which one or more
17 of the school's facilities are located provided that proper notices
18 pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act and the Bagley-Keene Open
19 Meeting Act are posted within the physical boundaries of each of
20 the counties in which any of the school's facilities is located. A
21 charter school also may meet in a county contiguous to the county
22 where one or more of the school's facilities are located if at least
23 10 percent of the pupils who are enrolled in the school reside in
24 that contiguous county. A nonclassroom based charter school that
25 does not have a facility may meet within the boundaries of the
26 county in which the greatest number of pupils who are enrolled in
27 the school reside.

28 (g) The governing body of a charter school may hold closed
29 sessions to consider a matter regarding pupil discipline as described
30 in Section 48912.

31 (h) For purposes of the Political Reform Act of 1974, the
32 jurisdiction of a charter school shall be the county or counties in
33 which the school's facility or facilities are located. The jurisdiction
34 for a nonclassroom based charter school that does not have a
35 facility shall be the physical boundaries of the county or counties
36 where at least 10 percent of the pupils who are enrolled in the
37 school reside or, if at least 10 percent of the pupils do not reside
38 in a single county, the county in which the greatest number of
39 pupils who are enrolled in the school reside.

- 1 (i) A statement of economic interest that is filed by a designated
- 2 person at a charter school after the required deadline pursuant to
- 3 the Political Reform Act of 1974 shall not be the sole basis for
- 4 revocation of a charter pursuant to Section 47607.
- 5 (j) For purposes of this section, “facility” means a charter school
- 6 campus, resource center, meeting space, or satellite facility.
- 7 (k) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2012.