
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

AB 22 (McCarty) - Transitional kindergarten: enrollment: funding: planning workgroups

Version: August 16, 2021

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 23, 2021

Policy Vote: ED. 4 - 0, HUMAN S. 4 - 1

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill requires any increases in student enrollment for transitional kindergarten to be funded with General Fund appropriations outside of the Proposition 98 guarantee. This bill also requires an additional adjustment to the kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 base grant equal to 14.2 percent for transitional kindergarten, and requires county superintendents of school to convene local transitional kindergarten planning workgroups to support the implementation of transitional kindergarten.

Fiscal Impact:

- By requiring increases in transitional kindergarten to be funded with General Fund appropriations, rather than within Proposition 98, this bill could lead to substantial General Fund cost pressures and the diversion of funding from other non-education related programs. At full implementation, these increases could range from the high hundreds of millions of dollars to over one billion dollars each year.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) estimates that the bill's grade span adjustment could result in additional Proposition 98 General Fund costs estimated to be between \$100 million and \$150 million in year 1, growing to approximately \$500 million each year at full implementation.
- By requiring county superintendents of schools to convene local transitional kindergarten planning workgroups, this bill could result in a reimbursable state mandate. The extent of these costs is unknown. The bill also provides intent language specifying that local funds, including funding from the California Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Program, may be used for the purposes of the local transitional kindergarten planning workgroups.
- The CDE estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$5 million over a five-year period to hire an external contractor to meet the data collection and statewide evaluation requirements of this bill. The CDE may also incur additional, unknown General Fund costs associated with selecting the evaluation contractor, providing technical assistance, and monitoring the contractor.

Background: Existing law establishes compulsory education, requiring children to attend school from age 6-18, and requires a child to be admitted to kindergarten if the child will have his or her fifth birthday on or before September 1 of the school year.

Transitional kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. Transitional kindergarten is designed to serve “older” four-year-olds and “young” five-year-olds who have their fifth birthday after the cut-off date for kindergarten (between September 2 and December 2). Eligibility for transitional kindergarten is focused on this cohort of students because they would have been eligible for kindergarten under the previous age requirements for entry into kindergarten.

Proposed Law: This bill requires appropriations to be made, for each fiscal year in which transitional kindergarten student enrollment is required to increase for offering transitional kindergarten to all eligible students, in addition to funding appropriated pursuant to Section 8 of Article XVI of the California Constitution (Proposition 98). This bill requires the amount of the appropriation to be equal to the cost of supporting the previous years of increased transitional kindergarten enrollment plus the cost of the estimated current fiscal year enrollment increase multiplied by the average kindergarten LCFF amount calculated, including grant add-ons, as adjusted for inflation.

This bill also requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to compute an additional adjustment to the kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 base grant that is equal to 14.2 percent for each transitional kindergarten student who is enrolled in the school district or charter school.

This bill requires each county superintendent of schools to convene a local transitional kindergarten planning workgroup to support the successful implementation of transitional kindergarten, as specified. The workgroups shall solicit feedback to inform planning from a range of parents, family childcare providers, and preschool and childcare teachers that reflects the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and economic diversity of the county. The workgroups shall also work collaboratively to plan and strategize around the implementation of transitional kindergarten on specified issues.

This bill requires CDE, in consultation with the Department of Social Services and First 5 California, to conduct a statewide evaluation on the impact of transitional kindergarten in California, as specified.

Staff Comments: The 2021 Budget Act Package expands the transitional kindergarten program beginning in the 2022-23 school year, and seeks to achieve Universal Transitional Kindergarten eligibility by 2025-2026. For each school year during the period of 2022-23 through 2025-26, the Transitional Kindergarten program enrollment date is extended two months later, with the final year extending the enrollment date by three months such that a child who has their fourth birthday by September 1st shall be admitted to a Transitional Kindergarten Program. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, a school district or charter school shall maintain an average of at least one adult for every 12 pupils, transitioning to one adult for every 10 pupils in a transitional kindergarten classroom in 2023-24, subject to Budget appropriations.

This bill requires an additional adjustment to the kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 base grant that is equal to 14.2 percent for each transitional kindergarten student who is enrolled in the school district or charter school. CDE estimates that this could result in an estimated \$100 million to \$150 million in year 1, growing to approximately \$500 million each year at full implementation.

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