

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1851 (Gipson) – As Amended April 27, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), by July 1, 2027, subject to an appropriation, to enter into a contract with one or more local educational agencies (LEAs) with capacity and established expertise providing technical assistance to LEAs to serve as lead entities for implementation of integrated, universal social-emotional learning (SEL), behavioral health, and restorative practices for K-12 education students. Selected lead entities must, by January 1, 2028, make resources and technical assistance available to LEAs and ensure that support provided is equity-focused, including trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

One-time Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures of an unknown amount but likely in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Legislature to appropriate funds for CDE to enter into a contract with one or more LEAs selected as lead entities to produce and proliferate guidance, resources, and technical assistance as required by this bill.

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

This bill strengthens coordination and accountability around existing Social Emotional Learning and school-based behavioral health efforts so that prevention happens early, consistently, and equitably. Our students deserve systems that work together, not in isolation.

2) **Background. *Social-Emotional Learning.*** CDE participates in the Collaborating States Initiative on SEL (CASEL), which promotes information sharing among member states to support the proliferation of best practices and ideas helping build strong SEL in schools. CASEL emphasizes the five competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. According to CDE, the principles undergirding a SEL approach can support implementation of LCAP goals, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), establishment of LEA leadership priorities, curriculum adoption, and community engagement.

***Existing Whole-Child Initiatives.*** The state has made multiple significant investments in recent years to promote SEL in public schools including, but not limited to, the California

Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), MTSS, California Integrated Supports Project (CA-ISP), and community schools.

AB 133, (Committee on Budget), Chapter 143, Statutes of 2021, created the CYBHI to be administered by the California Health and Human Services Agency and appropriated \$4.6 billion across several fiscal years to promote behavioral health supports and services. The Legislature also appropriated a total of \$4 billion in one-time funds across several fiscal years to establish community schools and the 2026 Governor's Budget proposes \$1 billion in ongoing support for this program both for existing community schools funding recipients and for new participants. CA-ISP, established in 2021, included a one-time \$50 million appropriation for Placer County Office of Education, selected through a competitive application process, to partner with Orange County Department of Education to expand the state's capacity to support LEAs in implementing an integrated approach to SEL. To date, the Legislature has appropriated almost \$100 million total across multiple fiscal years to support MTSS, which attempts to address the needs of students through a framework aligning academic, behavioral, and SEL in a fully integrated system benefiting all students.

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