
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1969
Author: Bonta (D)
Amended: 8/21/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

PRIOR SENATE VOTES NOT RELEVANT

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/26/26

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 56-14, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Community Schools Partnership Program: Promise Neighborhoods

SOURCE: Grace INC

DIGEST: This bill requires any local education agency that retains funds distributed through the California Community Schools Partnership Program for administration to use the funds consistent with the Community Schools Framework and authorizes the local educational agency to use those funds to make a schoolsite a network lead for multiple schoolsites located in a Promise Neighborhood.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/21/26 remove the definitions and grant program and instead allow local education agencies to use funds retained from the California Community Schools Partnership Program as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes, in federal law, the Promise Neighborhood program, which provides grants to nonprofit organizations, tribal organizations, or institutions of higher education, which, together with partners, develop and implement plans to significantly improve outcomes of children living in a given neighborhood. (20 United States Code (U.S.C.) section 7274)

- 2) Establishes the “California Cradle-to-Career Data Systems Act”, which expresses legislative intent to build a data system that services students and families by identifying and tracking predictive indicators to enable parents, teachers, health and human services providers, and policymakers to provide appropriate interventions and supports to address disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students. (Education Code (EDC) section 10850 et seq.)
- 3) Defines “Community school” to mean a public school serving preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, with strong and intentional community partnerships ensuring pupil learning and whole child and family development, and specifically includes the following:
 - a) Integrated supports services, including the coordination of trauma-informed health, mental health, and social services that ensure coordination and support with county and local educational agency resources and nongovernmental organizations, and early screening and intervention for learning and other needs.
 - b) Family, pupil, schoolsite staff, and community engagement, which may include home visits, home-school collaboration, culturally responsive community partnerships to strengthen family well-being and stability, and school climate surveys.
 - c) Collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators, including professional development to transform school culture and climate, that centers on pupil learning and supports mental and behavioral health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, restorative justice, and other key areas relating to pupil learning and whole child and family development.
 - d) Extended learning time and opportunities, including before and after school care and summer programs. (EDC section 8901 (b))
- 4) Allocates funding to the California Community Schools Partnership Program to be spent in accordance with the California Community Schools Framework and used to implement community schools supported by local networks and to implement shared decision-making practices with education interest holders but not be used for punitive disciplinary practices or the engagement of campus law enforcement. (EDC section 8903 (b))

- 5) Allows local education agencies to retain 10% of California Community Schools Partnership Program funds for administration. (EDC section 8903 (f))

This bill:

- 1) Makes findings and declarations about child poverty and the impact of place-based initiatives.
- 2) Authorizes local education agencies that retain the allowable amount of California Community Schools Partnership Program funds for administration to use it to establish a schoolsite as the network lead for multiple schoolsites in a Promise Neighborhood.

Background

According to the author, “A strong understanding of the community and regional context, as well the effective coordination of services and supports aligned with the needs of the community, are essential to achieving better outcomes for children and families at every stage of life – from cradle to career.

“Over the last 10 years, Promise Neighborhoods, Cradle to Career (C2C) networks, and similar entities have worked in disadvantaged communities. Utilizing a place-based, equity-focused approach, these networks coordinate services and supports across the public and private sectors and collect and share data to maximize the efficiency and efficacy of programming. Areas where these networks have operated have seen substantial improvements in healthcare access, literacy, and college and career readiness, as well as reduced child welfare and juvenile justice involvement. To scale these proven cradle- to- career solutions, the state must invest in the “It Takes A Village” strategy by allowing Local Educational Agencies to partner up with these community based networks like Promise Neighborhoods in order to provide community schools with a support network.”

California’s Safety Net. According to End Poverty in California, “the safety net’s job is to undo the poverty and disparities wrought by other institutions” by providing financial and programmatic support to folks already experiencing poverty or economic need. In California, the safety net includes numerous programs that provide a mix of supports and services including cash grants, nutritional support, housing assistance, and tax credits. These programs include CalFresh, CalWORKs, school lunch programs, the Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program, state and federal Earned Income Tax Credit, the child tax credit, General Assistance, and Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment.

These programs help millions of Californians each year. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit lowered poverty rates in 2023 by 2.3 points among children and CalFresh prevented 3.7% more children from living in poverty. Additionally, CalWORKs and General Assistance together lowered California's child poverty rate by 0.9%.

The majority of safety net programs have stringent and unique eligibility criteria and different application and access points, which make programs difficult to navigate and attain for families who need support, especially when compounded with the chronic stress of living in poverty.

Community Schools. Community Schools are an educational model that requires schools to provide services that care for the whole student, not just their educational needs. This includes expanded options for before and after school programs, health and wellness services, and services for the student's family. The schools provide these services with their own funding and through partnerships with community organizations. According to the State Department of Education, community schools usually include four features: (1) integrated support services; (2) family and community engagement; (3) collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators; and (4) extended learning time and opportunities. This bill acknowledges the alignment in administration and mission of place-based partnerships and community schools. This year the California budget included \$1 billion allocated for the California Community Schools Partnership Program to allow local education agencies to implement new community schools and provide ongoing support for existing community schools. Local education agencies can retain 10% of the funding they receive for specified activities. This bill allows schools that receive funding to also use it to serve as the network lead for multiple school sites in a Promise Neighborhood.

Federal Promise Neighborhoods. Promise Neighborhoods are a holistic, place-based approach to reducing poverty and improving economic, social, and academic outcomes in disadvantaged communities by developing "cradle to career" solutions that support children and families. According to the Lifting Children and Families out of Poverty Task Force, "Promise Neighborhoods tailor their specific set of cradle-to-college-and-career solutions to the local context, but each share the following characteristics: results-driven focus on impacting population-level results; place-based to focus on a specific high-need geography; collective impact is achieved through partnerships."

Notable examples of Promise Neighborhoods outside of California include the Promise Heights Neighborhood in Baltimore. According to the Urban Institute,

“Promise Heights successfully built partnerships with schools, community organizations, and families. These partnerships served as the infrastructure for expanded access to a cradle-to-career pipeline of resources and supports aligned with the goals of the Promise Neighborhoods program. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, the flexibility of grant funding enabled Promise Heights to pivot from its long-term strategy in order to meet urgent needs that arose in the community. Although Promise Heights made a shift toward a partnership-based model and established a childcare center to sustain programming, the initiative faced barriers to sustainability in the final years of the grant.”

Related/Prior Legislation:

AB 1321 (Bonta, 2023) was substantially similar to this bill. AB 1321 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2517 (Bonta, 2022) was substantially similar to this bill. AB 2517 was vetoed by Governor Newsom, who cited costs concerns and stated, “Bills with significant fiscal impact, such as this measure, should be considered and accounted for as part of the annual budget process.”

AB 132 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 144, Statutes of 2021) establishes the Cradle-to-Career Data System to link data on student progress through education, workforce training, employment, health and social services; establishes a governing board comprised of 21 members; and establishes the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data within Government Operations Agency until July 1, 2026, among other things.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: Yes Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations for the 6/10/26 version of this bill: “Unknown General Fund costs, potentially tens of millions, to fund the grant program. Unknown General Fund costs, potentially hundreds of thousands, annually for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to administer the grant program. The California Department of Education (CDE) estimates General Fund costs of \$384,000 in 2026–27 and \$378,000 in 2027–28 for state administration.”

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/21/26)

Grace INC (Source)

California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

California Primary Care Association

Cft – a Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, Aft, Afl-cio

Emeryville, City of
Greater Sacramento Urban League
Marin Promise Partnership
Mission Economic Development Agency
Oakland, City of
Resources for Community Development
Sbcs

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/21/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 56-14, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Castillo, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Johnson, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Flora, Garcia, Hoover, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Schultz

Prepared by: Naima Ford Antal / HUMAN S. / (916) 651-1524
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