

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2056 (Alvarez)

As Amended June 9, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Revises and recasts the World Language Teacher Exchange and Recruitment Law of 1963 by expanding authorized teacher exchange and recruitment activities to include county offices of education and charter schools, expressly authorizing exchanges with Mexico and Spain, removing specified state-level administrative responsibilities, and authorizing designated visa sponsors to facilitate placements of teachers from other countries, including Mexico and Spain, in California schools for cultural exchange purposes.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Adds Spain to the named countries for which the State Board of Education (SBE) is authorized to adopt rules and regulations under which teachers employed by local educational agencies (LEAs) may exchange positions with teachers in schools in other countries. Retains the authority for the SBE to adopt rules and regulations under which teachers employed by LEAs may exchange positions with teachers in schools in any country.
- 2) Requires any adopted SBE rules and regulations to authorize J-1 visa sponsors designated by the United States Department of State to sponsor teachers from other countries, including Mexico and Spain, for placement in California LEAs to promote cultural exchange for specified purposes, expanding current law which lists only Mexico.
 - a) Clarifies that one of the specified purposes is to ensure California students may engage in bilingual instruction and assist LEAs in supporting diverse language learning opportunities.

COMMENTS

Modernizing a largely dormant statutory framework. The World Language Teacher Exchange and Recruitment Law of 1963 was enacted at a time when formalized teacher exchange programs were more centrally coordinated through state and federal agencies. Existing law still contemplates a state-directed structure in which the SBE adopts regulations, and the California Department of Education (CDE) administers exchange arrangements in coordination with federal programs. In practice, however, many modern international educator exchange programs operate through direct partnerships between LEAs and federally designated visa sponsors. This bill updates statute to better align with the current operational reality of international teacher recruitment and exchange programs.

Addressing ongoing bilingual teacher workforce challenges. California continues to experience staffing shortages in bilingual education and world language instruction. Teacher shortages have been particularly acute in dual language immersion programs and in schools serving large populations of English learners. LEAs have increasingly explored international recruitment pipelines, particularly with Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries, as one strategy for addressing persistent workforce shortages. By expressly authorizing exchanges and recruitment activities involving Mexico and permitting placements facilitated through designated visa sponsors, this bill seeks to provide greater statutory clarity for these arrangements.

Shift from state-level administration to local flexibility. This bill substantially reduces the formal role of the SBE and the CDE in administering exchange programs. Rather than requiring statewide regulations and department-administered arrangements, this bill moves toward a more decentralized framework in which LEAs may work more directly with exchange organizations and visa sponsors. Supporters may argue that this approach provides greater flexibility and reduces unnecessary state administrative involvement. However, the shift also raises broader questions regarding consistency, oversight, and accountability across programs that may operate differently from one LEA to another.

Bill is similar to measure vetoed last year. AB 833 (Alvarez) of the 2025-26 Session would have required that the rules and regulations adopted by the SBE under which teachers employed by LEAs and charter schools may exchange positions with teachers in schools in other countries authorize J-1 visa sponsors designated by the United States Department of State, in addition to the CDE, to sponsor teachers from Mexico for placement in California LEAs to promote cultural exchange. That bill was vetoed by the Governor with the following message:

This bill is unnecessary as there is no statutory barrier to expanding program sponsorship for teachers from other countries, including Mexico, to California. Federal law does not require a single exclusive sponsor. Further, the author's stated goal is to help fill persistent educator shortages, which is contrary to the program's purpose to promote cross-cultural understanding and short-term professional growth opportunities.

This bill is substantially similar to AB 833, but additionally removes the requirement that exchanges be made through the CDE and removes the department's authority to administer the program; eliminates the requirement that exchanges be limited to one year or less; states that exchanges with teachers from Mexico and Spain may help provide California pupils with access to bilingual instruction and assist LEAs in meeting bilingual education needs; and removes the authority for the department to accept federal grants for the program. As a result, this bill arguably moves even farther away from the traditional conception of a short-term cultural exchange program and more directly frames the program as a workforce strategy for addressing bilingual teacher shortages.

According to the Author

"AB 2056 constitutes a bold and transformative legislative response to the persistent difficulties facing California's bilingual education and English learner programs. By opening the opportunity for supporting exchanges with Mexico, this groundbreaking legislation unlocks access to a pool of exceptionally qualified temporary educators who bring rich expertise in Spanish-language instruction and culturally relevant teaching methods. With over 1.1 million English Learners in California's public schools, the inclusion of Mexican teachers is not just beneficial but essential for cultivating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This initiative not only aims to bridge the critical gap of bilingual teachers—particularly in subjects such as math, science, and special education—but also enhances the educational experience by fostering global education and cultural exchange."

"The proposed bill also seeks to enhance cultural exchange opportunities. Numerous teachers from Mexico have expressed interest in participating as temporary educators in California. Beyond the professional benefits of program participation, these educators are afforded the opportunity to observe and engage with California's cultural environment. It also expands the range of opportunities, allowing local educational agencies, including school districts and county

offices of education, to decide whether to participate in bringing a temporary international teacher from Mexico for cross-cultural exchange."

Arguments in Support

The San Diego County Office of Education writes, "Since 1986, when the U.S. Department of State designated the California Department of Education as a sponsor for the Exchange Visitor Program, the Teacher Exchange Program has been instrumental in bringing credentialed teachers from abroad to California on J-1 visas. These educators have played a critical role in supporting bilingual and bicultural education, particularly in classrooms with high numbers of students who are English learners. Yet, the program's current structure lacks the flexibility needed to expand participation, leaving many qualified foreign teachers without access to valuable cultural and professional exchange opportunities in California."

"AB 2056 (Alvarez) expands teacher exchange opportunities with Mexico by strengthening cultural and educational collaboration between California and Mexico and increasing access for qualified bilingual educators to participate temporarily in California's Teacher Exchange Program. Increasing the number of Mexican teachers sponsored under the program would help meet the needs of California's diverse student population and support culturally responsive instruction."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES:

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

YES: Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Alanis, Garcia, Lowenthal, Pellerin, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 13-0-2

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi, Pellerin

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0-6

YES: Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Solache, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Addis, Hadwick, Celeste Rodriguez, Sharp-Collins, Soria, Wicks

SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
ABS, ABST OR NV: Ashby, Grove, Seyarto

UPDATED

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