

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2202 (Muratsuchi, et al.)
As Amended May 18, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Establishes the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission (Commission), an advisory body to the State Board of Education (SBE).

Major Provisions

- 1) States the purposes of the Commission are to: advise the SBE and the California Department of Education (CDE) on existing SBE and CDE policies and practices related to closing the achievement gap; make recommendations for improving the support that the state provides to local educational agencies (LEAs) to close the achievement gap; and use the Closing the Achievement Gap State Operations and Support Plan developed as proposed by AB 2225 (Patel) of the current session, as a guiding document for reviewing and developing the Commission's priorities and recommendations.
- 2) Requires the Commission to consist of 17 specified members appointed by the Governor to reflect geographic, demographic, and district-type diversity and to serve no more than one four-year term, based on the calendar year.
- 3) Requires the Commission to consult with the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) to identify and assess the state's efficacy in providing assistance and support to LEAs identified for assistance as part of the statewide system of support; identify opportunities to strengthen continuous improvement support, including the development of a program, to be known as the Statewide Improvement Pathways Program, that provides examples of best practices and programs that can be scaled and modified to adapt to the needs of LEAs; and continually assess the extent to which there are gaps in state support for LEAs in their efforts to close achievement gaps.
- 4) Requires, on December 1, 2028, and annually every two years thereafter on December 1st, the Commission to submit a report to the Governor, the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, the SBE, and the CDE with recommendations and proposed actions that the state can take to help and support LEAs in closing the achievement gap. Requires the SBE to consider reports submitted by the Commission as an agenda item at a regularly scheduled public meeting or at a meeting of the SBE that includes public discussion and consideration. Requires the CDE to post reports submitted by the Commission on the CDE's website.

COMMENTS

Key provisions of the bill. This bill would establish the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission, an advisory body to the SBE, with 17 specified Commission members. The Commission's stated purpose would include: advising the SBE and the CDE on existing SBE and CDE policies and practices; making recommendations for improving the support that the state provides to LEAs to close the achievement gap; and using the Closing the Achievement Gap State Operations and Support Plan, developed as proposed by AB 2225 (Patel) of the current

legislative session, as a guiding document for reviewing and developing the Commission's priorities and recommendations.

This bill is one of four bills sponsored by the California School Boards Association (CSBA) in the 2025-26 Session to establish "a comprehensive state-level operations and support plan that clearly defines how the state will help LEAs close achievement gaps" (CSBA Closing the Achievement Gap Legislative Package Overview). Other bills include: AB 2149 (Garcia) would require the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) to assess and publicly report to the Legislature and the Governor the state's progress in closing pupil academic achievement gaps and to include recommendations on actions that the state can take to meet its performance targets established pursuant to AB 2225 (Patel) of the current legislative session; AB 2225 (Patel) would establish a working group to develop a Plan; and AB 2514 (Ransom) of the current legislative session would require the working group and Plan to be established by AB 2225 (Patel) of the current legislative session to include recommendations for the development of a State of the Achievement Gap Dashboard.

Achievement gaps. Achievement gaps are significant and persistent disparities in student performance and educational attainment between student groups. Achievement gaps exist between different student ethnic and racial groups, as well as between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In California, achievement levels between student groups on nearly every indicator of student performance has been making progress in closing the achievement gap, but several student groups still fall behind state averages.

According to a 2015 report from the Economic Policy Institute, "Early Education Gaps by Social Class and Race Start United States Children Out on Unequal Footing: A Summary of the Major Findings in Inequalities at the Starting Gate," achievement gaps begin as early as birth, particularly among students with different socioeconomic backgrounds. The key foundations for learning begin as soon as a child is born, and starting school behind their peers typically persists as children progress through school. Studies show that the black-white achievement gap has persisted but changed over time. It narrowed in both reading and math from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, then widened in the early 1990s, but has been narrowing consistently since 1999 (Reardon, 2014). In addition, even though the Black/African American subgroup includes pupils at all income levels, its scores are below the scores of economically disadvantaged pupils, which suggests that poverty alone does not explain this outcome. According to Reardon et al., a relatively common question addressed in studies of racial/ethnic achievement gaps (particularly the black-white gap) is the extent to which the observed gaps can be explained by socioeconomic differences between the groups.

A 2004 Review of Economics and Statistics report, described that socioeconomic factors explain almost all (85%) of the black-white math gap, and all of the reading gap at the start of kindergarten. By the third grade, however, the same socioeconomic factors account for only about 60% of both the math and reading black-white gaps. This finding suggests that socioeconomic factors explain, in large part, the black-white differences in cognitive skills at the start of formal schooling, but do not account for the growth of the black-white gap as children progress through elementary school.

Student achievement on standardized test results in California demonstrates achievement gaps between different race and ethnic groups, students with disabilities and students without disabilities, and students of different socioeconomic statuses. For example, the 2025 California

Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) English Language Arts (ELA) results for all grades assessed included 32.8% of Black or African American students and 38.84% of Latino students that met or exceeded targeted benchmarks for mathematics, compared to 61.8% of White students, and 74.4% of Asian students. The statewide average was 48.8%. 2025 CAASPP Math results for all grades assessed included 20.1% of Black or African American students and 25.74% of Latino students that met or exceeded targeted benchmarks for mathematics, compared to 51% of White students, and 70.3% of Asian students. The statewide average was 37.3%.

Academic achievement gaps have consequences beyond school. A 2018 Equality of Opportunity Project at Stanford University report, *Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective* states, "Black children born to parents in the bottom household income quintile have a 2.5% chance of rising to the top quintile of household income, compared with 10.6% for whites," and "American Indian and black children have a much higher rate of downward mobility than other groups [emphasis in original]."

Statewide efforts to close achievement gaps in California. Since the creation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the related accountability measures in 2013, California has developed the "Statewide System of Support" for all LEAs, including school districts, COEs and charter schools. The goal for support at all levels is to assist LEAs and their schools in meeting the needs of each student served, with a focus on building capacity to sustain improvement and effectively address inequities in student opportunities and outcomes. The System of Support is comprised of four entities in current law: the CDE, SBE, county offices of education (COEs), and CCEE. Current law articulates a system of policymaking (the Governor, Legislature and SBE), data collection (CDE and LEAs), technical assistance (CDE, COEs, and CCEE), and practice (LEAs), but there is no entity formally tasked with collecting research related to achievement gaps and supporting undergraduate and preservice preparation of educators programs. Although achievement gaps are widely studied both at the national and statewide levels, few supports exist to collect, distill and distribute the findings from that research to practitioners and technical assistance providers in order to change statewide policies and local practice. Please refer to the Assembly Education Committee analysis of this bill for additional information about state efforts underway to close the achievement gap.

According to the Author

According to the author, "Despite billions in targeted funding, performance for our most vulnerable subgroups, including Black, Latino, and low-income students, as well as foster and homeless youth, remains stubbornly low. The current fragmented approach has failed to move the needle at the pace our students deserve. We cannot continue to identify disparities year after year without a coordinated, state-level strategy to eliminate them.

AB 2202 establishes the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission to move the state from a culture of monitoring to a culture of action. If we expect our local school districts to close the gap, the state must be held accountable for providing the resources, administrative flexibility and alignment they need to succeed."

Arguments in Support

The CSBA writes, "This legislative package proposes that the state, similar to local school district and county office of education boards, must adopt clear goals, measurable benchmarks and transparent and understandable reporting to the public on the state's progress towards a more

aligned state system that improves outcomes for California students. This north star would guide the state's public education entities and serve as a common throughline to a shared goal of closing achievement gaps. Together, they represent a landmark effort by the Legislature to help further focus and align the state's policy, fiscal and operational efforts to support schools and establish a new level of shared accountability between state entities and local educational agencies for closing achievement gaps."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

Ongoing General Fund costs of an unknown but significant amount, likely in the mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars, for the CDE to staff and support the commission.

VOTES**ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0**

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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