
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2241 (Boerner) - School facilities: inclusive school playgrounds

Version: April 27, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill establishes the Inclusive Playground Advisory Committee within the California Department of Education (CDE) to develop model guidelines for inclusive school playgrounds. The advisory committee would develop statewide guidance on playground design that supports participation by students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers, conduct outreach, and provide recommendations to the Legislature.

Fiscal Impact: The CDE indicates that the bill's costs would depend on whether it would have a member sitting on the council. To the extent that it were to have a member appointed, there would be ongoing General Fund costs of \$188,000 and 1.0 position to support the council and provide guidance. If CDE does not have a member on the council, it would incur ongoing General Fund costs of \$56,000 to appoint a chair. The bill requires CDE to support implementation using existing resources or available grant funding.

Background: Existing law requires the Department of General Services (DGS) to review plans and specifications for public buildings and school facilities to ensure compliance with state and federal accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires public facilities, including playgrounds, to meet minimum accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities.

Existing law requires DGS to supervise the design and construction of school buildings to ensure compliance with applicable safety and accessibility requirements. Existing law also requires the CDE to establish standards governing the design and construction of school facilities.

Existing law establishes the School Facility Program (SFP), administered by the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) and State Allocation Board (SAB), which provides state funding for school construction and modernization projects. The law authorizes school districts to use state school facilities funding for specified school facility improvements, including certain playground safety improvements.

Proposed Law: This bill establishes the California Inclusive School Playgrounds Act and defines an "inclusive school playground" as an outdoor play area designed to enable students with disabilities to play alongside nondisabled students through universal design features that exceed minimum accessibility requirements.

This bill establishes a 15-member Inclusive Playground Advisory Committee within the CDE, comprised of representatives with expertise in disability advocacy, child

development, universal design, school facilities, and inclusive playgrounds. It requires the advisory committee, by January 1, 2028, to coordinate with CDE to develop and publish model guidelines for inclusive school playgrounds that reflect universal design principles and address equipment, surfacing, sensory features, safety, maintenance, and the needs of underserved, rural, and special-needs communities.

This bill requires the advisory committee to recommend requirements or incentives that encourage inclusive playground features, conduct outreach and education activities, and coordinate with state agencies on accessibility and child-development efforts. It also requires the advisory committee, beginning January 1, 2028, and every five years thereafter, to submit a report to the Legislature regarding inclusive school playgrounds, including recommendations on resource allocation.

This bill authorizes CDE to review proposed inclusive school playground designs submitted by local educational agencies seeking state funding and provide technical feedback regarding consistency with the model guidelines.

The bill requires CDE to support implementation using existing resources or available grant funding.

Staff Comments: While federal ADA standards establish requirements for accessibility, including accessible routes, surfacing, and connections to play structures, inclusive playground design seeks to address a broader set of considerations, including sensory engagement, social interaction, cognitive accessibility, and opportunities for cooperative play among children with differing abilities. According to the author, “AB 2241 would ensure newly built or renovated playgrounds at public schools are made with inclusivity in mind. Play is a fundamental right for every child, recognized by United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Federal ADA standards mandate basic accessibility, but do not ensure inclusive play features. Out-of-state and internationally, there are many examples of playground design going above and beyond to create experiences for children which help them grow, both socially, and mentally, as well as in developing their fine motor skills. Current California design for playgrounds is not sufficient to nurture these important skills for our children. AB 2241 would address these issues by ensuring that new and renovated playgrounds on public school campuses are inclusive, accessible, and engaging for children of all abilities, designed by an expert advisory committee and given priority funding.”

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