

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2468
Author: Patel (D)
Amended: 8/18/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 7/1/26

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

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: School accountability: pupils with disabilities: inclusion

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill establishes the Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) Project in statute, assigns responsibility for universal supports to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and targeted supports to the California Department of Education (CDE), and redirects \$30 million appropriated for the project to CCEE for allocation to the El Dorado County Office of Education.

Senate floor amendments of 8/18/26 redirect the \$30 million appropriated for SIP in the 2026-27 Budget Act from CDE's direct allocation to Riverside and El Dorado County Offices of Education (COEs) to CCEE, through CDE, for allocation to El Dorado COE to implement CCEE's universal support responsibilities under this bill. The amendments also clarify that existing expenditure plan and reporting requirements apply only to the prior \$15 million appropriation.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires each local educational agency (LEA) to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible pupils with disabilities in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- 2) Requires pupils with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), such that they are educated alongside nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and removed from the general education environment only when necessary.
- 3) Requires California to develop and implement a State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) measuring the state's performance under IDEA, including indicators related to LRE placements.
- 4) Establishes the CCEE to advise and assist LEAs in achieving the goals established in local control and accountability plans through the statewide system of support, including differentiated assistance and direct technical assistance.
- 5) Authorizes the CDE to conduct general supervision and monitoring activities necessary to ensure LEAs comply with IDEA and state special education requirements, including compliance monitoring and corrective action.
- 6) Establishes the statewide system of support to provide coordinated technical assistance and continuous improvement support to LEAs.
- 7) Establishes the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program to increase access to inclusive early learning opportunities for children with exceptional needs.
- 8) Requires the CDE to publish LEA data related to federal LRE indicators on its website and make that information available through the California School Dashboard.

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the SIP Project in statute.
- 2) Requires the SIP Project to be jointly administered by the CDE and the CCEE, through contracts or a memoranda of understanding with one or two county COEs.
- 3) Assigns responsibility to CDE for targeted technical assistance provided to LEAs identified through IDEA SPP indicators and the department's general supervision process.

- 4) Assigns responsibility to CCEE for universal statewide technical assistance, including professional learning, demonstration sites, educator resources, inclusion academies, teacher preparation partnerships, and project evaluation.
- 5) Requires CDE and CCEE to coordinate implementation through shared referral processes, data-sharing protocols, and annual joint reviews.
- 6) Requires annual reports to the Legislature describing project activities, participation, outcomes, and recommendations.
- 7) Requires both agencies to ensure implementation is consistent with existing federal and state special education rights, including individualized education program (IEP) requirements and protections for pupils who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.
- 8) Revises the \$30 million appropriated for the SIP Project in the 2026–27 fiscal year to require CDE to allocate the funding to CCEE, which is required to allocate the funding to the El Dorado COE to implement CCEE’s responsibilities under the project.
- 9) Limits existing expenditure plan and annual reporting requirements applicable to SIP funding to the previously appropriated \$15 million.

Comments

Need for the bill. According to the author, “Research over many decades has found that inclusion offers a host of academic, behavioral, and social benefits for students with disabilities, as well as for their peers. In spite of these benefits, California has lagged behind most other states in the rate of inclusion of students with disabilities for many years.

“50 years after the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), California schools still struggle to realize the vision that all students with disabilities experience meaningful inclusion and belonging in the academic and social life of school communities. Research consistently shows that schools need sustained, practice-embedded support and a systemwide, proactive approach to achieve meaningful gains in inclusive education.

“Recent research from Policy Analysis for California Education shows that districts participating in the Supporting Innovative Practices project have increased

inclusion at a rate significantly higher than the state average. Over five years, SIP districts experienced 13 times the growth compared to the state average. Districts required to participate by the California Department of Education because of low rates of inclusion experienced growth 6 times the state average.

“AB 2468 will ensure that SIP is able to continue and expand its successful work, as well as align and integrate it with the other improvement initiatives.”

What is the appropriate division of responsibilities between CDE and CCEE? Prior amendments substantially revised the bill’s administrative structure. Rather than transferring the SIP Project entirely to the CCEE, this bill establishes a shared governance model in which CDE administers compliance-driven technical assistance required under federal law, while CCEE administers universal technical assistance through the statewide system of support. This approach better recognizes CDE’s responsibilities as California’s state educational agency under IDEA, while leveraging CCEE’s expertise in continuous improvement. However, because CDE and CCEE would administer different components of the same statewide initiative through COEs, the Legislature may wish to consider whether this bill sufficiently defines each agency’s responsibilities and decision-making authority to minimize duplication, avoid inconsistent guidance to LEAs, and establish clear accountability for overall program outcomes.

This bill shifts responsibility for statewide universal supports from CDE to CCEE. Although CDE would continue administering targeted technical assistance connected to its federal monitoring responsibilities, this bill assigns responsibility for universal supports, including statewide professional learning, educator resources, inclusion academies, demonstration sites, and teacher preparation partnerships, to CCEE. This represents a significant policy decision regarding where statewide expertise on inclusive instructional practices should reside. The Legislature may wish to consider whether these functions are more appropriately housed within CCEE because they align with the collaborative’s broader continuous improvement mission, or whether they should remain within CDE alongside other statewide special education initiatives to preserve a single statewide lead on instructional guidance and technical assistance for pupils with disabilities.

This bill codifies an administrative program while also prescribing its operational structure. Unlike many education programs created directly in statute, the SIP Project has operated administratively for approximately a decade through CDE and COEs. This bill not only establishes the project in statute, but also specifies in detail how it must be administered, the activities it must conduct, the agencies

responsible for implementation, coordination requirements, annual reporting, and the allocation of recently appropriated funding to implement the new administrative structure. Codifying these operational decisions provides stability and legislative direction but may also reduce administrative flexibility to adapt the project as state priorities, federal requirements, or lessons learned from implementation evolve.

This bill builds upon California's existing statewide system of support. This bill is intended to integrate inclusive instructional practices into California's broader statewide system of support rather than operate as a standalone special education initiative. Throughout this bill, the SIP Project is directed to align with differentiated assistance, direct technical assistance, educator workforce initiatives, teacher preparation programs, and other statewide improvement initiatives. To the extent this coordination can be successfully implemented, it may reduce duplication of technical assistance and reinforce the principle that improving outcomes for pupils with disabilities is a shared responsibility across general education and special education systems rather than the responsibility of special education programs alone. At the same time, successful implementation will require careful coordination between CDE and CCEE to ensure that technical assistance remains coherent rather than fragmented.

This bill aligns recently appropriated funding with the proposed administrative structure. The 2026–27 budget appropriated \$30 million to CDE for allocation in equal amounts to the Riverside and El Dorado COEs to support the SIP Project. This bill instead requires CDE to allocate those funds to CCEE, which would allocate the funding to El Dorado COE to implement CCEE's universal support responsibilities under this bill. Accordingly, this bill does not determine whether the SIP Project receives additional funding—the budget has already made that investment—but changes how the funding is administered to conform to the governance structure established by this bill.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- This bill could lead to one-time General Fund cost pressure of at least \$30 million for the project. The bill's provisions are contingent upon an appropriation and includes legislative intent to appropriate at least \$30 million over five years to the CCEE, in addition to separate funding for CDE. The AB 126 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 65, Statutes of 2026), the education trailer bill, includes \$30 million for this purpose.

- The CCEE estimates General Fund costs ranging from \$1.8 million to \$2.9 million over five years to administer and coordinate the universal support components of the SIP Project. The higher end of the range includes the cost for 3.0 positions and resources necessary to collaborate with an institution of higher education to support evaluation of the project, including the use of evidence-based practices, for the purpose of continuous improvement of the project.
- The CDE estimates ongoing General Fund costs of \$378,000 and 2.0 positions to oversee the new activities of coordinating with the CCEE and the new governance administration.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/18/26)

Alameda County Office of Education
Antelope Valley Union High School District
Association of Regional Center Agencies
Butte County SELPA
California Association for Bilingual Education
California Catholic Conference
California County Superintendents
California School Boards Association
Coalition for Adequate Funding for Special Education
Disability Rights California
DJ B Diamond
El Dorado County Office of Education
Eureka City Schools
Imperial County SELPA
Kern County Office of Education
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Manteca Unified School District
Merced County Office of Education
Merced County SELPA
NextGen California
North Monterey County Unified School District
Novak Education Consulting
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Organized Binder
Sacramento County Office of Education
San Diego Unified School District
San Francisco Unified School District

San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Santa Barbara County Education Office
Santa Clara County Office of Education
SELPA Administrators of CA
Soquel Union Elementary School District

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/18/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, 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, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Ian Johnson / ED. / (916) 651-4105
8/19/26 11:09:37

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