
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2496

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Fiscal: Yes

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Subject: Local educational agencies: reports: school accountability report card: California School Dashboard: local control accountability plan: local control funding formula budget overview

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide a report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Governor, and the Legislature that identifies duplication between the data contained in the school accountability report card (SARC) and other publicly available data sources.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires any school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be prepared an annual audit accounting for such funds and to adopt a SARC for each school. Requires every local school board to prepare a SARC to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent. (California Constitution, Article XVI, § 8.5)
- 2) Requires the governing board of each school district maintaining an elementary or secondary school to develop and cause to be implemented for each school in the school district a SARC. Requires the governing board of each school district annually to issue a SARC for each school in the school district, publicize those reports, and notify parents or guardians of pupils that a hard copy will be provided upon request. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district to make hard copies of its annually updated report card available, upon request, on or before February 1 of each year. (Education Code (EC) § 35256)
- 3) Requires the SARC provide data by which a parent can make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable him or her to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll his or her children. (EC § 33126)
- 4) Requires the SARC to include, but be limited to, assessment of the following school conditions:
 - a) Pupil achievement by grade level, as measured by the standardized testing and reporting programs;

- b) Progress toward reducing dropout rates;
- c) Estimated expenditures per pupil and types of services funded;
- d) Progress toward reducing class sizes and teaching loads, including the distribution of class sizes at the schoolsite by grade level and the average class size for the most recent three-year period;
- e) The total number of the school's fully credentialed teachers, the number of teachers relying upon emergency credentials, the number of teachers working without credentials, any assignment of teachers outside their subject areas of competence, misassignments, including misassignments of teachers of ELs, and the number of vacant teacher positions for the most recent three-year period;
- f) Quality and currency of textbooks and other instructional materials, including whether textbooks and other materials meet state standards and are adopted by the SBE for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and adopted by the governing boards of school districts for grades 9 to 12, inclusive, and the ratio of textbooks per pupil and the year the textbooks were adopted;
- g) The availability of sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials for each pupil, including English learners (ELs);
- h) The availability of qualified personnel to provide counseling and other pupil support services, including the ratio of academic counselors per pupil;
- i) Safety, cleanliness, and adequacy of school facilities, including any needed maintenance to ensure good repair;
- j) The annual number of schooldays dedicated to staff development for the most recent three-year period;
- k) Suspension and expulsion rates for the most recent three-year period;
- l) For secondary schools, the percentage of graduates who have passed course requirements for entrance to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU), including the course requirements for high school graduation, and the percentage of pupils enrolled in those courses;
- m) The number of advanced placement (AP) courses offered, by subject;
- n) The Academic Performance Index (API);
- o) Contact information pertaining to organized opportunities for parental involvement; and

- p) Career technical education data measures for secondary schools. (EC § 33126)
- 5) Requires, commencing in July 2000, and every July thereafter, each school to report on the status of its school safety plan, including a description of its key elements in the annual SARC. (EC § 32286)
- 6) Requires the CDE to develop and recommend for adoption by the State Board of Education (SBE) a standardized template intended to simplify the process for completing the SARC and make the SARC more meaningful to the public by July 1, 2006. (EC § 33216.1 and 332126.15)
- 7) Requires the results of the physical fitness testing of students to be included in the SARC. (EC § 33352)
- 8) Requires each school district that is connected to the internet to make the information contained in the SARC accessible on the internet. Requires the SARC information to be updated annually. Requires, commencing with the 2008–09 school year, each school district connected to the internet to make its annually updated report card available on the internet on or before February 1 of each year. Requires each school district not connected to the Internet to make hard copies of its annually updated SARC available on or before February 1 of each year. (EC § 35258)
- 9) Requires a superintendent of a school district, county superintendent, or charter school, as applicable, to present a report on the annual update to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) budget overview for parents on or before February 28 of each year as part of a nonconsent item at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board of the school district, county governing board, or governing body of the charter school, as applicable. Requires the report to include both of the following:
 - a) All available midyear outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP; and
 - b) All available midyear expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP. (EC §§ 47606.5, 52062, and 52068)
- 10) Requires a school district to take all reasonable steps to ensure that parents and guardians of pupils who speak a language other than English are properly notified in English and their home language of the rights and opportunities available to them, including information on the SARC. (EC § 51101.1)
- 11) Requires the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing administered on its SARC. (EC § 60800)
- 12) Requires LCAPs to address how the district will address and improve in eight state priority areas, including pupil achievement as measured by, among other things, the percentage of pupils who have successfully completed courses that

satisfy the requirements for entrance to the UC and the CSU, or the completion of career pathways. (EC § 52060)

- 13) Requires LEAs to adopt and annually revise LCAPs. (EC §§ 47604.33, 52060, and 52066)
- 14) Requires, notwithstanding any other law, as a condition of receiving federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding, an LEA to ensure that each school of the LEA consolidates any plans that are required by those programs into a single plan, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Requires that plan to be known as the single plan for student achievement (SPSA). (EC § 64001)
- 15) Requires in federal law, LEAs to ensure that each school within the LEA that operates a Schoolwide Program (SWP) develops and implements a comprehensive SWP plan. (Title 20, United States Code, § 1111 et seq. (2015))

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Removes the existing requirement for a school to report on the status of its comprehensive school safety plan (CSSP) in its annual SARC.
- 2) Requires the CDE, on or before March 1, 2027, to provide a report to the SPI, the Governor, and the Legislature that identifies duplication between the data contained in the SARC and other publicly available data sources.
- 3) Requires the CDE, in complying with the report above, to do the following for each table in the most recent SARC template adopted by the SBE:
 - a) Identify the statutory requirement that requires the data to be submitted by school districts and note each instance where the template exceeds statutory requirement.
 - b) Identify the other publicly available data sources that provide substantially similar information. Specified that sources of other data include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - i) The California School Dashboard, as specified.
 - ii) The CDE's DataQuest internet website.
 - iii) Any other internet webpage or system managed by the CDE.
 - iv) Any other internet webpage or system managed by other state entities
 - v) Any data that a school district is required to post on its internet website

- vi) Any data that a school district is required to present at a governing board meeting.
 - vii) Any data element that is required to be included in another plan or report, including but not limited to, a LCAP or the School Plan for Student Achievement.
- c) Analyze how closely the data identified in b) above aligns with or differs from the current data available in the SARC. This may include, but is not limited to, an indication that the data is identical, that the information is similar but not identical with a notation of the differences, or that the information addresses the same topic but is available at a different level, such as at a school district level when the SARC requires schoolsite-level information.
- 4) Requires the CDE, in complying with the report requirement above, to also identify any instance where data provided by school districts in SARC is used to satisfy other state or federal requirements, and what other alternatives may exist to satisfy those same requirements.
 - 5) States the Legislature's intent that the CDE makes a broad interpretation of the similarity of other publicly available data sources so as to promote a robust analysis of the degree of duplication. However, differences should be thoroughly described.
 - 6) Specifies that the reporting requirement above shall only remain in effect until January 1, 2028, and as of that date is repealed.
 - 7) Removes the existing requirement that each school within the jurisdiction, if a school district or COE, include the results of physical fitness testing of pupils in the SARC.
 - 8) Removes the existing requirement for the governing board of a school district to report the aggregate results of its physical performance testing in its SARC.
 - 9) Removes the existing requirement for a governing board of a school district, a county board of education, or a governing body of a charter school to present a midyear update report on the LCAP and the LCFF budget overview, and instead provides an authorization to do so.
 - 10) Makes a series of findings and declarations related to the utility of the SARC in light of newer accountability systems.
 - 11) States that it is the intent of the Legislature to consolidate, truncate, or replace duplicative or obsolete reports that increase the reporting burden of local educational agencies (LEAs) and do not benefit accountability, transparency, and pupil achievement.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “By streamlining duplicative reporting requirements, AB 2496 would alleviate the increased reporting burden schools face while maximizing our educational resources. Designating the California School Dashboard as the state’s definitive tool for school accountability and public transparency would refine duplicative and outdated statutory requirements placed upon our education agencies. Because it is important that we use our educational resources efficiently to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

“Much of the information historically reported through SARC is now reported through the Dashboard and related LCFF tools. As a result, the SARC largely duplicates existing reporting systems, creating unnecessary administrative workload for districts. In addition, separate requirements such as the mid-year LCAP update further contribute to reporting demands beyond the annual LCAP adoption process. Collectively, these overlapping requirements divert time and resources away from student-focused efforts and underscore the need to consolidate duplicative reporting statutes while preserving public access to essential information.”

- 2) ***California School Dashboard.*** The Dashboard is an online tool that shares school and LEA performance and progress on both state and local measures that are drawn from the eight priority areas of the LCFF. State measures apply to LEAs, charter schools, and student groups, and are based on data that is collected annually across the state. The state measures are as follows:

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| a) Academic Performance
(reported separately for
English language arts and
Math assessments) | d) English Learner Progress |
| b) Chronic Absenteeism | e) Graduation Rate |
| c) College/Career | f) Suspension Rate |
| | g) Science |

LEAs receive one of five color-coded performance levels on the state indicators. From highest to lowest, the five performance levels are: Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red.

Local measures apply at the LEA and charter school level and are based on data collected at the local level. The local indicators are as follows:

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| a) Basic Services and
Conditions | e) Access to a Broad Course
of Study; |
| b) Implementation of State
Academic Standards; | f) Coordination of Services
for Expelled Students (for
COEs only); and |
| c) Parent and Family
Engagement; | g) Coordination of Services
for Foster Youth (for COEs
only). |
| d) School Climate; | |

Provided an LEA satisfies the performance standards for each local measure, the Dashboard will automatically assign a performance level of *Met*. If an LEA does not meet the performance standards, the Dashboard will automatically assign a performance level of *Not Met* or *Not Met for Two or More Years*, as applicable.

The Dashboard is updated annually. For LEAs and schools in need of additional assistance or intervention, the Dashboard helps identify specific areas in need of targeted assistance.

- 3) **DataQuest.** DataQuest is the CDE's web-based data reporting system for publicly reporting information about California students, teachers, and schools. DataQuest provides access to a wide variety of reports, including school performance, test results, student enrollment, EL, graduation and dropout, school staffing, course enrollment, and student misconduct data.
- 4) **School Accountability Report Card.** Since the passage of Proposition 98 in 1988, state law has required that schools receiving state funding prepare and distribute a SARC. A similar requirement is also contained in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The purpose of the SARC is to provide parents and guardians with important information about each school and its progress in achieving its goals. Parents can also use this information to make meaningful comparisons between public schools that will enable them to make informed decisions on the school in which to enroll their children. SARCs are required to be annually updated, approved by the governing board of a school district, and issued by February 1st.

While there may be variations with each school's design of its SARC, each generally begins with a profile that provides background information about the school and its students. The profile usually summarizes the school's mission, goals, and accomplishments. State law requires that the SARC contain the following:

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| • Demographic data | • Teacher and staff information |
| • School safety and climate for learning information | • Curriculum and instruction descriptions |
| • Academic data | • Postsecondary preparation information |
| • School completion rates | • Fiscal and expenditure data |
| • Class sizes | |

State law requires schools to notify all parents about the availability of the SARC and provide parents with instructions about how the SARC can be obtained through the internet and on paper upon request. The CDE maintains a web page that allows parents and the public to view the current and two prior years of SARC reports that have been submitted to the Department by the schools and LEAs.

- 5) ***LCAPs and mid-year updates.*** In 2013, California's education funding system was fundamentally changed with the enactment of the LCFF. The LCFF is designed to improve student outcomes by providing more resources to meet the educational needs of low-income students, ELs, and foster youth. The reforms to the funding system were accompanied by changes to the state accountability system, including LCAPs. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities. The LCAP provides an opportunity for LEAs (school districts, COEs, and charter schools) to share their stories of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs.

Current law requires that, before the governing board of a school district considers the adoption of an LCAP, numerous and specific steps be taken to ensure public input in the development of the LCAP. This includes consulting with teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local bargaining units of the school district, parents, and pupils.

Existing law also requires all LEAs to present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and the LCFF Budget Overview for Parents on or before February 28 of each year at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board or body of the LEA. These reports must include both of the following: (1) all available mid-year outcome data related to metrics identified in the current year's LCAP, and (2) all available mid-year expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the current year's LCAP.

This bill would shift the requirement for LEAs to provide those updates into an authorization. Proponents of this bill argue that the current timeline and requirements conflict with other reporting timelines, such as the SARC deadline, and divert time and resources away from student-focused efforts.

- 6) ***This bill no longer replaces the SARC outright.*** This bill helps facilitate the conversation for an eventual phase out of the SARC by requiring the CDE to compile a report identifying areas where reporting requirements for the SARC overlap with the Dashboard and other CDE data platforms.

When the bill was first introduced, and heard in the Assembly Education Committee, it called for the wholesale elimination and formal replacement of the SARC with the CA Schools Dashboard. Recognizing the fact that there are some data points that are exclusively found in the SARC, the bill transitioned through several iterations to instead provide the SPI, the Governor, and the Legislature with the information necessary to make more informed decisions about how to streamline the data in the future.

While it no longer eliminates the SARC outright, it does remove the statutory requirement for LEAs to report the following within the SARC:

- a) The results of physical fitness testing of pupils;
- b) The aggregate results of performance testing students in grades 5, 7, and 9; and

c) The status of its CSSP adoption.

- 7) **Arguments in support.** In a letter of support submitted to the Committee, the bill's co-sponsors, the Association of California School Administrators, California Association of School Business Officials, and the California School Boards Association note the following:

“When Proposition 98 established the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) in 1988, it was a groundbreaking tool for transparency. Supporters of the ballot initiative said, “Proposition 98 makes schools accountable by requiring that each school make public a progress report on test scores, dropout rates, classroom discipline, class size, instructional materials, the quality of instruction and school leadership.” Since then, the educational landscape shifted in 2013 with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the subsequent launch of the California School Dashboard and the Local Control and Accountability Plan. These two systems form the basis of our current accountability system and provide the same information that the supporters of Proposition 98 envisioned with the SARC. As a result, California districts are maintaining two separate, largely duplicative accountability systems. This “compliance overlap” increases administrative workload without a commensurate increase in transparency.

“AB 2496 seeks to remedy this by beginning a process to identify the duplication in our educational data reporting structures. Specifically, AB 2496 would require the California Department of Education to issue a report that identifies similarities and differences between each SARC data element and data contained in other education reporting systems, such as the California School Dashboard. This would provide the first comprehensive analysis of where the duplication exists for future conversations. In addition, AB 2496 would remove two elements of the SARC that were added following the passage of Proposition 98, the Physical Fitness Test results and the status update on the school safety plan. These two elements are input into the SARC by LEAs, despite the state no longer reporting on the former, and the latter being a poor substitute for providing parents with the full school safety plan each year.”

- 8) **Committee amendments.**

a) *Reinstate the mid-year LCAP and LCFF Budget Overview for Parents update requirement but eliminate the February 28th deadline to provide LEAs with flexibility as to when that update is provided.*

- 9) **Prior and related legislation.**

AB 2008 (Patel, 2026) would require that if a bill introduced or amended by the Legislature would require a school district, COE, or charter school to complete a plan or report with an undefined end date to either 1) include a provision that repeals the reporting requirement, or 2) makes the requirement inoperative, no

later than a date four years following the date upon which the bill, as enacted, becomes operative or four years after the due date of any report required every four or more years. *AB 2008 has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

SB 374 (Archuleta, Chapter 580, Statutes of 2025) extends by one year the date by which the CDE must provide a report to the Legislature regarding the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit annually, and removes the requirement for the SBE to adopt an Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA) Addendum to the LCAP relating to service improvements for students with disabilities.

SB 1315 (Archuleta, Chapter 486, Statutes of 2024) requires the CDE to conduct a report on the number and types of reports that LEAs are required to submit on an annual basis.

AB 716 (O'Donnell, Chapter 471, Statutes of 2018) revises and recasts provisions relating to the consolidated application, the School Plans for Student Achievement, and schoolsite councils, and repeals the School-Based Program Coordination Act, to account for implementation of the LCFF and the ESSA.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators (co-sponsor)
California Association of School Business Officials (co-sponsor)
California School Boards Association (co-sponsor)
California Association of Suburban School Districts
Fresno County Office of Education
Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
San Joaquin County Office of Education
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Small School Districts Association

OPPOSITION

None received

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