

Date of Hearing: January 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 673 (Jackson) – As Amended January 12, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 7 - 0

Human Services

4 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), in consultation with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), to administer a pilot of the Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant Program for the purpose of providing supports for unaccompanied homeless youth 16 and 17 years of age not in the care of their parent or guardian.

Specifically, this bill requires the program to provide grants to local educational agencies (LEAs), available for expenditure up to five years from receipt. The bill requires grant recipients to use funds towards providing supports such as connecting unaccompanied homeless youth who are 16 and 17 years of age with existing structures, basic needs supports, educational support services and tutoring, or health and behavioral health resources, with a focus on resources to find stable housing. Each LEA grantee must submit an annual report to the CDE. The CDE must submit a report to the Legislature upon completion of the five-year grant cycle.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) According to the CDE, this bill necessitates the creation of a new housing office within the department creating approximately \$844,334 in ongoing General Fund costs to support an additional four staff to oversee administration of the grant program. However, it is unclear to the committee whether the new administrative workload imposed by this bill warrants four additional staff.
- 2) One-time Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures of an unknown but likely significant amount, potentially in the millions to tens of millions of dollars, to fund the first five-year cycle of pilot grants.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author's office, this bill provides tangible resources for homeless and unaccompanied youth by funding grants for "referrals to housing supports, basic needs, educational supports, employment readiness, and supportive services."
- 2) **Background.** Under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, every school district, county office of education, charter school, and special education local plan area must designate a liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness, whether they be accompanied or not. The liaisons help connect these students to resources such as enrollment in school, transportation to and from school, and timely resolution of any

disputes. The CDE reports there were 286,854 homeless students in the 2023-24 school year, with 8,831 of those being unaccompanied homeless students, meaning they were not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Several programs exist to help provide temporary and transitional housing to the homeless community and homeless youth, typically administered by a state agency, such as the California Department of Social Services or California Department of Housing and Community Development. For example, the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Grant Program, administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, provides grants to cities, counties, and continuums of care with flexible funding to address homelessness, with a requirement that a grantee spend 10% of its allocation on services for homeless youth.

California receives funding under the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youths program, which provides grants to states to ensure homeless children and youth receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Each state then must provide subgrants, awarded on a competitive basis, to LEAs for facilitation of enrollment, attendance, and success in school for homeless students, which may include addressing transportation, immunization, documentation, or guardianship needs. LEAs collaborate with other local agencies (such as a county social services agency) to ensure homeless students receive these comprehensive supports and services.

- 3) **Prior Legislation.** AB 408 (Quirk-Silva), Chapter 904, Statutes of 2022, requires LEAs to establish homeless education program policies consistent with federal law, requires homeless education liaisons to offer training to specified school staff, and requires the CDE to develop a risk-based monitoring plan for homeless education requirements.

AB 2375 (Luz Rivas), Chapter 912, Statutes of 2022, requires LEAs and charter schools to identify all homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth enrolled at the school by administering a housing questionnaire based on specified best practices.

SB 532 (Caballero) Chapter 918, Statutes of 2022, provides expanded flexibility regarding local graduation requirements for foster youth, homeless youth, former juvenile court school students, children of military families, migratory children, and students participating in a newcomer program (highly mobile students).

Analysis Prepared by: Aaron Heredia / APPR. / (916) 319-2081