
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 833
Author: Alvarez (D)
Amended: 5/29/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/25/25

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

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25

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

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-1, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Teachers: exchange programs: local educational agencies: sponsors

SOURCE: International Alliance Group

DIGEST: This bill updates the scope of what the State Board of Education's (SBE) teacher exchange program regulations must include. It requires the regulations to expressly authorize teacher exchanges with Mexico, apply to all local educational agencies (LEAs)—including school districts, county offices of education (COEs), and charter schools—and allow teachers from Mexico to be sponsored for placement in California schools by any J-1 visa sponsor designated by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), in addition to the California Department of Education (CDE).

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the SBE to adopt rules and regulations under which teachers employed by California school districts may exchange positions with teachers in schools in other countries for a period of one year or less. Arrangements are made through the CDE in cooperation with federal teacher exchange programs. (Education Code (EC) § 44612)

- 2) Establishes the World Language Teacher Exchange and Recruitment Law of 1963, which outlines the purpose, eligibility, compensation rules, and travel cost provisions for the teacher exchange program. (EC § 44611-44614)
- 3) Authorizes LEAs to hire “sojourn certificated employees” from other countries to provide bilingual instruction, world language instruction, or cultural enrichment, subject to credentialing and verification requirements by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). (EC § 44856)
- 4) Authorizes exchange programs for international teachers under the J-1 visa category and outlines federal eligibility requirements for sponsors and participants. (22 Code of Federal Regulations § 62.24)

This bill

- 1) Requires the SBE to adopt regulations that:
 - a) Expressly provide for the participation of teachers from Mexico in exchange programs governed by this section.
 - b) Apply to school districts, COEs, and charter schools.
 - c) Authorize sponsorship of teachers from Mexico by J-1 visa sponsors designated by the DOS, in addition to the CDE.
 - d) Promote cultural exchange through teacher placements for the purposes of:
 - i. Fostering cross-cultural understanding by allowing Mexican teachers to share knowledge, traditions, and methodologies with California pupils and educators; and
 - ii. Providing visiting teachers firsthand experience in the U.S. education system to strengthen international collaboration and appreciation of diverse educational practices.

Comments

- 1) *Need for this bill.* According to the author, “AB 833 represents a bold and transformative step in addressing California’s persistent teacher shortages, particularly in the vital areas of bilingual education and high-demand subjects. By mandating exchanges with Mexico, this groundbreaking legislation unlocks access to a pool of exceptionally qualified educators who bring rich expertise in

Spanish-language instruction and culturally relevant teaching methods. With over 1.1 million English Learners in California’s public schools, the inclusion of Mexican teachers is not just beneficial but essential for cultivating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This initiative not only aims to bridge the critical gap of bilingual teachers—particularly in subjects such as math, science, and special education—but also enhances the educational experience by fostering global education and cultural exchange. Furthermore, AB 833 emphasizes accountability through annual reporting on the program’s impact, ensuring that California builds strong educational partnerships with Mexico to better serve its diverse student population.”

- 2) *What Does This Bill Do?* California law has authorized teacher exchange programs with other countries since 1963. Under Education Code, the SBE is required to adopt rules and regulations to allow teachers employed by California school districts to exchange positions with teachers in schools in other countries for a period of one year or less. These exchanges must be arranged through the CDE, in cooperation with teacher exchange programs administered by federal agencies.

Since 1986, CDE has served as California’s designated sponsor for the J-1 exchange visitor visa program in the teacher category—a federal program administered by the DOS. Under this program, the DOS designates certain public and private organizations, including state education agencies, universities, and nonprofits, to act as sponsors. Sponsors are responsible for recruiting, screening, placing, and supporting exchange teachers.

In the case of teachers from Mexico, CDE has interpreted a 2004 memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Mexico’s Secretariat of Education as giving it exclusive authority to sponsor such teachers in California. Other DOS-designated sponsors have not been used. As a result, the number of Mexican teachers participating in California schools has remained low—between 8 and 21 per year in recent years.

Recent correspondence from Mexico’s Secretariat of Education clarified that Mexico has no objection to its teachers participating through any DOS-designated sponsor. This bill responds by clarifying that Mexico is an eligible exchange partner under California law, that SBE rules must apply to all LEA types, and that DOS-designated sponsors beyond CDE may be used for teacher exchanges.

- 3) *Could This Change Be Made Without Legislation?* The underlying authority for California's teacher exchange program already exists in Education Code, and federal law does not require a single exclusive sponsor. The restriction to CDE as the sole sponsor for teachers from Mexico is not statutory but is instead based on CDE's interpretation of its 2004 MOU with the Mexican government.

Recent clarification from Mexico's Secretariat of Education removes any bilateral obstacle to using other sponsors. In theory, either CDE could revise its interpretation of the MOU, or the SBE could amend its regulations to allow greater flexibility under existing law.

From that perspective, this bill is not legally necessary to authorize the use of other sponsors, but it serves to codify and signal that California supports a more open approach to implementing teacher exchanges—particularly with Mexico—and ensures consistent treatment across all LEA types.

- 4) *Consistency with Broader State Goals.* Although the bill does not modify credentialing processes or create new state programs, it reflects ongoing state interest in fostering multilingualism and cultural responsiveness in K–12 education. Policies such as the California English Learner Roadmap, Proposition 58, and Global California 2030 signal a statewide commitment to expanding dual language immersion and biliteracy pathways. To the extent this bill facilitates access to qualified bilingual teachers—particularly those with Spanish-language expertise—it may support these long-standing goals.
- 5) *Implications of Removing the Reporting Requirement.* Earlier versions of the bill included a requirement for CDE to report annually on program participation and characteristics, including disaggregated data by country, grade level, and subject area. That provision has been removed. While this change simplifies implementation, it also eliminates a mechanism that could have supported statewide understanding of trends, gaps, or best practices. LEAs and policymakers may need to rely on informal data collection or periodic legislative inquiries to monitor program effects.
- 6) *Implementation May Vary by Local Capacity.* By explicitly authorizing LEAs to work with J-1 sponsors other than CDE, the bill introduces local flexibility that may enable more rapid or targeted recruitment. However, implementation quality may vary depending on LEA capacity, familiarity with the J-1 program, and ability to support visiting teachers. LEAs would remain responsible for ensuring that exchange teachers meet state credentialing requirements and are

appropriately supported throughout their placements. The absence of a centralized onboarding process may present challenges in maintaining consistency across placements.

- 7) *Unclear Impact on Workforce Supply.* Proponents frame this bill as a strategy to help address ongoing teacher shortages, particularly in bilingual, STEM, and special education fields. While expanded access to international exchange teachers could support local staffing efforts, actual participation will likely depend on a range of factors, including LEA interest, sponsor availability, visa processing timelines, and cost. The bill removes a key procedural barrier but does not guarantee large-scale uptake or lasting workforce solutions.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the CDE estimates General Fund costs of \$430,000 each year to hire additional staff necessary to administer the expanded version of the teacher exchange program and prepare the annual report required by the bill.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/28/25)

International Alliance Group (Source)
 Association of California School Administrators
 California Association for Bilingual Education
 California Charter Schools Association
 San Diego Unified School District

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/28/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-1, 6/2/25

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, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: DeMaio

NO VOTE RECORDED: Tangipa

Prepared by: Ian Johnson / ED. / (916) 651-4105

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