

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1378 (Ochoa Bogh) – As Amended June 22, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to establish the California Excellence in Service Learning Designation Program to designate schoolsites demonstrating excellence in service learning.

FISCAL EFFECT:

One-time General Fund costs of \$410,640 and \$402,000 ongoing annually for CDE to establish a new service learning designation and oversee implementation, reviewing of applications and renewals, and perform ongoing monitoring of participating schoolsites.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Service learning integrates community service with academic instruction, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world issues while developing civic responsibility and leadership skills. California already recognizes schools for excellence in other areas through programs such as the California Green Ribbon Schools Award and the Purple Star School Designation, which highlight achievements in environmental sustainability and support for military-connected students. California currently lacks a statewide recognition program that highlights schools and LEAs excelling in service learning. SB 1378 addresses this gap by creating a designation that recognizes outstanding programs across the state. By recognizing these efforts, the program will promote student engagement while strengthening connections between schools and their communities.

2) **Background.** Several school designations exist that CDE oversees currently, collectively referred to as the California School Recognition Program (CSRP). They include such designations as National Blue Ribbon School and California Exemplary Career Technical Education, along with 11 others. However, only one is established in statute and the remainder were developed voluntarily by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. According to CDE, these programs generally recognize sustained student achievement, excellence in environmental program design, superior job performance, and community involvement.

CDE administers the California Serves Program, established in 2022, in consultation with CaliforniaVolunteers, to provide opportunities for students in grade 12 to complete service-learning counting towards achievement of the State Seal of Civic Engagement. According to the federal Learn and Serve program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, service-learning is “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 2354 (Gabriel), of the current legislative session, expands the California Serves program from grades nine through 12 to grades 6 through 12. AB 2354 is awaiting hearing in the Senate Appropriations committee.

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