

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 670 (Cervantes)

As Amended April 10, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Updates the definition of immigrant integration for purposes of Adult Education Programs in California.

Major Provisions

- 1) Amends the definition located within an article of Education Code pertaining to Adult Education Programs in the State of California to read as follows:
 - a) "Immigrant integration" means a two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, thriving, cohesive, and inclusive communities. In the process, immigrants are embraced and welcomed by the receiving society with effective, culturally relevant, and linguistically accessible programs and services that facilitate their linguistic, economic, civic, and social integration and provide upward social and economic mobility, increased civic participation, and multigenerational integration, and service providers encourage immigrants to maximize their contribution to the economic and civic life of their communities.

COMMENTS

Adult Education in California. Adult education is a public education program, which offers free to low-cost classes to those considered to be adults, ages 18 or older. In California, adult education courses are offered by the California Community Colleges (CCC), libraries, community-based organizations, and adult schools operated by local education agencies. These providers address the evolving need of adults with pre-collegiate skills and knowledge necessary to be productive citizens, workers, and family members.

In 2013, the Legislature in partnership with Governor Brown passed AB 86 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 48, Statutes of 2013 which restructured California's adult education system by creating the adult education regional consortia. The intention was to address longstanding concerns from providers about the lack of coordination by requiring each provider to become a member of a consortia and work collaboratively with other providers to create an adult education plan to meet the civic and basic skill needs of adults in a specific region. Consortia membership is limited to local education agencies, community college districts, county offices of education, and joint powers agencies.

Currently, there are 71 adult education regional consortiums throughout the state, who in 2023-2024 provided educational services to 690,858 adults. The 71 regional consortia consist of 72 community college districts and close to 300 school districts who work together to provide educational services to adults across the state. Each consortium is self-governed by a board made of members of the consortium who collectively create an education plan and disburse funding for the provision of adult education courses. Consortium members are authorized and receive state funding for the following courses or programs: courses in parenting, courses in elementary and secondary basic skills, courses required for a high school diploma, courses in English as a second language, courses to assist immigrants in obtaining citizenship, courses for adults with

disabilities, courses for short-term career education, courses for senior citizens, courses in home economics, courses in health and safety education, and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Each year the Chancellor and the SPI are statutorily required to produce a report on the outcomes of adult learners who participated in adult education programs. The last available report contains enrollment, skill gains, and outcome data from academic year 2020-2021. Of the 429,203 adult learners served:

- 1) 340,587 completed 12 or more hours of instruction;
- 2) 12,354 obtained a high school diploma or a GED;
- 3) 41,968 completed a postsecondary education credential;
- 4) 60,418 transitioned to postsecondary education;
- 5) 26,475 English as a second language learners transitioned to non-developmental credit college course; and
- 6) 65,774 English as a second language learners transitioned to career technical education programs.

Immigrant integration. Adult Education Programs provide educational services that would enable adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the skills necessary to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Despite this duty, adult education programs have not always provided progress data on the achievements of adult learners who also identify as immigrants and refugees. To address the missing metric, AB 2098 (McCarty and Thurmond), Chapter 751, Statutes of 2018, required the Chancellor and the SPI to create a method for assessing the effectiveness of adult education programs in providing immigrant integration for immigrants and refugee adults seeking services.

The Chancellor's Office 2020-2021 Adult Education Program report, confirms: "a new metric was created—Participants Who Completed an Immigrant Integration Milestone—and integrated into the Adult Education Pipeline Dashboard."

The Adult Education Pipeline Dashboard identifies "Participants Who Completed an Immigrant Integration Milestone" as participations who have completed an El Civics Course or a Civic Objective and Additional Assessment Plan milestone. In 2021-2022, the dashboard identified 57,733 students as completing an Immigrant Integration Milestone.

AB 670 (Cervantes) would statutorily adopt a recommendation from the AB 2098 workgroup by adopting a definition of immigrant integration into the Education Code sections pertaining to adult education programs.

According to the Author

"California is home to a vibrant and diverse population of over 10.6 million immigrants, representing 22% of the nation's foreign-born residents. Despite their significant presence, many immigrant adults encounter a range of complex and interrelated challenges that hinder their economic advancement and integration into the fabric of our state and country. These challenges often include limited proficiency in English, which can restrict job opportunities and social

interactions. Many find themselves trapped in low-wage employment, struggling to make ends meet, while others lack permanent legal status, leaving them vulnerable and without access to certain benefits and protections. Additionally, low levels of formal education can further impede their ability to secure higher-paying jobs, and a lack of familiarity with American culture, societal norms, and institutions can create barriers to navigating everyday life. To combat these issues, adult education programs operating within workforce development and adult education systems strive to provide essential services aimed at reducing these barriers and facilitating integration. However, the policies and program designs that underpin these initiatives frequently fail to recognize the distinct needs and characteristics of immigrant populations compared to their U.S.-born counterparts. This oversight can lead to a mismatch between available resources and the actual needs of immigrant adults, resulting in programming that is neither effective nor equitable in helping them achieve their goals."

The Author contends the need for SB 670 as the measure "seeks to establish a clear definition of immigrant integration in order to enhance both the effectiveness and equity of adult education programs. The legislation recognizes that successful integration depends not only on English proficiency but also on civic participation and economic inclusion. These elements are vital for the success of immigrants, their families, and the communities they choose to call home. By focusing on creating more responsive and integration-centered programming, SB 670 aims to offer support that helps via its integrated definition the ability to navigate the complex landscape of services available to them. This includes providing accessible pathways that enable them to engage with other important resources, such as education, job training, and community services. Given that immigrants often constitute a significant demographic within adult skills systems—frequently making up a large minority or even the majority of individuals enrolled in programs, especially those lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent—this initiative is especially important. Enhancing these programs to better cater to the needs and experiences of immigrants will ultimately strengthen the fabric of our communities and promote a more inclusive society."

Arguments in Support

As stated by the sponsors of the measure, California Council for Adult Education (CCAEE) and the California Adult Education Administrators Association (CAEAA), "SB 670 rightly defines immigrant integration as a two-way process that not only describes the role of the receiving community (embracing and welcoming immigrants) but also solidifies the importance of active engagement, contributions, expectations and responsibilities of immigrants. Literature emphasizes the importance of collaboration and co-creation of cohesive communities by both immigrants and the established community as a dynamic process. Further, the inclusion of multigenerational integration is of great value given its alignment with the California Adult Education program area of 'parents supporting K-12 success.'"

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, there is no fiscal effect.

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3**

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
ABS, ABST OR NV: Hurtado, Reyes, Stern

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 9-0-1

YES: Fong, Boerner, Jeff Gonzalez, Jackson, Muratsuchi, Patel, Celeste Rodriguez, Sharp-Collins, Tangipa
ABS, ABST OR NV: DeMaio

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

YES: Muratsuchi, Hoover, Addis, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Patel

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Jeff Gonzalez, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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