
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1973	Hearing Date:	June 29, 2022
Author:	McCarty		
Version:	May 2, 2022		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Ian Johnson		

Subject: Education finance: base grants: adjustments: kindergarten: minimum schoolday.

SUMMARY

This bill phases in a requirement for school districts and charter schools offering a kindergarten program to offer at least one full-day kindergarten class at each schoolsite, as specified, to receive their full Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) K-3 grade span adjustment.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the LCFF was enacted. The LCFF establishes per-pupil funding targets, with adjustments for different student grade levels, and includes supplemental funding for local educational agencies (LEAs) serving students who are low-income, English learners, or foster youth. The LCFF replaced almost all sources of state funding for LEAs, including most categorical programs, with general purpose funding including few spending restrictions.

The largest component of the LCFF is a base grant generated by each student. Current law establishes base grant target amounts for the 2013-14 fiscal year, which are increased each year by the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Purchases of Goods and Services for the United States.

The base grant target rates for each grade span for the 2021-22 fiscal year are as follows:

- 1) \$8,935 for grades K-3 (includes a 10.4 percent adjustment for class size reduction);
- 2) \$8,215 for grades 4-6;
- 3) \$8,458 for grades 7-8;
- 4) \$10,057 for grades 9-12 (includes a 2.6 percent adjustment for career technical education).

The K-3 base grant amount above includes a 10.4 percent increase, which districts receive for maintaining an average class enrollment of not more than 24 pupils for each schoolsite in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive unless a collectively bargained

alternative annual average class enrollment for each schoolsite in those grades is agreed to.

For each disadvantaged student, a district receives a supplemental grant equal to 20 percent of its adjusted base grant. A district serving a student population with more than 55 percent of disadvantaged students receives concentration grant funding equal to 50 percent of the adjusted base grant for each disadvantaged student above the 55 percent threshold.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires, from the 2027-28 school year to the 2029-30 school year, as a condition of receiving the K-3 grade span adjustment for kindergarten attendance, a school district or charter school providing a kindergarten program, and that has an enrolled unduplicated pupil percentage of 50 percent or more, to provide a full-day kindergarten class at each schoolsite.
- 2) Requires, beginning in the 2030-31 school year, as a condition of receiving the K-3 grade span adjustment for kindergarten attendance, every school district or charter school providing a kindergarten program to provide a full-day kindergarten class at each schoolsite.
- 3) Specifies that this requirement does not apply to transitional kindergarten (TK) attendance.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Full-day kindergarten gives students the time they need to engage in meaningful learning and play, resulting in greater school readiness, self-confidence, and academic achievement compared to part-day programs. However, some school districts only offer part-day programs, leaving students without access to the benefits of full-day kindergarten. AB 1973 requires school districts and charter schools to offer full-day kindergarten programs, giving all students the opportunity to participate in a full-day program, which will prepare them with the skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.”
- 2) ***Research on the impact of full-day kindergarten is mixed.*** While many argue that a large body of research demonstrates that full-day kindergarten programs benefit children, a 2009 Public Policy Institute of California study states that “research to date...has provided little evidence of long-term academic benefits beyond kindergarten or first grade.” Further, an analysis done by the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation titled “Ready for School: Can Full-Day Kindergarten Level the Playing Field” found that “This study reinforces the findings of earlier studies that suggest full-day kindergarten programs may not enhance achievement in the long term. Furthermore, this study raises the possibility that full-day kindergarten programs may actually be detrimental to mathematics performance and to nonacademic readiness skills.”

- 3) ***Most school districts already operate full-day kindergarten programs.*** According to the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), as of 2017-18, 71 percent of school districts in California ran only full-day kindergarten programs, 19 percent ran only part-day programs, and 10 percent ran a mix of full-day and part-day programs. The LAO estimates that approximately 70 percent of kindergarten students attend a full-day program and roughly 30 percent attend a part-day program. Enrollment in full-day programs has grown significantly since 2007-08 when 43 percent of students were attending full-day kindergarten programs. A recent study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), on behalf of the California Department of Education (CDE) found that the average full-day kindergarten session was 5.6 hours and the part-day sessions averaged 3.5 hours.
- 4) ***Why do some districts not offer full-day kindergarten?*** School districts determine the length of their kindergarten programs. Part-day programs operate between three to four hours per day, and full-day programs operate for more than four hours per day. Schools operating part-day programs typically run a morning session and afternoon session in the same classroom using two teachers—one teacher in the morning and another in the afternoon. Full-day programs, in contrast, require a separate classroom and are typically assigned one full-time teacher who leads the class throughout the day. The state funds kindergarten through the Local Control Funding Formula, which provides districts the same per student funding rate for part-day and full-day programs (\$8,235 per student in 2018-19).

When surveyed by the LAO for their reasons for not operating full-day kindergarten programs, school districts reported a variety of reasons, including limited classroom space, teachers preferring part-day programs because they receive additional support from another teacher throughout the day, and parent preference for a shorter school day for their children.

According to the 2017 UCLA study, lack of classroom space has been a primary barrier to offering full-day kindergarten. In order to address this problem and facilitate the expansion of full-day kindergarten, the state has invested \$890 million over the last 4 years in grant funding to support full-day kindergarten programs (\$100 million in 2018-19, \$300 million in 2019-20, and \$490 million in 2021-22).

California is experiencing a significant shortage of teachers overall. A 2020 research brief by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) notes that “When California students returned to school in fall 2019, hundreds of thousands returned to classrooms staffed by substitutes and teachers who were not fully prepared to teach. In recent years, California has experienced widespread shortages of elementary and secondary teachers as districts and schools seek to restore class sizes and course offerings cut during the Great Recession.” The LPI report goes on to say that “Analysis of statewide teacher supply and demand factors indicates that there are three main factors driving shortages in California: the decline in teacher preparation enrollments, increased demand for teachers, and teacher attrition and turnover. However, the relative weight of supply and demand factors can vary from district to district.”

The expansion of TK is expected to exacerbate this need as it is projected that full implementation of TK with reduced staffing ratios will require up to 12,000 or more additional credentialed teachers, as well as up to 25,000 teacher assistants.

- 5) ***Charter schools would be required to comply in order to receive this funding.*** As summarized above, the LCFF currently provides a 10.4 percent adjustment to the K-3 base grant for school districts that maintain an average class enrollment of not more than 24 pupils for each schoolsite in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, unless a collectively bargained alternative annual average class enrollment for each schoolsite in those grades is agreed to. Charter schools also receive this adjustment, however, they are not required to comply with the class size requirement.

As currently drafted, this bill would eventually require all charter schools providing a kindergarten program to offer at least one full-day kindergarten class at each schoolsite to receive the K-3 grade span adjustment for kindergarten attendance.

- 6) ***Arguments in support.*** First 5 California states, “Research shows that full-day kindergarten programs are associated with greater growth in cognitive, reading, and math skills compared to part-day programs – crucial academic building blocks that prepare children for first grade. Full-day kindergarten programs also improve school-readiness by giving children more opportunities for social-emotional and behavioral development, resulting in greater self-confidence and ability to work and play with others.

“While the number of districts providing full-day programs has increased in recent decades, many students are still left out of this opportunity because they attend school districts that only offer part-day programs. Recognizing the need to expand access, the state has invested \$890 million in grant funding to support the construction of facilities to support full-day kindergarten over the last three years.

“AB 1973 sets California’s youngest learners up for success in school and beyond by requiring school districts and charter schools to offer full-day kindergarten programs to all children starting in the 2025-26 school year. This bill will give students the time they need to engage in meaningful learning and play, resulting in greater school readiness, self-confidence, and academic achievement compared to part-day programs.”

- 7) ***Arguments in opposition.*** The California School Boards Association states, “Many kindergarten programs operate on a half-day schedule, primarily due to logistical challenges and lack of facility capacity. As a result, many offer separate morning and afternoon kindergarten programs not for policy reasons, but rather because they lack adequate facility capacity and/or teachers to meet demand. As such, this enables school districts to assign one teacher to a kindergarten classroom but serve twice as many students by providing separate morning and afternoon kindergarten classes in the same classroom. AB 1973 would also

present increased challenges to our smaller and more rural school districts, which already struggle to a greater degree with staffing shortages and lack of adequate school facilities.

“Furthermore, there is no additional funding identified in this measure to fund the expansion of full-day kindergarten. Without additional funding to help school districts of all sizes offer full-day kindergarten, many districts will be faced with the unenviable task of choosing between offering full-day kindergarten or foregoing their class size reduction (CSR) funding and increasing class sizes for some of our youngest students. Although we appreciate the intent of the bill to provide full-day kindergarten, we believe additional funding separate and apart from the CSR program is a better approach to achieving this goal.”

- 8) **Committee Amendment.** As summarized above, the K-3 base grant amount includes a 10.4 percent increase, which districts receive for maintaining an average class enrollment of not more than 24 pupils for each schoolsite in kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, inclusive unless a collectively bargained alternative annual average class enrollment for each schoolsite in those grades is agreed to.

This bill proposes to add another requirement on LEAs to earn this funding, which conflicts with why this funding was provided in the first place. Moreover, LEAs that cannot comply with this requirement would lose a portion of their existing funding and have no remaining incentive to keep their kindergarten class sizes low.

If it is the desire of the Committee to pass this measure, **staff recommends** amending the bill to make the requirement to offer at least one full-day kindergarten class at each schoolsite, as specified, a standalone requirement that is in no way tied to the LEA’s ability to earn the K-3 base grant adjustment.

SUPPORT

California Association for Bilingual Education
California School Employees Association
California State PTA
Early Edge California
First 5 California
The Education Trust-West

OPPOSITION

Association of California School Administrators
California School Boards Association

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