

AB 2759 (Jones)
The California State Preschool Program Act of 2008
(As amended June 17, 2008)

SUMMARY

This bill would implement the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell’s P-16 (Preschool through Higher Education) Council Recommendation to streamline the state’s preschool system, as well as to expand and enhance it to help bridge California’s Achievement Gap. The P–16 Council is a statewide assembly of education, business, and community leaders convened by the Superintendent to develop a specific, ambitious plan that holds the State of California accountable for creating the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap.

AB 2759 would consolidate all the current State Preschool, Prekindergarten-Family Literacy and General Child Care and Development programs serving preschool-aged children, to create the California State Preschool Program. It would be the largest state-funded preschool program in the nation and would streamline the administration of our state preschool programs and help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program administration.

AB 2759 will go hand-in-hand with SB 1629 (Steinberg), which would establish a commission to propose a preschool quality improvement system. The commission would develop a framework for assessing program quality and an enhanced funding structure that would provide the necessary resources for programs to achieve and maintain a high quality preschool program.

THIS BILL

AB 2759 would state the Legislature’s intent to consolidate and reform the state’s existing five child development programs for preschool-aged children: State Preschool, Full-Day State Preschool, Prekindergarten and Family Literacy, Prekindergarten and Family Literacy Full-Day, and General Child Care and Development Programs to create the California State Preschool Program.

While ensuring that quality early care and education services to eligible families with three and four-year-old children continue this program would:

- Streamline the administration of programs providing services to three-and four-year-olds,
- Combine statutory and regulatory requirements for the programs,
- Ensure that children receive either part-day or full-day child development services based on the needs of the family.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the California Department of Education offers local education agencies and center-based child development agencies the opportunity to contract with the state for the provision of preschool services. Over time, the state has developed two separate preschool programs, the Pre-Kindergarten Family Literacy (PKFL) program and State Preschool programs. Additionally, it administers general child development programs that include developmentally appropriate preschool

activities for three- and four-year-old children.

Within the PKFL, State Preschool program, and the general child care and development program, children may receive either part-day or full-day services based on the needs of the parents and the program that is available in their area.

In order to serve as many preschool-age children as possible, many child development and preschool agencies administer all three programs and contract with the state to offer PKFL, State Preschool and general child care and development programs. Each program, however, has separate contracting requirements for both part-day and full-day preschool.

Current requirements result in many preschool agencies operating up to five separate contracts with the state. As a result, many agencies have the administrative burden of annually accounting for five separate contracts for the provision of one service: preschool. This complexity places a large workload on preschool administrators and decreases the time and resources available to increase program quality.

By taking the necessary steps now to create a high-quality preschool system upon which future expansion can occur, California would have a preschool system that helps to address the readiness gap that children display upon entering the K-12 system and, ultimately, assists in reducing the achievement gap.

FISCAL IMPACT

The state currently allocates ~\$441 million for state preschool and uses ~\$375 million in general child care and development funds for the provision of preschool for three- and four-year-old children. This would

consolidate these funds into one allocation of ~\$816 million. Consolidation will result in administrative cost savings.

SUPPORT

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell (Co-Sponsor)
- Preschool California (Co-Sponsor)
- Children Now (Co-Sponsor)
- California Child Development Administrators Association (Co-sponsor)
- Advancement Project
- Bay Area Council
- Bay Area Early Childhood Education Professional Development Collaborative
- BIOCUM
- California Business for Educational Excellence
- California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
- California Federation of Teachers
- California Head Start Association
- California State PTA
- California Teachers Association
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
- First 5 California
- League of Women Voters of California
- Local Early Education Planning Council of Santa Clara County
- Low Income Investment Fund
- Merced County Office of Education
- Nuvview Union School District
- Options – A Child Care and Human Services Agency
- Sacramento County Office of Education
- San Mateo County Office of Education
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- State Coalition of Probation Organizations
- United Educators of San Francisco
(Partial list)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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