

California Leaders Oppose Cutting Kindergarten



“Eliminating the TK mandate would be a huge step backward for the state and early education. Transitional Kindergarten doesn’t cost more money. Schools will still be serving the same number of children in the same number of classrooms with the same number of teachers. Transitional kindergarten is a unique opportunity to provide a high-quality and developmentally appropriate kindergarten program to more than 1.5 million children over the next decade and a half at no additional cost to the state general fund. We expect to see lower retention rates, less remediation, fewer special education placements, and higher test scores.”

– **Susan Bonilla, Assemblymember, State of California**

“My support for moving the birthdate back for entry into kindergarten was contingent on the establishment of transitional kindergarten. Research clearly shows that children who attend high-quality early care and education programs are less likely to be held back in school, need remedial classes or drop out of school. This budget proposal would revoke that provision, subvert the intention of the legislation and jeopardize childrens’ success in school.”

– **Julia Brownley, Chairwoman, Assembly Committee on Education**

“We want to keep the governor’s overall budget, and are trying to make appropriate tweaks in areas where we have already set a strong policy direction we want to keep. [Transitional kindergarten] is one of those areas where this body has already spoken.”

– **Bob Blumenfield, Chairman, Assembly Budget Committee (Mar. 14 Budget Hearing)**

“As one who is a supporter of transitional kindergarten, I am very troubled that we are moving very quickly (on proposal to eliminate transitional kindergarten), without really knowing what those impacts will be or how those savings will occur.”

– **Alan Lowenthal, Senator, State of California**

“As a pediatrician, I know sound research demonstrates early interventions for children such as high quality preschool improves a broad array of outcomes and reduces societal costs of remediation later in life. Maintaining transitional kindergarten is an investment with tremendous impact on the future of California.”

– **Richard Pan, Assemblymember, State of California**

“Losing publicly funded transitional kindergarten will disproportionately affect low income and minority students and will only worsen the achievement gap. That’s why the Governor’s proposed changes are so upsetting. Research shows that kids who participate in early childhood education programs do better in school, are less likely to get into trouble with the law, and are more successful professionally.”

– **Luis A. Alejo, Assemblymember, State of California**

“While the trailer bill proposal would give districts the option whether or not they want to implement transitional kindergarten, displacing these students from kindergarten is still bad for kids, bad for families and bad for schools - whether it’s the state or a local district that denies access.”

— **The Honorable Joseph Simitian, Senator, State of California**

“Delaying a kindergarten education to up to 125,000 children adds an undue burden to families who are already amidst a major financial crisis. This is clearly an injustice to children and families throughout the state and may cause irreparable damage to our most vulnerable communities.”

– **Ricardo Lara, Assemblymember, State of California**

“This proposal (to eliminate TK) is misguided. I’m really concerned about us compromising the developmental experience of our children.”

– **Sandré Swanson, Assemblymember, State of California**

“If (the funding cut) were to take place, that would really be a major step backward in California’s early learning efforts. If the governor’s suggestion is adopted by the state legislature when they pass the budget, there would be some students who were too young for kindergarten but too old to qualify for state-supported preschool programs...We’d be leaving some folks literally with no place to go.”

– **Paul Hefner, Communications Director, California Department of Education**

California Leaders Oppose Cutting Kindergarten

"Kindergarten offers California's youngest learners essential instruction that lays the foundation for success later in school. Balancing the budget on the backs of up to 125,000 kindergarteners is unfair and unacceptable."

– **Ada Hand, President, California Kindergarten Association**

The California Federation of Teachers opposes any changes to the law or funding that would result in the denial of eligible children to participate in a transitional kindergarten program. It is unacceptable to deny up to 125,000 kindergartners the right to early education, and we will fight to protect these young children, 62 percent of whom are from low-income schools and 40 percent of whom are English learners. We must ensure that children will not miss a critical window of education opportunity and that their families will not have to bear the economic impact of providing for preschool or childcare. To deny children this educational opportunity is bad for kids, families, schools, and the communities of which they are a part.

– **The California Federation of Teachers**

"The kindergarten reform legislation passed two years ago changed the kindergarten entry date and promised parents the option of having their children in a classroom setting that would meet their educational needs. The governor's proposal reneges on that promise and would be profoundly damaging to children, families and schools."

– **David W. Gordon, Superintendent, Sacramento County Office of Education**

"NCLR is gravely concerned about the impacts these cuts will have on young Latino children. The elimination of transitional kindergarten will mean that up to 60,000 Latino children will not have access to kindergarten and will, in effect, miss out on the opportunity to do well in school and have a prosperous future."

– **Antonia Lopez, Early Care and Education Director, National Council of La Raza**

"Governor Brown's proposed elimination of transitional kindergarten – a move that will effectively deny up to 125,000 children the right to California schools – is exactly the kind of wrong-headed approach to fiscal management that President Obama has cautioned against. On behalf of the students, teachers, parents and staff of the Sacramento City Unified School District, I strongly oppose this proposition."

– **Jonathan Raymond, Superintendent, Sacramento City Unified School District**

"It is shocking and disappointing to see the governor propose denying up to 125,000 children the right to kindergarten in his proposed budget. All parents want a better life for their children and know that education is the pathway to lifelong success. These cuts will prevent students from accessing critical early education programs and could entrap them in a cycle of poverty."

– **Oscar E. Cruz, President and CEO, Families in Schools**

"It is imperative that we do not pull the rug out from under our youngest learners by denying up to 125,000 kindergartners the right to public education. The early years are the most vital, and the children who will be impacted disproportionately are children of color."

– **Blair Taylor, President and CEO, Los Angeles Urban League**

"It is unacceptable to balance the budget on the backs of our kindergarteners and their families. Denying up to 125,000 children the right to kindergarten is a lose-lose-lose that will hurt children, parents and teachers. Without this year of school, our children will fall further behind. Parents, who are expecting their children to enter school in the fall, will be forced to scramble to find child care or stop working. And up to 5,000 teachers will permanently lose their jobs. Denying up to 125,000 children access to early education, one of the highest returns of any public investment, is fundamentally short-sighted."

– **Catherine Atkin, President, Preschool California**

"In what has become an unfortunate pattern, this Administration has focused its cuts on our state's most vulnerable children, slashing the safety net both inside and outside our schools. All of these cuts – from the \$4.8 billion education trigger cuts to the elimination of transitional kindergarten to cuts to child care and social services – will hurt children, especially children of color and low-income children. We should not have to remind the Governor that these communities now constitute a significant majority of California's students, and in the future, will represent the majority of our state's working population."

– **The Education Trust-West**

For more information, visit www.preschoolcalifornia.org/savekindergarten