
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: SB 140 **Hearing Date:** April 26, 2017
Author: Allen
Version: March 21, 2017
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Lynn Lorber

Subject: Education finance: Learning Communities for School Success Program

SUMMARY

This bill expands priority for the Learning Communities for School Success Program grant fund to include Promise Neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, through passage of Proposition 47 in November 2014, which reduces the penalties for certain non-violent, non-serious drug and property crimes. Existing law requires 25 percent of the resulting savings to be deposited in the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund to fund a grant program administered by the California Department of Education (CDE) to reduce truancy and support students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime. (Government Code § 7599, et seq.)
- 2) Establishes a grant program, the Learning Communities for School Success Program, to be administered by the CDE that furthers the purpose of Proposition 47 in reducing truancy and supporting students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are victims of crime. Existing law authorizes grant funds to be utilized for activities that include but are not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Establishing a community school, as defined.
 - b) Implementing activities or programs to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to, early warning systems or early intervention programs.
 - c) Implementing restorative practices, restorative justice models, or other programs to improve retention rates, reduce suspensions and other school removals, and reduce the referral of students to law enforcement agencies.
 - d) Implementing activities that advance social-emotional learning, positive behavior interventions and supports, culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed strategies.

- e) Establishing partnerships with community-based organizations or other relevant entities to support the implementation of evidence-based, non-punitive approaches to further the goals of the program.
- 3) Adding or increasing staff within a local educational agency (LEA) whose primary purpose is to address ongoing chronic attendance problems, including but not limited to, conducting outreach to families and children currently, or at risk of becoming, chronically truant. (Education Code § 33430 et seq)

ANALYSIS

This bill expands priority for the Learning Communities for School Success Program grant fund to include Promise Neighborhoods.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “The Promise Neighborhoods program is a United States Department of Education initiative established by President Obama. The program designates distressed urban and rural areas as Promise Neighborhoods and provides grants to assist these areas in improving educational and health outcomes for students and youth. California has six federally-designated Promise Neighborhoods which have realized improvement in educational outcomes through this program. For example, the Hollywood/Pacoima Promise Neighborhood, established in 2010, made vast improvements in early education, K-12 services, and family and community support. In 2016, 11% of the graduates at STEM Academy in Hollywood were admitted to UCLA. This represents 15 students. Importantly, 35 seniors applied in 2016, whereas two years prior, only 5 students applied and none were admitted. Overall, 41 graduating seniors accepted admissions to a University of California campus, more acceptances in one year than in the entire prior history of the school. While Promise Neighborhoods are able to meet any of the Learning Communities for School Success Program grant funding priorities, they are not explicitly named as a funding priority. By explicitly stating that funding should be prioritized for applicants that are part of the Promise Neighborhoods program, the state can ensure that the existing gains and improvements made will not be lost. This emphasis will also help us create new, replicable, models for our state to reduce chronic absenteeism and help close opportunity and achievement gaps for all California students, the ultimate goal of the Prop 47 funding.”
- 2) ***Promise Neighborhoods.*** Promise Neighborhoods, established under the authority of the federal Fund for the Improvement of Education Program, provides federal funding to support eligible entities, including nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and Indian tribes. The purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities. In 2010, the Promise Neighborhoods program awarded one-year grants to support the development of a plan to implement a Promise Neighborhood in 21 communities across the country. In 2011, the United States Department of Education awarded a second

round of planning grants and a first round of implementation grants. The five implementation grants and 15 planning grants reached an additional 16 communities throughout the United States in order to help revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods. In 2012, a third round of planning grants and a second round of implementation grants were awarded. The 7 implementation grants and 10 planning grants reached an additional 11 new communities throughout the country. Promise Neighborhoods in California that have received federal Promise Neighborhood funds include several areas of Los Angeles, Hayward, Campo, San Francisco, Fresno, Chula Vista, and Corning.

- 3) **Existing grant program.** The California Department of Education (CDE) administers a grant program, the Learning Communities for School Success Program, and coordinates assistance to LEAs in identifying and implementing evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices that are aligned with the goals for students contained in each LEA's local control and accountability plan. Existing law requires a LEA that chooses to apply for funding to submit an application to the CDE, and requires the CDE to determine eligibility for grants and the distribution of grant funding based on all of specified factors. Existing law requires a LEA that receives a grant to use the grant funds for planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities in support of evidence-based, non-punitive programs and practices to keep the state's most vulnerable students in school.

Existing law authorizes the California Department of Education (CDE), in selecting grant recipients, to give priority to a local educational agency (LEA) that meets any of the following criteria:

- a) Has a high rate of chronic absenteeism, out-of-school suspension, or school dropout for the general student population or for a numerically significant student subgroup, as identified in the local control and accountability plan (LCAP). This bill defines "high rate" as a rate that exceeds the state average.
- b) Is located in a community with a high crime rate.
- c) Has a significant representation of foster youth among its student enrollment.

This bill adds Promise Neighborhoods to existing priority for state Learning Communities for School Success Program grant funds.

- 4) **Funding.** The 2016-17 Budget provides a total of \$27.9 for the purposes of the Learning Communities for School Success Program. Specifically, the budget includes \$9.9 million in Proposition 47 savings and an additional \$18 million in one-time Proposition 98 funds to implement the K-12 grant program required under Proposition 47. Fiscal Year 2016-17 is the first year of funding for the program's three-year LEA competitive grants. The grants are to be annually awarded using continuously appropriated funds identified by the California Department of Finance as the annual savings resulting from Proposition 47. The

Request for Applications was released by the CDE in March 2017, and applications are due by May 10, 2017. Funded applicants will receive \$50 per year per student enrolled in the LEA, with a minimum of \$15,000 and a maximum of \$2 million per LEA per three-year grant period. No grant funds have been awarded yet. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r8/prop47rfa.asp>

This bill adds to priority for selection of grant recipients, thereby potentially expanding the pool of applicants for the grant funds. The total pool of grant funds and grant amounts are set, so more applicants could make the application process more competitive.

SUPPORT

Youth Policy Institute

OPPOSITION

None received

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