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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair  
2015 - 2016 Regular

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**Bill No:** SB 318  
**Author:** Morrell  
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**Urgency:** No  
**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo  
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**Fiscal:** Yes

**Subject:** Education technology and digital resources training pilot program

### SUMMARY

This bill would establish a new pilot program to train teachers in the County of San Bernardino to more effectively utilize technology and digital resources and appropriate \$1 million in Proposition 98 General Fund for this purpose.

### BACKGROUND

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), enacted as part of the 2013-14 Budget Act, was a significant reform to the state's system of financing K-12 public schools. It replaced the prior system of revenue limits and restricted funding for a multitude of categorical programs with a new funding formula that provides base funding for the core educational needs of all students and supplemental funding for the additional educational needs of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth. Because the LCFF funds have limited spending restrictions, local educational agencies (LEAs) have considerable flexibility to direct LCFF resources to best meet their students' needs.

Under the old system, revenue limits provided LEAs with discretionary (unrestricted) funding for general education purposes, and categorical program (restricted) funding was provided for specialized purposes, with each program having unique allocation and spending requirements. Revenue limits made up about two-thirds of state funding for schools, while categorical program funding made up the remaining one-third portion. For some time, that system was criticized as being too state-driven, bureaucratic, complex, inequitable, and based on outdated allocation methods that did not reflect current student needs.

The previous categorical programs included the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP), which provided a regionalized network of technical assistance to schools and school districts on the implementation of education technology. The CTAP was composed of regional consortia that work collaboratively with school districts and county offices of education to meet locally defined technology based needs. Its functions included technical services to support access, planning, and use of high-speed telecommunications networks as well as providing technology planning and implementation assistance to rural and technologically underserved school districts and county offices of education. The CTAP program is no longer operative in light of the LCFF.

**ANALYSIS**

This bill:

1. Appropriates \$1 million in Proposition 98 General Fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to be allocated to local educational agencies (LEAs) servicing the County of San Bernardino who apply for the purpose of implementing a pilot program to train kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, teachers to more effectively utilize technology and digital resources within their instructional day, while also measuring and teaching the critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills pupils need to succeed on California's next-generation online assessments, as well as to prepare pupils for college and career objectives.
2. Requires the SPI to develop an application process for the allocation of funds appropriated by the bill, limited to LEAs servicing the County of San Bernardino.
3. Allows LEAs servicing the county of San Bernardino to apply for funding to implement the pilot program.
4. Requires the pilot program to be operated in the County of San Bernardino and focus on teachers working with underserved populations.
5. Requires the pilot program to include the ability to measure 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of teachers and pupils using the international standards defined by the International Society for Technology in Education. The skills to be measured shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:
  - A. Creativity and innovation
  - B. Communication and collaboration
  - C. Research and information fluency
  - D. Critical thinking and problem solving
  - E. Digital citizenship
  - F. Technology operations and concepts
6. Requires the pilot program to provide professional development for teachers to ensure that these skills are met and that assistance is provided when these skills are not met.
7. Provides that the program shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2020.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

1. ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author's office, the new assessments associated with English language arts and mathematics will require digital literacy skills to demonstrate core content knowledge, which many students do

not presently have. It is critical that students have the necessary skills to take these tests, which utilize computers and technology that students and teachers may not have access to. The author's office indicates that there has not been a consistent effort to prepare students and teachers for these changes. There is broad concern that this lack of preparation might be reflected in the test results once the tests are in full effect. This bill is intended to ensure that teachers have the resources and understanding to teach their students the digital literacy skills needed to succeed on the new assessments, as well as prepare them for college and careers.

2. ***A new categorical program?*** The Committee may wish to consider whether the pilot program proposed by this measure is consistent with the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). This new funding formula restructured the existing K-12 finance system and eliminated over 40 existing programs. The statutory and programmatic requirements for these programs were eliminated, thereby rendering any related activities to be dependent on local district discretion. In other words, school districts already have the ability to utilize their LCFF allotments to provide the technology related training proposed by this bill.

In addition, the 2013-14 Budget Act provided \$1.25 billion in one-time Proposition 98 funds to assist K-12 school districts in implementing the new Common Core standards. These funds allowed school districts to make significant one-time investments in professional development, instructional materials, and enhancements to technology. School districts are required, on or before July 1, 2015, to report detailed information to the California Department of Education (CDE), including, but not limited to, specific purchases made and the number of teachers, administrators, or paraprofessional educators that received professional development. However, the CDE has estimated that based on the cost of implementing previous content standards, successful implementation of the Common Core could cost approximately \$3 billion. Additionally, the Association of California School Administrators has conducted a survey on the expenditure of the \$1.25 billion for Common Core implementation and found a relatively even distribution of expenditures in the three allowable categories (professional development, instructional materials, and technology, with slightly more interest in professional development. When asked about how any new funds provided would be spent, the priorities of the district respondents were again fairly evenly distributed among the three categories.

3. ***Too prescriptive?*** Notwithstanding the potential need for additional resources for school districts to implement the Common Core standards, it is unclear why the proposed pilot program should be limited to only local educational agencies in the San Bernardino County when other school districts in the state may have similar technology related needs. Further, the bill requires the pilot program to use the international standards defined by the International Society for Technology in Education. Would it be more prudent to leave this to the discretion of the program recipients?
4. ***SBAC assessments and Common Core.*** California joined the Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium (SBAC) as a governing state in 2011, for the purpose of developing assessments that are aligned to the Common Core

standards. California committed to administering the SBAC assessments to pupils beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The State is not currently bound by statutes or fiscal requirements to fulfill the commitments made to SBAC. However, the State has adopted the Common Core standards and as a result, has updated curricular frameworks, professional development modules, supplemental instructional materials, and is working on the adoption of instructional materials. School districts have been required to provide instruction on the Common Core standards for several years now and have spent resources to do so.

**SUPPORT**

None received.

**OPPOSITION**

None received.

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