

AB 197: K-12 - Full Day Kindergarten

Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D – 79)

SUMMARY

AB 197 would require school districts offering kindergarten to implement a full-day kindergarten program by the 2021-22 school years. Further, the bill would require that a minimum school day for full-day kindergarten is the same number of minutes per school day that is offered to pupils in 1st grade.

BACKGROUND

According to the Education Commission of the States, full-day kindergarten attendance can help to close achievement gaps early on in a child's education. Research indicates that longer school days enable children to receive more individualized, academically focused and meaningful instruction from teachers, as well as more time interacting with their peers – both of which can lead to long-term benefits and increased scores.

Students who attend full-day kindergarten programs are also more likely to have better attendance, academic success and social/emotional development. In particular, low-income children who may not have had previous access to an academically enriching environment can get an essential boost in school readiness by attending all-day kindergarten.

However, according to a 2017 Ed Source report, only 70.5 percent of California schools serving kindergarten-age children are offering full-day programs. California lags behind many other states that offer full-day programs to a larger proportion of their kindergarten students. Governor Newsom has indicated his support of this policy by proposing \$750 million to address barriers to full-day

kindergarten. This investment will put California on a path for all kindergartners to attend full-day kindergarten.

EXISTING LAW

Under current law, the maximum school day for kindergarten students in California is 4 hours. In schools that provide extended day kindergarten programs, student instruction time can exceed 4 hours.

THIS BILL

Because more and more children participate in preschool and early education programs, kindergarten is no longer their first school experience. Many are used to a full-day program and ready for a full day of kindergarten. The additional hours provided under AB 197 would expand instruction time and give teachers the opportunity to provide an academically rich experience for young learners. In addition, more time in the classroom would support the educational gains made by children previously enrolled in a pre-school environment (daycare, pre-K, etc.) by providing consistency and balance in their learning environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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