

Summary Outline of the Early Education block grant trailer bill

Findings and Declarations

Establish the block Grant

“Early Education Block Grant” (EEBG) to be administered by the California Department of Education to provide one-year of subsidized pre-kindergarten education for low-income and at-risk four-year-old children

Definitions

Eligibility defined (see section below on priority eligibility): Children that are age-eligible AND are either of the following: At risk as defined; Income eligible.

- Age: children who have their fourth birthday on or before September 1st of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in prekindergarten program funded by EEBG
- At-risk means any one of the following:
- Homeless; Foster youth; Children with exceptional needs”; at of abuse, neglect or exploitation w/written referral; Limited English speaking proficient and non-English speaking proficient;
- Income: income eligible for state-subsidized child care care and development programs (EC 8263.1) or for free/reduced price meals (EC 42238.01(a)).

Community Early Learning Plans (school districts)

- By July 1, 2018, school districts must develop 3-year “Community Early Learning Plans” which must be adopted by district governing boards and provided to the county office of education. Districts must use the plan template adopted by its county office of education.
- In developing a plan, the school board must consult with teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local bargaining units of the school district, and local providers of prekindergarten education programs, parents and pupils.
- The plans must be updated and provided to the county office of education by July 1 of each year and are required to include 9 specified elements.
- Annual updates to be done must include: review of changes in applicability of plan goals; review of progress toward the goals, assessment of effectiveness of specific actions in the plan, description of changes to specific actions the district will make as result of review and assessment.

Regional Early Learning Plans (COEs)

- Each county superintendent shall develop and present to the county office of education a 3-year regional early learning plan. Plans to be updated on or before October 1 of each year. (First plan to be developed and presented to COE by October 1, 2017). The counties are to use a template adopted by the California Department of Education.
- County plans must include assessment of the early learning needs of the county that includes at a minimum 8 specified factors.
- In addition, the plan must include annual goals for increasing capacity of districts and other preK program providers to provide access to high quality, full day preK education.
- The county plan must also include a summary of the data and other information provided by districts in their district plans.
- The annual updates must include the same review and assessment required of the district annual updates (see above)

- County superintendent must consult with the following in developing the plan: teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local bargaining units of the COE, parents and pupils.

Note: pursuant to the Governor’s Child Care trailer bill proposal, COEs are to develop county plans for child care and are encouraged to combine the child care plan with the regional early learning plan to create aligned set of early learning and child care priorities for their regions.

Program Requirements

- Programs would be required to provide a minimum of 180 minutes per day and for at least an equal length of time during the school year as the district’s kindergarten classes.
- School districts are encouraged to provide full day prekindergarten programs.
- Programs would need to meet at least Tier 4 on their county QRIS matrix, although school district programs would be exempt from “elements that are not applicable to them, including director qualifications”.
- Programs must publicly post their QRIS tier of quality for families and public to see.
- A change to the common quality tiers of the QRIS shall be subject to legislation.
- Curriculum: School districts have the autonomy to choose a curriculum appropriate and responsive to needs of tis students and aligned to goals and priorities of its early learning plan.
- The trailer bill states that districts are strongly encouraged to use the Preschool Learning Foundations.

Licensing requirements:

Local educational agencies are exempt from Title 22 licensing but other providers of prekindergarten programs funded by EEGB shall be licensed under title 22.

Governance requirements (Districts)

As condition of funding:

- School districts must submit their plans to their county offices of education by July 1 of each year.
- The expenditure of EEGB funds must be aligned with the goals and priorities identified in the district’s plan.
- Districts must provide preK programs to “no less than the number of children served within the school district boundaries in TK and State Preschool in the 2016-17 school years, as determined by CDE. This condition becomes effective in 2018-19 school year.
 - Calculating the number of children served: the sum of children receiving state subsidized prek within a district boundary without regard to the entity providing the program, if the program is at least equivalent in quality to a prek program funded by the EEGB. Children partially subsidized through a graduated fee program developed by a school district may be included in the number of children served.
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) may waive this requirement for a school district if it is determined that the district will not be able to meet the requirement due to circumstances beyond the district’s control.
- A district may contract with another entity, including other school districts, OCEs and community based organizations to provide a prek program funded by the EEGB. School districts must ensure that the providers meet the minimum program quality requirements.
- Programs must comply with eligibility, age and priority requirements.
- Districts may develop a family fee schedule but fees shall not be required of families that are income eligible.

- Technical assistance: school districts shall provide technical assistance to contracting agencies as needed. A district shall request that the COE assist in providing technical assistance to the extent the assistance is beyond what the district can provide.
- School districts are encouraged to form consortia to administer prek programs with other districts and COEs and a district may form a joint powers entity or appoint a separate entity to administer its EEBG.
- School districts shall take steps to minimize disruption to care for children in prek programs as the state transitions to the EEBG.

Governance – Counties

As a condition of funding, county offices of education shall

- Develop and submit to the CDE a regional early learning plan
- Align expenditure of funds with the goals and priorities identified in the county office’s regional early learning plan
- Provide districts and community based organizations with preK program technical assistance
- If an entity requires technical assistance beyond what the county office is able to provide, the county office shall request the department of education assist in providing technical assistance to the entity.
- Work with a regional consortium to maintain and administer the QRIS matrix (as per EC 8203.1)
- Work with preK providers including Head Start, to maintain and expand program capacity in the county
- Provide assistance to entities contracting with multiple school districts for EEBG funds to allow them to consolidate contracts and realize efficiencies in contracting processes, should they request assistance.
- By April 15, 2017, develop a template for the Community Early Learning Plan. The template shall be structured to minimize workload for districts in completing the plan.
- County offices are encouraged to form consortia to administer preK programs funded by EEBG with school districts and other county offices of education.
- A county office may form a joint powers entity to administer or appoint a separate entity to administer its EEBG funds.
- County offices of education shall take steps to minimize disruption to care of children as the state transitions to the EEBG.

Governance – CDE

- The Department shall provide technical assistance to county offices of education to help them regionally plan for early education, build capacity and serve as support agencies for school districts. Programmatic technical assistance shall be provided through CDE’s Early Ed Support Division.
- By February 1, 2017, the Department shall develop a template for the Regional Early Learning Plan and provide the template to county offices of education. The template shall be structured to minimize workload for county offices of education in completing the plan.
- By November 1, 2017, and by November 1 of each year thereafter, the Department shall report to DOF and Legislature a statewide summary of data and other information collected in the Regional Early Learning Plans.

- By February 1, 2018, the Department shall provide to each school district the number of children served within district boundaries in TK and State Preschool in the 2016-17 school year, using data from the second principal apportionment.

Charter schools

Charter schools may participate in the EEBG.

Eligibility and Priority of children served

Priority for prek programs supported by the EEBG is for children defined as age-eligible and low-income or at-risk.

If the following conditions are met, EEBG funds may be used to serve additional children beyond these priorities:

- 1) The district or COE has actively promoted availability of the program to eligible families.
- 2) The district or COE has taken reasonable steps to ensure the prek program is convenient to access.
- 3) All children in the prioritized eligibility who reside within the school district boundaries and whose families have requested access have received access.

Fee structure

A district or COE may develop a family fee schedule if the purpose is to expand access to or improve services in the program. Fees may not be charged to families defined as low income and at risk.

Districts are encouraged to develop fees that are graduated based on family income.

Rates and Funding, Transition

Funding for the EEBG shall be provided in the annual budget act.

Funding shall be allocated in accordance with priorities identified in the district or county early learning plan.

If a district or county has contracted with another entity, the district or county may be reimbursed for costs administrative and monitoring the contract up to 5% of the contract amount.

For the 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 fiscal years:

- The CDE shall provide EEBG funding to participating school districts in the amount of state P98 that each school district received in FY 2016-17 for its TK students and for part and full day state preschool program and in the amount of P98 that non-school district state preschool contractors received to provide services within school district boundaries in FY 2016-17.
- If it is unclear which school district to attribute the 2016-17 funding to, the department shall provide the COE with the EEBG funds and the COE shall distribute the funding based on need as determined by the county's early learning plan.

School districts without capacity to provide a prek program consistent with the EEBG, may contract with another entity, including a COE to provide the program on its behalf.

Commencing with 2020-21 fiscal year, the department shall provide EEBG funding to participating school districts and COEs in at least the same amount as provided in 2019-20. The amount may be reduced if the district or COE does not serve at least the number of children it is required to serve.

If a district has fewer than 20 eligible children or has had its minimum service requirement waived by the Superintendent, it may develop an alternate plan of service that may allow it to maintain a higher level of funding than is reflective of the number of children served.

If the department finds a district is not in compliance with requirements of EEBG, it may revoke the district EEBG funding, but only if both the district's COE and the department have attempted to provide technical assistance to bring the district into compliance. If funds are revoked, they may be returned to the district upon the district coming into compliance with requirements of the EEBG and upon funds being available for allocation.

Commencing in 2017-18, any increase any increase in appropriation of the EEBG shall be distributed by the department abased upon unmet need.

The EEBG shall be subject to an annual COLA.

The 2017-18 per child rate for the EEBG shall be \$6,200.

Ongoing Equity Assessment

Legislative intent: opportunities for subsidized prek are provided equitably across the state and those priorities for state prek resources go to children who could most benefit and have least ability to access prek without assistance.

Commencing in 2017-18 and at least once every 3 years, the Legislature shall appoint an independent entity to assess the level of equity of opportunities for subsidized prek across the state. The assessment shall include:

- Estimates of the number of children provided with access to prek education
- Estimate of the percentage need for subsidized prek education in each county and school district
- Comparisons of unmet need for subsidized prek education by county and school district
- Identification of barriers to families accessing subsidized prekindergarten programs and school districts in providing access
- Recommendations on steps the state could take to increase the program equity and access.

The assessment shall be submitted to Department of Finance and Legislature by February 1st of each fiscal year in which an assessment is required.

Prop. 98 Designation

For purposes of making the computations required by Section 8 of Article XVI of the California Constitution, appropriations made for the EEBG shall be deemed .. (i.e., are Prop 98)

QRIS Block Grant

Local planning councils are removed from the list of required representatives to local consortia. Commencing July 1, 2017, allocations of QRIS block grant funds shall be based upon percentage of Average Daily Attendance within each consortium and would give priority for funding to county offices of education.

Transitional Kindergarten

Statutory language on computing average daily attendance for transitional kindergarten pupils is removed. This change takes effect beginning July 1, 2017.

Statutory language on transitional kindergarten program is removed, taking effect beginning July 1, 2017.

Class Size Reduction Hold Harmless

One time funding for COEs to implement EEBG

\$10 million

(The May Revision also proposes \$10 million ongoing funding to COEs for the EEBG)

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