

Early Learning Quality Improvement Act

SB 1629 (Steinberg)

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PURPOSE

Research confirms the social and economic benefits of early education for children and families, as well as society. Children who attend effective preschool programs are better prepared for kindergarten. They have stronger language skills in the first years of elementary school. And they are less likely to repeat a grade or drop out of school. These benefits are especially evident for low-income children and English language learners.

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, however, our state-funded preschool programs meet only 4 of 10 key benchmarks for quality. That's why State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell's P-16 Council and the Governor's Committee on Education Excellence propose reforming existing preschools to create the quality experience that helps children get ready to read and learn.

Nineteen states already have early learning quality improvement systems to assess quality and support programs in providing better learning environments. Primarily through their local First 5 Commissions, five California counties have local quality improvement systems in place. They serve as models from which California can build high-quality programs for young children.

BILL SUMMARY

SB 1629 establishes an Advisory Committee to recommend a state Early Learning Quality Improvement System, which will develop policy and an implementation plan for improving the quality of early education programs. This includes a quality rating scale to help

parents make informed decisions about programs for their children, and a funding model to help existing and future programs reach and maintain higher levels of quality.

The Advisory Committee will conduct an assessment and analysis of the existing early care and education infrastructure, and may consider issues ranging from teacher qualifications and compensation and parent involvement to English learner support and group size and ratios. The committee will provide an interim report to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 2009, and a final report one year later.

No general fund dollars will be used to fund the committee, which shall apply to the First 5 Commission to fund its work. SB 1629 is joined to AB 2759 (Jones), which consolidates and streamlines existing Title V programs for 3 and 4 year olds.

SUPPORT (continued on page 2)

California Superintendent of Public Instruction
Jack O'Connell (Co-Sponsor)
Preschool California (Co-Sponsor)
Children Now (Co-Sponsor)
California Child Development Administrators
Association (Co-Sponsor)
Advancement Project
Alameda County Office of Education
Alliance for a Better Community
Bay Area Council
Bay Area Early Childhood Education
Professional Development Collaborative
BIOCOM
California Association for Bilingual Education
California Association for the Education of
Young Children
California Business for Educational Excellence
California Child Care Coordinators Association

SUPPORT (continued)

California Child Care Resource and Referral
Network
California Continuation Education Association
California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association
California Federation of Teachers
California Head Start Association
California Kindergarten Association
California School Boards Association
California State PTA
California Teachers Association
Californians Together
Campaign for High Quality Early Learning
Standards in California
Child Development Policy Institute
Child Care Law Center
Children's Defense Fund—California
County of Los Angeles
El Dorado County Office of Education
English Language Learners Preschool
Coalition
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California
First 5 California
League of Women Voters
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Low Income Investment Fund
Mendocino County Office of Education
Merced County Office of Education
National Council of La Raza
Policy Roundtable for Child Care
Professional Association for Childhood
Education
Sacramento County Office of Education
San Bernardino Mayor Patrick J. Morris
San Mateo County Office of Education
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
Yolo County Office of Education

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