

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1689

**Introduced by Assembly Member Low
(Coauthor: Assembly Member McCarty)**

January 21, 2016

An act to amend Section 51225.3 of, and to add Section 51221.1 to, the Education Code, relating to school curriculum.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1689, as introduced, Low. School curriculum: coursework for high school graduation: service learning.

(1) Existing law establishes a system of public elementary and secondary schools in this state, and authorizes local educational agencies throughout the state to operate schools and provide instruction to pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. Existing law prescribes the course of study a pupil is required to complete while in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, in order to receive a diploma of graduation from high school. These requirements include the completion of 3 courses in social studies, including one-year courses in United States history and geography and world history, culture, and geography, and one-semester courses in American government and economics.

This bill would express legislative findings and declarations relating to service learning. The bill would additionally require, commencing with the high school class graduating during the 2021–22 school year, and for the high school classes graduating in each subsequent school year, at least one of the courses completed by a pupil to satisfy the graduation requirements referenced above to have a service learning component. The bill would define “service learning” for this purpose.

The bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop curriculum standards for courses that incorporate a service learning component in order to satisfy the requirements of this bill. The bill would require the Superintendent to consult with leaders of community organizations, pupils, parents, classroom teachers, school administrators, postsecondary educators, representatives of business and industry, and other persons with knowledge or experience the Superintendent deems appropriate to the task of developing these curriculum standards. The bill would require the Superintendent to submit these proposed curriculum standards to the State Board of Education on or before March 1, 2018, and for the state board to adopt or reject curriculum standards that incorporate a service learning component into courses on or before July 1, 2018.

If the state board adopts these proposed curriculum standards, the bill would require the curriculum standards to be implemented by school districts, commencing with the 2018–19 school year, as a component of courses in order to satisfy the graduation requirements enacted by this bill. To the extent the implementation of these curriculum standards would impose new duties on school districts, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
 State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) California has been a national leader in promoting service
- 4 and volunteerism, including support for youth service and the
- 5 conservation corps, service learning, and statewide mentor
- 6 initiatives.
- 7 (b) Service learning is a powerful instructional strategy for
- 8 improving the educational performance of pupils, along with

1 contributing to the development of character, values, self-esteem,
2 civic responsibility, and knowledge of local community issues and
3 concerns.

4 (c) This act is based on the results of numerous research studies
5 that identify the following benefits associated with pupils who
6 engage in quality service learning programs infusing well-planned
7 service activity into the school curriculum, including, but not
8 necessarily limited to, all of the following:

9 (1) Pupil academic achievement increases, as demonstrated by
10 higher standardized test scores and by higher grade point averages.

11 (2) Pupils are less likely to drop out of school.

12 (3) Pupils are less likely to have discipline problems, or to
13 engage in behaviors that lead to pregnancy or arrest.

14 (4) Pupils are likely to maintain higher attendance rates in
15 school.

16 (5) Pupils are more likely to develop a sense of civic
17 responsibility and an ethic of service in their communities.

18 (6) Pupils report greater acceptance of cultural diversity and
19 show increased awareness of cultural differences, including positive
20 attitudes toward helping others.

21 (7) Pupils show increases in measures of personal and social
22 responsibility, perceive themselves to be more socially competent,
23 and are more likely to increase their sense of self-esteem and
24 self-efficacy.

25 (d) This act is intended to promote volunteer service performed
26 by pupils, since research has demonstrated many positive outcomes
27 of pupil volunteer service, including, but not necessarily limited
28 to, all of the following:

29 (1) Senior pupils who are engaged in volunteer work, whether
30 through school or on their own, are likely to have significantly
31 higher civics assessment scale scores than pupils who did not
32 participate in volunteer work as reported by the National
33 Assessment of Educational Progress in 1998.

34 (2) Community leaders report that service learning partnerships
35 help build more positive community attitudes toward youth.

36 (3) Schools that support service learning and community service
37 are more likely to have positive relationships with their community.

38 SEC. 2. Section 51221.1 is added to the Education Code, to
39 read:

1 51221.1. (a) The Superintendent shall develop curriculum
 2 standards for courses that incorporate a service learning component
 3 in order to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (3) of subdivision
 4 (a) of Section 51225.3. In developing the curriculum standards
 5 under this section, the Superintendent shall consult with leaders
 6 of community organizations, pupils, parents, classroom teachers,
 7 school administrators, postsecondary educators, representatives
 8 of business and industry, and other persons with knowledge or
 9 experience the Superintendent deems appropriate to the task of
 10 developing these curriculum standards. The persons the
 11 Superintendent consults with pursuant to this section shall
 12 represent, as much as feasible, the diverse regions and
 13 socioeconomic communities of this state.

14 (b) (1) The Superintendent shall submit the proposed curriculum
 15 standards developed under subdivision (a) to the state board for
 16 its review on or before March 1, 2018. The state board shall adopt
 17 or reject curriculum standards that incorporate a service learning
 18 component into courses on or before July 1, 2018. If the state board
 19 adopts the proposed curriculum standards, the curriculum standards
 20 shall be implemented by school districts, commencing with the
 21 2018–19 school year, as a component of courses in order to satisfy
 22 the requirements of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section
 23 51225.3.

24 (2) If the state board rejects the curriculum standards proposed
 25 under this subdivision, the state board shall submit a written
 26 explanation of the reasons why the proposed curriculum standards
 27 were rejected to the Superintendent, the Legislature, and the
 28 Governor.

29 SEC. 3. Section 51225.3 of the Education Code, as amended
 30 by Section 2 of Chapter 888 of the Statutes of 2014, is amended
 31 to read:

32 51225.3. (a) A pupil shall complete *coursework in accordance*
 33 *with* all of the following while in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, in order
 34 to receive a diploma of graduation from high school:

35 (1) At least the following numbers of courses in the subjects
 36 specified, each course having a duration of one year, unless
 37 otherwise specified:

38 (A) Three courses in English.

39 (B) Two courses in mathematics. If the governing board of a
 40 school district requires more than two courses in mathematics for

1 graduation, the governing board of the school district may award
2 a pupil up to one mathematics course credit pursuant to Section
3 51225.35.

4 (C) Two courses in science, including biological and physical
5 sciences.

6 (D) Three courses in social studies, including United States
7 history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a
8 one-semester course in American government and civics; and a
9 one-semester course in economics.

10 (E) One course in visual or performing arts or foreign language.
11 For purposes of satisfying the requirement specified in this
12 subparagraph, a course in American Sign Language shall be
13 deemed a course in foreign language.

14 (F) Two courses in physical education, unless the pupil has been
15 exempted pursuant to the provisions of this code.

16 (2) Other coursework requirements adopted by the governing
17 board of the school district.

18 (3) (A) *Commencing with the high school class graduating*
19 *during the 2021–22 school year, and for the high school classes*
20 *graduating in each subsequent school year, at least one of the*
21 *courses completed by a pupil to satisfy the requirements of this*
22 *subdivision shall have a service learning component.*

23 (B) *For purposes of this subdivision, “service learning” is*
24 *defined as follows:*

25 (i) *It is a method through which pupils or participants learn*
26 *and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized*
27 *service that: (I) is conducted in, and meets the needs of, a*
28 *community; (II) is coordinated with a secondary school and with*
29 *the community; and (III) helps foster civic responsibility.*

30 (ii) *It is a method that: (I) is integrated into, and enhances, the*
31 *standards-based academic curriculum of the pupils; and (II)*
32 *provides structured time for the pupils or participants to reflect*
33 *on the service experience.*

34 (b) ~~The governing board,~~ *board of the school district,* with the
35 active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and pupils,
36 shall adopt alternative means for pupils to complete the prescribed
37 course of study that may include practical demonstration of skills
38 and competencies, supervised work experience or other outside
39 school experience, career technical education classes offered in
40 high schools, courses offered by regional occupational centers or

1 programs, interdisciplinary study, independent study, and credit
2 earned at a postsecondary educational institution. Requirements
3 for graduation and specified alternative modes for completing the
4 prescribed course of study shall be made available to pupils,
5 parents, and the public.

6 (c) If a pupil completed a career technical education course that
7 met the requirements of subparagraph (E) of paragraph (1) of
8 subdivision (a) of Section 51225.3, as amended by the act adding
9 this section, before the inoperative date of that section, that course
10 shall be deemed to fulfill the requirements of subparagraph (E) of
11 paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of this section.

12 (d) This section shall become operative upon the date that
13 Section 51225.3, as amended by the act adding this section,
14 becomes inoperative.

15 SEC. 4. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
16 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
17 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
18 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
19 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.