



California Association for Bilingual Education



THE CAPITOL REPORT



August 2019

by *Martha Zaragoza-Díaz, CABE Lobbyist*

The Final Weeks of the 2019 Legislative Session

The California Legislature returned from its month-long summer recess today, August 12, 2019. Many bills are still left to be dealt with by the legislature. The end-of-session will see a flurry of activity and more often than not, some bills will be “gutted and amended” where the bill content and policy area has been changed from the original version. This usually occurs in the weeks leading to the adjournment of the legislature on September 13, 2019. Thank goodness, however, bills are now required to be available for public review 72 hours before any final vote.

Bills waiting to be considered are our sponsored bill, **AB 1319 (Arambula & Bonta)** **Migrant Students.** The bill would require local educational agencies, as defined, to allow a pupil who is a migratory child, as defined, to continue attending their school of origin, as defined, or a school within the school district of origin, as provided, regardless of any change of residence of the pupil, as specified. The intent of the bill is to allow migrant students to finish their schooling in the school or district they were attending before the family's change in residence. AB 1319 is currently on the Senate Floor waiting a floor vote.

Stay tuned for an update as to which bills made it to the governor's desk.

The Repeal of the Reading Instruction Competency Act (RICA)

On July 1, 2019, Senator Rubio amended SB 614, proposing the elimination of the RICA (Reading Instruction Competency Assessment). CABE and Californians Together joined CTA in supporting SB 614.

A requirement in obtaining a teacher credential, is successfully passing the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA). The intent of RICA is to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to teach literacy.

The RICA has served as a barrier for many persons in obtaining their teaching credential. Developed in 1996, the RICA does not reflect current research and instructional practices in literacy. RICA is a financial burden on applicants, it doesn't respond to needs of high-risk children, it exacerbates California's teacher shortage and the "passage rates based on gender, ethnicity and other factors demonstrate bias," as one state Commission on Teacher Credentialing report puts it. Lastly, the RICA is neither aligned to the current English Language Arts standards and the current curriculum framework, nor to the current teacher performance expectations.

SB 614 would shift the evaluation of teachers' reading and literacy knowledge from the RICA to university coursework, teacher performance expectations and assessment of literacy competency through the accreditation program. This is good for our teacher candidates, schools and students because teacher candidates will still be required to learn how to teach reading and literacy. SB 614 (Rubio) would not remove this requirement.

However, the bill faced strong opposition from school reformers who often do battle with the CTA and other elements of the education establishment. EdVoice, one of the reform groups, strongly opposed SB 614, stating that the bill is ill-advised and proposes to eliminate evidence of competency in science-based reading instruction as a pre-requisite to a teaching credential in California, as specific requirement.

While this is not the case, Senator Rubio chose to make SB 614 a two-year bill to provide more time to develop the bill so that it addresses all concerns. Stay tuned for further updates on SB 614.

Charter School Report

On June 6, 2019, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, released the much-anticipated Charter Task Force Report of Recommendations to Governor Newsom, ahead of the July 1, 2019 deadline. Governor Newsom, in late February, requested Superintendent Thurmond convene a group of experts to examine the impact of charter school growth on district budgets and to provide a report with recommendations by July 1, 2019. The task force met regularly since early March and culminated its work with a report that has both recommendations that were unanimously agreed upon by the task force members, as well as proposals that provide opportunities for future efforts. Please note that these proposals did not meet full consensus of the task force.

While there was consensus reached on some areas and other not, State Superintendent Thurmond stated "The public deserves a transparent report, and one that also reflects honestly that there is more work to be done. The California Department of Education, under my leadership, will lead the efforts to provide solutions to the issues surrounding current standards, guidelines, and authorization processes. We will continue working with the Governor, legislators, and stakeholders, as well as welcome the opportunity for public input, as we lead this next phase."

The full report includes a central focus on the fiscal impact that charter schools have on traditional public schools, as well as the inconsistencies in how charter schools are authorized throughout the state. Recommendations were made to alleviate concerns in these areas and provide specific ways to address fiscal impact and authorization challenges.

Several bills are going through the legislative process that reflect some of the recommendations contained in the report. They are:

AB 1505 (O'Donnell): The bill would revise and recast numerous provisions relating to the submission of petitions to establish charter schools, the appeal of decisions of the governing boards of school districts to deny approval or renewal of charter schools, and the revocation of charters by chartering authorities.

AB 1507 (Smith): The bill would delete the authority of a charter school to locate outside the jurisdiction or geographic boundaries of the chartering school district because the charter school has attempted to locate a single site or facility to house the entire program, but a site or facility is unavailable in the area in which the charter school chooses to locate, or the site is needed for temporary use during a construction or expansion project.

AB 967 (Smith): The bill would require the development, adoption and transparency requirements for the LCAPs and the updates to those plans that apply to the governing boards of school districts, superintendents of school districts and county superintendents of schools, to also apply to the governing bodies of charter schools, administrators of charter schools, and chartering authorities as specified.

Stay tuned for updates on these bills!