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AB-903 School accountability: local control and accountability plans: education technology: best practices: School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 28, 2025

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 903

Introduced by Assembly Members Ávila Farías and Solache

February 19, 2025

An act to add Section 52073.6 to the Education Code, relating to school accountability.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 903, as amended, Ávila Farías. School accountability: local control and accountability plans: education technology: best practices: School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee.

Existing law requires school districts, county superintendents of schools, and charter schools to adopt and update a local control and accountability plan (LCAP) using a template adopted by the State Board of Education that requires an LCAP to include certain information, including, among other information, (1) a description of the annual goals to be achieved for specified state priorities, including, among others, pupil achievement and pupil outcomes, (2) a description of the specific actions that the local educational agency will take during each year of the LCAP to achieve these goals, and (3) an assessment of the effectiveness of the specific actions described in the existing LCAP toward achieving the goals, as provided.

This bill would, among other things, require the ~~state board~~, *State Department of Education*, in consultation with the ~~department~~ *state board* and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, on or before December 31, 2026, to prepare, and update at least once every 2 years, a compilation of best practices to harness the power of technology to support pupil academic success and accelerate pupil academic achievement for school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools that receive specified federal funding, including a model policy for incorporation of those best practices into their LCAPs. The bill would require the department, in collaboration with the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, to conduct at least 3 informational webinars in 2027 for those local educational agencies to understand how to incorporate the best practices and model policy into their LCAPs.

~~The bill would require each county office of education to compile, and submit to the state board, on or before December 31, 2028, a summary of school district practices and local control and accountability plans related to harnessing the power of technology to~~

~~accelerate pupil academic performance in comparison to the compilation of best practices developed by the state board. By imposing additional duties on county offices of education, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.~~

~~The bill would require the department, in consultation with the state board and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, to develop a concise questionnaire and conduct a statistically reliable sample of local educational agencies to participate in a baseline survey, on or before June 30, 2027, to determine the status of the use of technology in schools, and to administer a followup survey, on or before June 30, 2030, to measure changes in the adoption of best practices to harness the power of technology to accelerate academic performance, as provided. To the extent the bill would impose additional duties on local educational agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.~~

The bill would require the ~~state board~~ *department* to establish a School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee that includes ~~one representative at least one school board member, administrator, teacher, and representative from the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and multiple individuals or organizations that represent the interests of supporting the use of technology in public schools,~~ with experience regarding the effective use of technology in accelerating pupil academic ~~performance from specified organizations, as provided, and performance, as provided. The bill would require the advisory committee to share with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and advise the Superintendent on, best practices to harness the power of technology to support pupil academic success and accelerate pupil academic achievement for local educational agencies. The bill would also~~ require the advisory committee, on or before December 31, 2028, and annually thereafter, to prepare an annual report on the progress in harnessing the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic achievement and to submit the report to the *department and the* state board.

~~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 the statutory provisions noted above.~~

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: ~~yes~~*no*

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all the following:

(1) The global pandemic underscored the digital divide in K–12 education, exposing deep disparities that disproportionately affect pupils attending public schools in underserved communities. These historical disparities hinder equitable access to educational opportunities, limiting pupil success and long-term economic prosperity.

(2) In response to the crisis, California schools, with state and federal relief assistance, rapidly deployed digital devices and internet access to facilitate distance learning and strengthen home-school communication. Teachers and pupils adapted to new digital platforms, and parents took on a more active role as learning partners. However, many public schools serving high-need pupils and families lacked the prior experience and infrastructure to integrate these innovative evidence-based resources effectively. To ensure sustainable benefits and address persistent achievement gaps in California, schools serving high proportions of low-income pupils require targeted capacity-building and technical assistance to fully optimize the unprecedented infusion of technology and funding.

(3) Existing state law establishes all of the following:

(A) That a priority school, for purposes of the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, is a school with 55 percent or more of its enrollment being English learners, pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or foster youth.

(B) That instructional materials are designed for use by pupils and their teachers as learning resources that help pupils learn facts, skills, or opinions, or to develop cognitive processes, *and* which can be printed or nonprinted, and include textbooks, technology-based materials, tests, and other educational materials.

(C) That technology-based materials are basic or supplemental instructional materials that are designed for use by pupils and teachers as learning resources and that require the availability of electronic equipment in order to be used as a learning resource.

(D) That technology-based materials include, but are not limited to, software programs, video disks, compact disks, optical disks, video and audiotapes, lesson plans, and databases, and also include the electronic equipment required to make use of those materials used by pupils and teachers as a learning resource, including, but not limited to, laptop computers and devices that provide internet access.

(4) Findings from the 2023 California Statewide Digital Equity Survey, conducted by University of Southern California in collaboration with the California Department of Technology and the California Emerging Technology Fund include:

(A) Broadband use by families at home declined since it peaked in 2021, from 97 percent in 2021 to 93 percent in 2023.

(B) The share of households reporting that their home broadband connection is paid by the school dropped from about 15 percent in 2021 to 3 percent in 2023.

(C) Pupil access to computing devices at home declined from 95 percent in 2021 to about 72 percent in 2023 as a result of school-based programs established for distance learning being eliminated.

(5) Surveys of computing device distribution programs conducted in connection with the federal Affordable Connectivity Program reveal the transformative potential of these initiatives:

(A) Sixty-three percent of computing device recipients reported that the devices “were helpful” or “helped a lot” for parents to assist their children with school at home.

(B) Nearly 80 percent of parents reported that the computing devices helped their children to participate in online classes, engage with teachers, and find information online for learning.

(6) Pursuant to statewide broadband initiatives, including Executive Order No. N-73-20, the Broadband 2020 Action Plan, and the California Broadband Council’s Get Connected! California initiative, survey data provides additional evidence of the critical need for coordinated efforts to close the digital divide, reinforcing the important role that public schools can play in establishing an equitable and effective digital learning environment for all California pupils, including that:

(A) Sixty-five percent of families with children in school did not own a computing device.

(B) Thirty-seven percent of families stated that their children’s school did not provide a digital device for each pupil.

(C) Forty-seven percent of families were not able to take a school-provided computing device home and 64 percent of families said the school did not allow family members other than the pupil to use the device.

(7) Technology integration programs implemented in high-need Title I schools have demonstrated the effectiveness of, and need for, a comprehensive approach to maximizing education technology investments by ensuring that teachers, pupils, parents, caregivers, and staff understand technology tools and have the skills to use them.

(8) Evaluations from some of these comprehensive technology integration programs have found positive results, with pupils, parents, and teachers reporting having had an easier time adjusting to distance learning. Evaluations also identified vital best practices that facilitate the effective use of technology to enhance pupil performance, teacher proficiency with technology, and home-school communications in high-poverty communities.

(9) Analysis of these comprehensive technology integration programs has identified vital best practices that facilitate the effective use of technology to enhance pupil performance. These practices can serve as benchmarks for scaling the program to other high-need schools, ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ZIP Code, have opportunities to develop the skills needed for college and careers. These best practices also can form the foundation of a state initiative to be implemented in all high-need and priority schools across California. This state initiative should be developed based on the following principles:

(A) Integration: Implementation of the effective use of technology to improve and accelerate pupils academic performance requires integration of best practices into existing school-improvement initiatives that are tailored to each local educational agency and school.

(B) Leadership: Effective implementation requires the establishment and facilitation of regular meetings of school leadership teams to set goals, adopt metrics, and facilitate continuous assessment for transparency and accountability.

(C) Capacity Building: Schools need assistance and a catalyst to move away from siloed approaches to interrelated systems and integrated technology implementation with well-defined goals for pupils and parents.

(D) Digital Divide: Pupils need a suitable digital computing device to use at school and to take home to help close the digital divide, extend the learning day, and promote educational continuity.

(E) Internet Access: All low-income households in California need to have access to lower-cost affordable home internet service through public subsidies or affordable subscription plan offers from internet service providers for eligible households.

(F) Professional Learning and Coaching: Teachers need to have access to ongoing professional development and learning opportunities and embedded coaching to help them incorporate technology into effective classroom practices and lessons.

(G) Parent Engagement: Schools need to provide ongoing parent training with standards performance metrics to ensure that parents can use computing devices and navigate the internet to communicate with teachers in languages spoken at home, access information about their children's assignments and grades, contribute to the development of the local control and accountability plans, participate in other school activities, and access community services to improve their daily living.

(H) Learning Academies: Building school performance capacity and accelerating pupil academic achievement is greatly accelerated by bringing together school leadership teams from several schools and local educational agencies in regular learning academies to share experiences and lessons learned.

(I) Accountability: School leadership teams need to lead continuous assessment and share evaluation results with the entire school community to provide feedback to inform ongoing implementation.

(J) Transparency: Local educational agencies need to report on the technology environment at their schools as part of the California School Dashboard section on basic services and conditions.

(10) It is the policy of the State of California to harness the power of computing and internet technologies to support the attainment of educational goals and to accelerate improvement in pupil academic achievement in all schools and local educational agencies, with a special focus on providing assistance to under-performing priority and Title I schools in low-income neighborhoods that lag behind in pupil achievement in comparison to the averages statewide.

(11) The local control funding formula and related statutes assign responsibilities to the State Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence that provide existing authority to optimize the use of technology in preparation and implementation of local control and accountability plans that can accelerate improvement in pupil academic achievement.

(12) Existing budget allocations and funded programs, including the California Community Schools Partnership Program, have sufficient resources to begin to better use technology in improving pupil academic achievement, beginning with incorporating recognized best practices into local educational agency local control and accountability plans pursuant to support, assistance, and guidelines that are the responsibility of the State Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.

(13) A computing device in the classroom and for use to complete assignments out of the classroom and at home, coupled with access to the internet in the classroom and at home, is as valuable today to prepare pupils for success as are textbooks, and every local educational agency is encouraged to review the use of existing resources to identify and adopt best practices to harness the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic achievement, including by providing a computing device, with a durable protective cover, to every pupil, with a special focus on pupils in underperforming priority and Title I schools beginning no later than in grade 6 as soon as practically feasible.

(14) Local educational agencies are encouraged to do both of the following:

(A) Allow pupils in priority and Title I schools to take home a school-issued device, as is the practice for assigned textbooks, after proper training of pupils and parents pursuant to the local educational agency's policies.

(B) Incorporate best practices for harnessing the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic achievement into their local control and accountability plans as soon as practically feasible.

SEC. 2. Section 52073.6 is added to the Education Code, to read:

52073.6. (a) (1) (A) The ~~state board~~, *department*, in consultation with the ~~department~~ *state board* and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, on or before December 31, 2026, shall prepare a compilation of best practices to harness the power of technology to support pupil academic success and accelerate pupil academic achievement for local educational agencies that have a priority school, as defined in Section 69617, or that receive funding pursuant to Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.), as amended by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95), including a model policy for incorporation of those best practices into local control and accountability plans.

(B) On or before December 31, 2028, and at least once every two years thereafter, the ~~state board~~, *department*, in consultation with the ~~department~~ *state board* and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, shall update the compilation of best practices required pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(2) (A) The ~~state board~~ *department* shall publish and post the compilation of best practices and model policy on its internet website on or before December 31, 2026.

(B) The ~~state board~~ *department* shall publish and post the updates required pursuant to subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) on its internet website.

(3) The department, in collaboration with the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, shall conduct at least three informational webinars in 2027 for local educational agencies to understand how to incorporate the best practices into their local control and accountability plans under the model policy.

~~(4) Each county office of education shall compile, and submit to the state board, on or before December 31, 2028, a summary of school district practices and local control and accountability plans related to harnessing the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic performance in comparison to the compilation of best practices developed by the state board pursuant to paragraph (1).~~

~~(b)(1) The department, in consultation with the state board and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, shall develop a concise questionnaire and conduct a statistically reliable sample of local educational agencies to participate in a baseline survey, on or before June 30, 2027, to determine the status of the use of technology in schools, and shall administer a followup survey, on or before June 30, 2030, to measure changes in the adoption of best practices to harness the power of technology to accelerate academic performance, including, but not limited to, comparing changes in academic performance, if any, associated with the implementation of those best practices.~~

~~(2) The questionnaire and surveys may be incorporated into the standardized template for the existing School Accountability Report Card developed by the department pursuant to Section 33126.1.~~

(c) (1) The ~~state board~~ *department* shall establish a School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee that includes ~~one representative with~~ *at least one participant from each of the groups listed in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, and multiple participants from the group listed in subparagraph (E), all of whom shall have* experience regarding the effective use of technology in accelerating pupil academic ~~performance from at least the following organizations:~~ *performance:*

~~(A) The California School Boards Association.~~

~~(B) The Association of California School Administrators.~~

~~(C) The California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators.~~

~~(D) The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents.~~

~~(E) The California Teachers Association.~~

~~(F) The American Federation of Teachers.~~

~~(G) The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.~~

~~(H) The International Society for Technology in Education.~~

~~(I) Computer Using Educators.~~

~~(J) The California Emerging Technology Fund.~~

~~(K) Families in Schools.~~

~~(L) The California State Parent Teachers Association.~~

~~(M) Common Sense Media.~~

~~(N) The Silicon Valley Education Foundation.~~

~~(O) Any other organizations or philanthropic foundations determined by the state board to be experienced and willing to contribute to harnessing the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic achievement.~~

(A) School board members.

(B) Administrators.

(C) Teachers.

(D) The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.

(E) Individuals or organizations that represent the interests of supporting the use of technology in public schools.

(2) The School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee shall be staffed by the department and meet at least three times in each fiscal year.

(3) The School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee shall share with the Superintendent, and advise the Superintendent on, best practices to harness the power of technology to support pupil academic success and accelerate pupil academic achievement for local educational agencies.

~~(3)~~

(4) On or before December 31, 2028, and annually thereafter, the School Technology Empowerment Advisory Committee shall prepare an annual report on the progress in harnessing the power of technology to accelerate pupil academic achievement and submit the report to the *department and the* state board.

(d) For purposes of this section, "local educational agency" means a school district, county office of education, or charter school.

~~SEC. 3.If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.~~