

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Ruthie Fagerstrom, Chairperson
Monique Segura, Vice Chairperson
Marie Ibsen, Recording Secretary
George Melendez, Board Liaison
Ann Adler/Elisa Gusdal, Consultants
Toni Trigueiro, Legislative Consultant

MAJOR POLICY

None

OTHER ITEMS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

None

REFERRALS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None

MATTERS PENDING

None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. Toni Trigueiro, Legislative Advocate, shared updates on the TK bill and mandatory kindergarten. She summarized the legislative process and timelines. She encouraged all of us to be critical viewers of proposal SB837 because the governor has made it clear there will be no expansions or creations of new programs. She is encouraging members to send input and critique via email. TTrigueiro@cta.org
2. George Melendez, Board Liaison, listened to the concerns of the committee regarding the new State Council schedule and the impact it has on Friday committee meetings as well as caucus meetings. He also reminded us that your local union should be involved in the bargaining of LCFF, the organizing of LCAP and its connection to LTSP.
3. Sue Allen, California Kindergarten Association Liaison, reported that California Kindergarten Association is asking to be kept informed about the mandatory kindergarten bill and the new TK bill. Last year's TK and Common Core Trainings were such a big success that they are continuing them this year throughout the state. The information was practical and appropriate for the young child.
4. Carole Delgado, First Five Liaison, reported that First Five is excited about the changes that are

happening in early education, and the funding that is accompanying it. First Five is fully supporting SB837 (Expanding Transitional Kindergarten Bill) First Five will be involved in a TK Longitudinal Study that will begin in spring of 2014 and end in 2016.

5. Monique Segura, Vice Chair, will be researching and developing a spreadsheet with the various pre-k programs in the state of California, listing credentialing, student teacher ratios, salary ranges, working hours, student contact time, prep time and collaboration.
6. Kei Swensen, Legislative Sub-Committee Chair, reported out the committee recommendations and concerns regarding SB837 (Steinberg). This bill can be found at leginfo.ca.gov.

We, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Committee, believe that Pre-K programs should be fully funded through the creation of a universal preschool plan for 4-year-old children currently not being served. We do not want to see funding from Prop 98 impacted as a result of an expansion of the TK program.

This bill has failed to include all stakeholders in its creation and has also failed to take into consideration the current ECE system, established 75 years ago. There are many ECE program models that currently exist: family daycare, private non-profits, private for-profits, state preschool programs, early childhood education programs in the public school system, and Head Start to name a few. How will these practitioners' enrollment, budgets and programs be impacted?

We believe our focus should remain on advocacy for mandatory kindergarten and supporting universal Pre-K. The impact of and implementation of Transitional Kindergarten should be watched and practices refined before expansion should be considered.

Specific Questions/Concerns raised in the reading of SB 837
(Italics indicate actual bill language)

“More strategically use existing state and federal funds to provide full day, developmentally appropriate services for four-year-old children from low-income families, and provide high-quality early learning and care to those children who need it the most.”

What constitutes a full day? A one half-day session like many state pre-k programs? Or a day much like 1st grade classes?

“A school district may not include for apportionment purposes the attendance of any pupil for more than two years in kindergarten or for more than two years in a combination of transitional kindergarten and kindergarten.”

We believe that, for some students that may not have had a pre-k experience, a third year of kindergarten may be needed. This language will encourage districts to put funding above the needs of an individual student.

“The governing board of a school district maintaining one or more kindergartens may, on a case-by-case basis, admit to a kindergarten a child having attained the age of five years at any time during the school year with the approval of the parent or guardian, subject to the following conditions:”

Moving a student from one grade level to another “at any time during the school year” is not a good idea. Assuming that there are two separate curricula being implemented, (TK and K) the student will have missed all kindergarten curriculum that had been addressed while in transitional kindergarten. Another concern here is the lack of language including the classroom teacher’s professional recommendation or “approval” of such a move.

“A school district or charter school administering transitional kindergarten may contract with a public agency, including, but not limited to, a county office of education, or a private local provider, or both, to participate in the delivery of transitional kindergarten consistent with the statutory requirements of transitional kindergarten.”

The work of public educators (CTA members) should not be contracted out to private agencies.

“On or before July 1, 2015, all transitional kindergarten classes shall be taught by a teacher who holds, at a minimum, an associate degree, and has a professional development plan that provides for a baccalaureate degree with at least 24 units in early childhood and a teaching credential by July 1, 2019.

On or before July 1, 2019, all transitional kindergarten classes shall be taught by a teacher who holds a baccalaureate degree with at least 24 units in early childhood education and a teaching credential.

On or before July 1, 2015 all transitional kindergarten associate teachers shall have, at a minimum, 24 units in early childhood education, and a professional development plan that provides for an associate degree by July 1, 2019.

On or before July 1, 2019, all transitional kindergarten associate teachers shall have an associate degree with at least 24 units in early childhood education.”

There are several concerns with this section. The credentialing requirements are substandard to the current requirements for transitional kindergarten teachers. The timeline for acquiring proper credentialing for the transitional kindergarten teacher is unrealistic for working professionals, and there is no consideration for the work experience of educators currently teaching four-year-old children in a pre-k program.

A definition of an “associate teacher” currently exists. This bill does not take this definition into consideration, nor does it address the impact that it will have on redefining requirements for “associate teachers.”

“Commencing with the 2015-2016 school year, for the purposes of compensation, including salary and benefits, transitional kindergarten teachers and associate teachers shall provide two part-day sessions per day in order to be considered full-time employees.”

A definition of “full day” that is referenced on page 4 line 37 needs to be defined. Does this mean that one part-day session is a “full day” and therefore only part-time work for the educators? Where is the preparation time for educators? Does this mean educators have two different classes of students every day? We believe that being the teacher of record for one class of transitional kindergarten students constitutes a full-time employee status.

“For the purposes of establishing collective bargaining rights for employees of a private local provider of transitional kindergarten pursuant to the terms of an agreement with the administering school district or charter school, as a condition of the receipt of funds, the private local provider shall be considered a public school employer, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 3540.1 of the Government Code, and Chapter 10.7 (commencing with section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, shall apply to the private local provider.”

Uh...no.