SENATE BILL   SB-17

Introduced by Senator Gonzalez

October 01, 2025

To expand access to safe and equitable artificial intelligence (AI) tools in K–12 schools serving low-income communities, ensuring students and teachers benefit from AI in education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-17 as introduced, Senator Gonzalez. AI for Education Equity Act.

Existing law establishes programs within the California Department of Education (CDE) to support educational technology and digital literacy, but does not provide specific guidelines or funding for the equitable use of artificial intelligence in classrooms. As AI tools become increasingly integrated into education, there is a risk of unequal access, data misuse, and bias, especially in underfunded schools.

This bill would establish the **AI for Education Equity Program** within the CDE. It would appropriate $5 million from the General Fund to provide grants to K–12 schools in low-income districts for:

1. Purchasing equitable AI-powered learning tools vetted for safety, accessibility, and non-bias.
2. Teacher training on integrating AI responsibly into classroom instruction.
3. Developing data privacy protections and equity-focused guidelines for AI in schools.

The CDE would coordinate with the California Privacy Protection Agency to ensure strong privacy safeguards and report annually to the Legislature on program outcomes.

Vote: Majority.   **Appropriation:** Yes.   **Fiscal Committee:** Yes.   **Local Program:** No

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

SECTION 1.
(a) The Legislature finds and declares that:
(1) Artificial intelligence (AI) presents opportunities to enhance student learning, reduce administrative burdens, and provide personalized instruction.

(2) Without public investment, AI integration may worsen inequities by limiting access to affluent districts while leaving low-income students behind.
(3) Strong privacy protections and equity standards must accompany AI adoption in classrooms.

SECTION 2.
(a) The **AI for Education Equity Program** is hereby established within the California Department of Education.
(b) The program shall provide grants to K–12 schools serving a student population where at least 60% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
(c) Grant funds may be used for:
(1) Procuring AI-powered educational platforms approved by the CDE for accuracy, accessibility, and non-bias.
(2) Teacher professional development on integrating AI responsibly into curriculum.
(3) Development of district-level guidelines ensuring student data privacy, algorithm transparency, and equitable access.

SECTION 3.
(a) Five million dollars ($5,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Education for the purposes of this Act.
(b) The Department shall submit an annual report to the Legislature evaluating program implementation, equity outcomes, and recommended improvements.

SECTION 4.

a) The **California Department of Education (CDE)** will administer **competitive grants** to eligible **K–12 districts**.
b) To qualify, a district must serve a student population where **at least 60% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.**
c) This aligns with existing **equity standards** under the *Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)*.

d) Each selected district may receive **$100,000–$300,000**, depending on enrollment size, need, and readiness to implement AI safely and effectively.

e) **Priority** will go to:

   o Districts with the **highest percentages of low-income students**.
   o Districts with **limited access to technology or AI resources**.
   o Those proposing **strong teacher-training and privacy-protection plans.**

- **60%** - Purchase of **AI learning tools** vetted by CDE for safety, accessibility, and non-bias.

- **25%** - **Teacher training** and professional development on integrating AI responsibly.

- **15%** - **Data privacy infrastructure** and oversight (developing district-level AI and data-ethics policies).

f) This bill intentionally targets high-need school districts, both urban and rural, to close the *AI access gap*.

g) **Potentially eligible regions could include:**

- Fresno Unified, Oakland Unified, San Bernardino City Unified, Imperial County and Central Valley rural districts, and smaller districts in Kern, Tulare, and Merced Counties.
- These are communities that already face funding shortages and are least likely to independently adopt AI learning technology. SB-17 ensures they aren't left behind in the digital future.

h) The $5 million appropriation will be distributed through a transparent, competitive grant process managed by the California Department of Education. By focusing on schools where more than 60% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, we're targeting resources to the districts that need them most, those currently excluded from emerging technology opportunities. SB-17 ensures equity, accountability, and measurable educational impact.