

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025-2026 SIMULATION SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO 16

Introduced by Senator Valladares

October 01, 2025

To strengthen school safety and expand parental choice in education for California families.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 16, as introduced, Valladares. Safe Schools and Parent Choice Expansion Act.

Under current law, all public schools, including charter schools, must develop and annually update a Comprehensive School Safety Plan (Education Code §§32280–32289.5). These plans assess campus crime and outline strategies to maintain a safe learning environment. However, the law does not provide dedicated funding for the implementation of safety measures such as hiring school resource officers, installing security infrastructure, or expanding after-school programs. Similarly, while Education Code §38000 et seq. authorizes districts to establish police or security departments and requires training and background checks for security personnel, it does not mandate or fund such staffing.

Charter schools operate under the Charter Schools Act of 1992 (Education Code §47600 et seq.), which allows their establishment and operation but limits access to certain funding streams. Although charter schools may receive local or direct funding, they are often excluded from local property tax revenues and other district resources. This funding disparity, combined with restrictive district approval processes, limits both the ability of charter schools to meet student needs and parental access to alternative education options.

The Safe Schools and Parent Choice Expansion Act addresses these gaps by creating a state-level School Safety and Security Grant Program, administered jointly by the California Department of Education and the Department of Justice. The program would provide grants to districts and charter schools to hire school resource officers, strengthen security infrastructure, and expand after-school safety initiatives. The bill would also amend Education Code §38000 et seq. to make districts eligible for these grants and require that Comprehensive School Safety Plans include law enforcement coordination, mental health threat assessments, and after-school safety measures as a condition of receiving state funds.

Finally, the bill would amend Education Code §47614 and related provisions to ensure charter schools receive a pro-rata share of local property tax revenues based on student enrollment. By providing equitable funding for charter schools and dedicated resources for school safety, the measure seeks to enhance student protection, strengthen accountability in safety planning, and expand parental choice in public education.

Vote: majority Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes8

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

SECTION 1. Findings and Declarations

The Legislature finds and declares all the following:

- (a) Safe and secure schools are essential to fostering a productive learning environment.
- (b) Current law requires schools to adopt Comprehensive School Safety Plans but does not provide dedicated funding for implementation.
- (c) Many districts and charter schools lack sufficient resources to hire school resource officers, improve campus security infrastructure, or expand after-school safety programs.
- (d) Parents deserve equitable access to high-quality educational options, yet disparities in funding between charter schools and traditional public schools limit parental choice.
- (e) It is the intent of the Legislature to (1) establish a statewide program to provide grants for school safety and security, (2) strengthen school safety planning requirements, and (3) ensure equitable funding for charter schools.

SECTION 2. Section 32284.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

32284.5. School Safety and Security Grant Program

- (a) The department, in consultation with the Department of Justice, shall administer the School Safety and Security Grant Program.
- (b) Grants shall be awarded to school districts and charter schools for the following purposes:
 - (1) Hiring or contracting with school resource officers.
 - (2) Installing or upgrading security infrastructure, including surveillance systems, controlled entry points, and emergency communication systems.
 - (3) Expanding after-school safety and supervision programs.
- (c) The department shall adopt regulations to implement this section by July 1 of the fiscal year following enactment.
- (d) It is the intent of the Legislature that school safety measures promote both physical security and emotional well-being, ensuring that prevention, counseling, and community engagement are prioritized equally alongside law enforcement presence
- (e) Priority shall be given to schools with demonstrated safety risks or resource shortages.

SECTION 3. Section 32280 of the Education Code is amended to read:

32280. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that all California public schools teaching kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, operated by a school district, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, community leaders, parents, pupils, teachers, administrators, classified employees, local emergency medical services personnel, and other persons who may be interested in the health and safety of pupils and the prevention of campus crime and violence, develop a comprehensive school safety plan that addresses the safety concerns identified through a systematic planning process. It is also the intent of the Legislature that all school staff be trained on the comprehensive school safety plan. For the purposes

of this section, law enforcement agencies include local police departments, county sheriffs' offices, school district police or security departments, probation departments, and district attorneys' offices. For purposes of this section, a "safety plan" means a plan to develop strategies aimed at the prevention of, response to, and education about, potential incidents involving medical emergencies, including sudden cardiac arrest, and crime and violence on the school campus.

(b) As a condition of receiving funding pursuant to Section 32284.5, each school safety plan shall additionally include all the following:

(1) Procedures for coordination with local law enforcement.

(2) Provisions for mental health threat assessments and response protocols.

(3) After-school safety and supervision measures.

(i) Mental health and threat assessment training for school staff, including strategies to identify and support at-risk students through counseling and early intervention, rather than punitive measures.

SECTION 4. Section 38000 of the Education Code is amended to read:

38000 (a) The governing board of a school district may establish a security department under the supervision of a chief of security as designated by, and under the direction of, the superintendent of the school district. In accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 45100) of Part 25, the governing board of a school district may employ personnel to ensure the safety of school district personnel and pupils and the security of the real and personal property of the school district. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this section that a school district security department is supplementary to city and county law enforcement agencies and is not vested with general police powers.

(b) The governing board of a school district may establish a school police department under the supervision of a school chief of police and, in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 45100) of Part 25, may employ peace officers, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 830.32 of the Penal Code, to ensure the safety of school district personnel and pupils, and the security of the real and personal property of the school district.

(c) The governing board of a school district that establishes a security department or a police department shall set minimum qualifications of employment for the chief of security or school chief of police, respectively, including, but not limited to, prior employment as a peace officer or completion of a peace officer training course approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. A chief of security or school chief of police shall comply with the prior employment or training requirement set forth in this subdivision as of January 1, 1993, or a date one year subsequent to the initial employment of the chief of security or school chief of police by the school district, whichever occurs later. This subdivision shall not be construed to require the employment by a school district of additional personnel.

(d) A school district may assign a school police reserve officer who is deputized pursuant to Section 35021.5 to a schoolsite to supplement the duties of school police officers pursuant to this section.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature to evaluate the presence of peace officers and other law enforcement on school campuses and to identify and consider alternative options to ensure pupil safety based on the needs of the local school communities. It is the intent of the Legislature to consider encouraging local educational agencies to use school resources currently allocated to such personnel, including school

police departments and contracts with local police or sheriff departments, for pupil support services, such as mental health services and professional development for school employees on cultural competency and restorative justice, as needed, if found to be a more appropriate use of resources based upon the needs of the pupils and campuses that serve them.

(f) A school district may apply for funding under the School Safety and Security Grant Program, established pursuant to Section 32284.5, to support the employment, training, and certification of school police and security personnel.

(g) All security personnel funded pursuant to subdivision (f) shall meet the training and background requirements of Section 38001.5.

SECTION 5. Section 47614.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

47614.7. (a) Notwithstanding any other law, each charter school shall receive a pro rata share of local property tax revenues, based on student enrollment, in addition to any funds provided under the Local Control Funding Formula.

(b) Allocations under this section shall be made on the same basis as distributions to school districts to ensure equitable per-pupil funding between charter schools and traditional public schools.

(c) Revenues distributed pursuant to this section shall not reduce or offset any other funding to which a charter school is entitled under this code.

SECTION 6. Implementation and Funding

(a) The California Department of Education (CDE), in consultation with the Department of Justice (DOJ), shall be responsible for the implementation and administration of the School Safety and Security Grant Program created by this act.

(b) There is hereby created in the State Treasury the School Safety and Parent Choice Fund, to be administered by the CDE. Moneys in the fund shall be used solely for the purposes of carrying out this act.

(c) Funding for the program shall be provided through annual appropriations by the Legislature from the General Fund to the School Safety and Parent Choice Fund. The Legislature may also authorize federal or private grant funds to be deposited in the fund for purposes consistent with this act.

(d) Administrative costs of the program shall not exceed 5 percent of the total annual appropriation.

SECTION 7. Program Accountability and Evaluation

(a) The Department of Education shall, by January 1, 2028, report to the Legislature on the number of grants awarded, the scope of safety improvements funded, and the measurable outcomes in terms of campus safety and student well-being.

(b) The Department of Justice shall assist in developing standardized performance metrics for evaluating campus safety programs and law enforcement partnerships.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature to evaluate, rather than eliminate, school-based law enforcement programs to ensure that resources enhance student safety responsibly and effectively.

SECTION 8. Fiscal Transparency and Review

(a) The Department of Education shall annually report to the Legislature on expenditures from the School Safety and Parent Choice Fund beginning January 1, 2028.

(b) This report shall include total funds disbursed, regional grant distribution, and a summary of outcomes achieved.

(c) This act shall remain in effect until January 1, 2031, and as of that date is repealed unless extended by a later enacted statute.

SECTION 9. Appropriation

(a) The sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the School Safety and Parent Choice Fund, established pursuant to Section 32284.5 of the Education Code, for the purposes of implementing the School Safety and Security Grant Program.

(b) Funds appropriated under this section shall be available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30 of the fiscal year following enactment.

(c) The California Department of Education may allocate grant funding only in compliance with the provisions of this act.

SECTION 10. Severability

If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.