

Opportunity Grants (Adds Uncodified Section)

SEC 46. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) While significant targeted investments have led to a narrowing of achievement gaps, achievement gaps for students with exceptional needs and students living in deep poverty persists. The state intends to provide struggling school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools with the systemic changes necessary to help eliminate the achievement gap and improve outcomes for all children.

(2) Intensive interventions in resources and evidence-based practices at the state level will help to build up sustainable school improvement models, targeted towards the education of pupils attending schools in high poverty areas.

(b) The Opportunity Grant program is hereby established as an education funding initiative with the goal of providing grant funds and state technical assistance to the state's highest poverty and lowest performing schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools selected pursuant to the provisions in subdivision (d) of this section.

(c) Prior to November 30, 2020, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence shall, in consultation with the Department of Education, develop a plan for the administration of the Opportunity Grant program, subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education. The CCEE will provide the administration plan to the Department of Education, the Department of Finance, the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, and the Governor. The administration plan shall be revised annually to reflect adjustments needed, to attain the greatest improvement in the grant recipient schools and school districts, track outcomes, and to successfully apply the knowledge and practices derived from schools statewide. At a minimum, this plan shall include:

(1) The grant selection process, including the timeline and acceptance criteria.

(2) The low-performance school criteria to be used in the selection process.

(3) The vision and scope of the Opportunity Grants.

(4) The roles of and requirements for the county offices of education and grant recipients.

(4) A description of the required instructional review process or processes, implementation plans, or other evaluation methods to be used.

(d) The sum of three hundred million dollars (\$300,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) to establish the Opportunity Grant program to be administered and allocated in the manner and for the purposes set forth in this section.

(e) (1) The CCEE shall allocate at least 90 percent of the amount appropriated in subdivision (d) for this program to grant recipients, which shall be selected from the following entities:

(A) A single school, in partnership with their local school district, or a consortia of schools within a district.

(B) A school district with numerous high-poverty schools.

(C) A charter school, in consultation with its charter school authorizer.

(D) A county office of education with one or more high-poverty schools in its jurisdiction.

(2) The size of the grant for each recipient shall be determined by the CCEE, subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education, pursuant to the process specified in subdivision (c), and shall, at a minimum, take into consideration the following:

(A) The number of pupils in the recipient school.

(B) The need for resources and technical assistance as determined by the instructional review process, and plans developed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(C) The size and scope of other awards and grants the award recipients have already received or will receive.

(f) The CCEE may set aside up to 10 percent of the total amount appropriated for this program in subdivision (d) as follows:

(1) An amount to be specified in the annual expenditure plan required pursuant to subdivision (g) may be used by the CCEE, for the following purposes:

(A) Establish capacity to better support award recipients.

(B) Provide award recipients with direct supports and services.

(C) Create a school quality diagnostic review and planning process and/or tool, to assist schools and districts in determining areas of improvement and informing a plan for continuous improvement.

(D) Establish a team of distinguished educators who can support award recipients directly and assist other struggling local educational agencies.

(E) Develop training models and engage in training leadership teams from recipient schools and other high-need local educational agencies.

(2) An amount to be specified in the annual expenditure plan required pursuant to subdivision (g) shall be allocated to the county office of education in which the grant recipient is located, to assist the CCEE with the purposes specified in subdivision (h) and to develop county resources to be used by other schools in the county and throughout the statewide system of support.

(g) The CCEE shall submit an expenditure plan for the Opportunity Grant program to the Department of Finance for approval prior to the release of funds. Upon approval of the expenditure plan, the Department of Finance will notify the Joint Legislative Budget Committee of the intent to release the funds. The expenditure plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

(1) The amount allocated to CCEE and the associated activities.

(2) The name of each grant recipient, the amount awarded to each recipient, and the activities provided with award funds.

(3) The amount allocated to the selected county offices of education and the associated activities.

(h) On or before, March 30, 2021, the Executive Director of the CCEE shall select the recipients of the Opportunity Grants pursuant to the process developed in subdivision (d), subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education, and shall ensure the following criteria are met when selecting award recipients:

(1) At least 90 percent of the award recipient's pupil population, in both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years, were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals, as determined by Section 42238.01 of the Education Code.

(2) The award recipients shall meet the lowest performing school criteria established pursuant to subdivision (c).

(3) The award recipients must be willing to meet all of the requirements specified in subdivision (i).

(i) Opportunity Grant funds allocated to award recipients pursuant to this section are available for expenditure or encumbrance through the 2024-25 fiscal year and may be used for the following:

(1) Staffing improvements, including recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced teachers and mentors.

(2) Integrated student supports, including health, mental health, social services, and before and after school care.

(3) Extended learning time.

(4) English learner development programs and multi-tiered systems of support.

(5) Investments in high-quality curriculum materials and training, including English Language Arts, mathematics, and science; technology supports; and social-emotional learning and restorative justice.

(6) School redesign that enables more personalized, effective instruction: Introduction of advisory systems, teaching teams that share students, looping designs, small learning communities that are known to dramatically reduce dropouts and improve climate and graduation rates.

(7) Other supports, services, materials, or investments included in the plan developed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(j) As a condition of receiving these awards, the award recipients shall agree to meet all of the requirements specified by the CCEE in the plan developed pursuant to subdivision (c):

(k) For purposes of making the computations required by Section 8 of Article XVI of the California Constitution, the appropriations made by subdivision (a) shall be deemed to be "General Fund revenues appropriated for school districts," as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 41202, for the 2019-20 fiscal year, and included within the "total allocations to school districts and community college districts from General Fund proceeds of taxes appropriated pursuant to Article XIII B," as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 41202, for the 2019-20 fiscal year.