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AB 123 (McCarty) Pre-K for All

Lead Co-Sponsors: Early Edge CA and Kidango

Staff Contact: Suzy Costa, (916) 319-2007

As Introduced: 12/3/18

SUMMARY

AB 123 expands access to full-day preschool for three crucial populations: all four-year-olds who are eligible based on income, all four-year-olds living in low-income neighborhoods, and all three-year-olds living in poverty. This bill also raises preschool quality, increases funding, and expands access to full-day programs to help close the school readiness gap.

ISSUE

Research shows that quality learning experiences during children's critical early years of brain development are pivotal to their success in school, overall well-being, and prospects in life.

High-quality preschool improves a child's school readiness and social-emotional development and builds a foundation for future success. The benefits of high-quality preschool are especially powerful for disadvantaged children who often enter kindergarten months behind their peers and struggle to catch up. Achievement gaps appear to emerge early in children's development, before they enter kindergarten, and are partly the result of children from low-income families having fewer high-quality early childhood educational opportunities.

California has made progress in expanding access to preschool through a suite of programs including State Preschool (CSPP), Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Head Start (HS). However, 30% of low-income 4-year-olds and 66% of low-income 3-year-olds still lack access to licensed preschool.

SOLUTION

AB 123 provides high-quality preschool to the children who need it most in order to set children on a path to success in school and in life. AB 123:

Expands access to full-day, full-year preschool for all 4-year-olds who live in a neighborhood where more than

70% of students are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. AB 123 also ensures that all 3-year-olds in poverty receive two years of high-quality preschool. In addition, by expanding access, AB 123 addresses the challenges that working parents face in obtaining quality, affordable child care for their preschool-aged children.

Increases salaries and qualifications of preschool teachers to support children's learning, including adequate financial support for obtaining additional higher education and training. AB 123 provides scholarships and resources for teachers who want to pursue higher education in early learning fields. Those who earn degrees in majors related to early childhood education will earn higher salaries.

Raises preschool quality by implementing proven best practices and increasing funding. AB 123 increases State Preschool reimbursement rates to raise teacher pay to a professional wage. AB 123 also incentivizes school districts to provide additional adult support in TK classrooms to reduce the teacher-child ratio and provide full school-day programs.

Builds a more unified preschool system by aligning standards and making it easier to blend State Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Head Start to provide high-quality, full-day, full-year preschool that meet the needs of working families.

COMPANION BILLS

AB 124 (McCarty) Preschool Facilities Bond Act of 2020

AB 125 (McCarty) Early childhood education: reimbursement rates

SUPPORT

Kidango (lead co-sponsor)

Early Edge California (lead co-sponsor)

Advancement Project (co-sponsor)

Children Now (co-sponsor)

California Federation of Teachers (co-sponsor)

Fight Crime Invest in Kids (co-sponsor)

LA Chamber of Commerce (co-sponsor)