



## **AB 123 Summary**

**AB 123 will invest \$1.5 billion to:**

- **Provide access to Pre-K for nearly 70,000 additional children**
- **Improve the quality of existing Pre-K and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) programs for 200,000 children**

**What AB 123 does:**

- **Expands access** to full-day, full-year, high-quality preschool for 4-year-olds living in low-income neighborhoods and all 3-year-olds in poverty
- **Provides incentives** for districts to reduce student to teacher ratios in TK classrooms
- Significantly **increases State Preschool teacher pay**
- **Increases qualifications** for lead State Preschool teachers over an 8-year period
- **Provides scholarships** and supports for teachers to attain higher qualifications and offers an alternative certificate for experienced teachers

**When will it happen:**

- July 1, 2020 - State Preschool classroom sizes limited to no more than 24 students
- July 1, 2020 - districts begin to receive incentives to reduce their TK teacher-student ratios and extend their TK programs to full-day
- July 1, 2020 - increased reimbursement rates for State Preschool are implemented
- May 20, 2020 - local planning councils must submit their plan describing how they will expand preschool in their district over the next four years to serve all eligible children
- July 1, 2024 - expansion of California State preschool programs is fully implemented
- July 1, 2024 - all lead State Preschool teachers must possess an Associate's degree (AA) with 24 Early Childhood Education (ECE) units or be enrolled in classes with the goal of obtaining an AA or Bachelor's degree (BA) with at least 24 ECE units
- July 1, 2028 - all lead State Preschool teachers must have a BA with at least 24 ECE units

**Why is California doing it:**

- Research shows that high-quality preschool significantly improves children's school performance 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 in key academic and social-emotional skills, and are never able to catch up.

## FAQs

### ***How does AB 123 raise teacher pay? How much will salaries increase?***

AB 123 provides for a 23 percent increase to State Preschool reimbursement rates while mandating that at least 65 percent of this additional funding go towards raising teacher and staff salaries. The goal is to put State Preschool teachers on a path to pay parity with the TK teachers in their school district. **For many State Preschool teachers, this will more than double their salary.**

### ***Is requiring teachers to have a BA feasible for California's current preschool system?***

AB 123 provides an eight year phase-in period before requiring that one teacher in every California State Preschool classroom have a BA. It provides funding to **increase** State Preschool teacher **compensation**, as well as **scholarships** for State Preschool teachers to obtain higher qualifications.

The federal Head Start program implemented a similar BA requirement for teachers with a five year phase-in--without funding to increase pay or provide scholarships--and Head Start met the requirement ahead of schedule. Nationwide, 34 out of 60 state-funded Pre-K programs require lead teachers to have a BA.

Furthermore, data indicates that a significant percentage of State Preschool teachers already have a BA. According to the most recently available [data](#) from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley (2012), 47% of lead teachers in center-based ECE classrooms in California have a BA and an additional 30% have an AA.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Will requiring that teachers have a BA lead to a less diverse workforce?***

AB 123 seeks to raise the compensation and qualifications of State Preschool teachers while preserving the diversity of the workforce. The bill provides scholarships to support State Preschool teachers in attaining their BA, opening up a pathway to higher and more equitable compensation.

**There is no compelling evidence to suggest that higher qualifications lead to a reduction in workforce diversity.**<sup>2</sup> However, to ensure that we maintain the diversity of the workforce and equitable access to educational opportunities, **the bill provides for a range of supports**, including scholarships, for the workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Austin, L., Edwards, B. & Whitebook, M. October 31, 2018. "California's ECE Workforce: What We Know Now and the Data Deficit That Remains." University of California, Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. Retrieved from <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/californias-ece-workforce/>

<sup>2</sup> Ullrich, R., Hamm, K. & Herzfeldt-Kamprath, R. August 2016. "Underpaid and Unequal: Racial Disparities in the Early Childhood Workforce." Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/01073800/NSECE-report2.pdf>

Head Start, which serves over 80,000 preschool-age children in California, successfully implemented raising the standard to a BA for its existing workforce, while maintaining the cultural and linguistic diversity of its teachers.

### ***Is a BA the most appropriate qualification for preschool teachers?***

There is a strong foundation in [research](#) to recommend a minimum of a BA with specialized training in ECE for lead preschool teachers.<sup>3</sup> Nationwide, 34 out of 60 state-funded Pre-K programs require lead teachers to have a BA.

**Nationwide, preschool programs that have produced [long-term academic and life gains for their students](#), including better high school graduation and employment rates, have required their teachers to possess a BA and specialized certification or credentialing.**<sup>4</sup> [Studies](#) have found that preschool classrooms with BA-level teachers are more likely to be of high quality, with richer language and literacy environments and better teacher-child interactions.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Will existing State Preschool teachers be required to obtain a BA? What will be the process and timeline?***

AB 123 will provide a process by which experienced teachers can obtain an alternative certification rather than a BA.

### ***Will all teachers be eligible to take advantage of scholarships and supports?***

The goal of AB 123 is to support teachers statewide and at all educational levels to work towards achieving their BA. Applicants would be eligible for assistance with tuition, books, fees, and other expenses. Applicants would commit to working for one year in a licensed preschool or child development program for each year that they receive assistance.

### ***Which children are prioritized for the expanded State Preschool slots?***

Under current law, foster children and children at risk of abuse and neglect are prioritized for spaces in State Preschool, with next priority going to children whose families meet the income eligibility requirements. After the needs of these children are met, AB 123 expands access to State Preschool to **all 4 year-old children who live in a neighborhood where more than 70 percent of the students in the local elementary school are eligible for free or reduced priced meals**. Low-income 4 year-olds who live outside these high-poverty neighborhoods would remain eligible for State Preschool based on existing priorities established in law.

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<sup>3</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2015. "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation." Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/19401>.

<sup>4</sup> Bueno, M., Darling-Hammond, L. & Gonzales, D. March, 2010. "A Matter of Degrees: Preparing Teachers for the Pre-K Classroom." The Pew Center on the States. Retrieved from [https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/pre-k\\_education/pkneducationreformseriesfinalpdf.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/pre-k_education/pkneducationreformseriesfinalpdf.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Bueno et al, 2010

AB 123 also provides funding to ensure that **all 3 year-olds in families living in poverty have access to high-quality preschool**. This means that 3 year-olds in poverty would have access to two years of high-quality preschool, which evidence shows provides the greatest long-term gains.

***How does AB 123 support additional facilities for expanded preschool?***

Companion bill AB 124 by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty would provide \$500M in funding to help school districts expand their State Preschool facilities.

***What will be the impact on child care providers?***

We recognize that children need high-quality care and education at every age, not just starting in preschool. There are several companion bills in the current legislative session that address payment and support for childcare providers.

- AB 125 reforms the reimbursement rate system for all publicly-funded childcare providers
- AB 167 expands access to high-quality childcare for infants and toddlers
- AB 194 seeks \$1B in additional funding to increase the number of families served by the Alternative Payment program and General Childcare
- AB 378 would create a statewide bargaining unit for childcare providers in order to collectively bargain for greater reimbursement rates from the State

**AB 123 sponsors are working to pass these companion bills so that our children are served by fairly paid, high-quality providers at every stage of life.**