

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2023-2024 Regular Session

SB 1194 (Wilk)
Version: March 18, 2024
Hearing Date: April 23, 2024
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
AM

SUBJECT

State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Parent Advisory Council

DIGEST

This bill requires the State Department of Education (Department) to publicly post on its website the membership of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Parent Advisory Council (PAC), and update the membership list on its internet website within 30 days of any membership change on or before January 31, 2025. The bill requires that the posted information regarding members includes: name, occupation, title, name of employer (if employed by a local educational agency), and county of residence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The author states that the genesis of this bill stems from him becoming aware of parents' applications to the PAC being rejected but not being able to find out who was eventually appointed. According to the author, requests to obtain information from the Department about the PAC's membership have proven futile. The author state his intent with this bill is to ensure that inquiring parents can find out who represents them on the PAC. The Senate Education Committee analysis of this bill notes that the Department "responded to a staff inquiry that [the Department] was planning to post information about the council and its members by the end of 2023; however, this information is still not on [the] website."¹ No timely support or opposition was received by the Committee. This bill passed the Senate Education Committee on a vote of 7 to 0.

¹ Sen. Education Comm. analysis of SB 1194 (2023-24 reg. session) as amended March 18, 2024 at p. 2.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Department and provides that the State Board of Education is the governing and policy determining body of the Department. (Edc. Code § 33300-33301.)
- 2) Requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to be elected by the qualified electors of the state at each gubernatorial election, and prohibits any SPI from serving more than two terms. (Cal. Const., art. IX, § 2.)
 - a) Provides that the SPI is the ex officio Director of Education, and that the Department is conducted under the control of an executive officer known as the Director of Education.

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Department, on or before January 31, 2025, to publicly post on its website the membership of the PAC, and update the membership list on its internet website within 30 days of any membership change.
- 2) Requires that the membership information posted on the website include, but not be limited to, all of the following for each person:
 - a) name;
 - b) occupation, title, and, if employed by a local education agency, their employer; and
 - c) county of residence.
- 3) Defines “local educational agency” as a school district, county office of education, or charter school.

COMMENTS

1. Stated need for the bill

The author writes:

I think it’s always a great idea to empower parents to help shape education policy and this council will help accomplish that. But I want to make sure that parents know who is speaking on their behalf and if their community is represented.

2. Requiring information regarding members of the PAC to be posted online

The Department's website states that the PAC's "mission is to engage families to help shape education policy and represent diverse parent voices in the statewide decision-making process. The PAC is committed to helping close gaps in achievement and to create authentic engagement opportunities that will result in transformative outcomes for California students."²

The Senate Committee on Education analysis of this bill provides useful background on the establishment of the Parent Advisory Council:

On April 5, 2022, CDE announced the formation of a statewide Parent Advisory Council by issuing a letter to county and district superintendents and charter school administrators stating, "The Parent Advisory Council will work directly with my office to provide input and feedback on matters affecting youth throughout the state. I am creating a council of diverse parents that will directly work with policymakers and educational partners to provide equitable change to California's education system through authentic parent voices. As we reimagine education, we hope to have parents working alongside California's education professionals and policymakers to build a better tomorrow for all learning institutions in our state."
[...]

No additional information about the Parent Advisory Council, such as membership and meeting dates, can be found on CDE's website (other than a general email address for the council).³

The Senate Education Committee analysis further notes that existing law authorizes several advisory councils, committees, or commission to be established by the Department and that the following ones provide the following information about their members on the Department's website:

- the Advisory Commission on Charter Schools provides members' names, group representing, biography, and terms of appointment;
- the Advisory Commission on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum provides members' names, position, title, and employer;
- the California Practitioners Advisory Group provides members' names, position/employer, group representing, and terms of appointment; and
- the Advisory Commission on Special Education provides members' names, email, term and appointing body.⁴

² *Whole Child Division*, Cal. Dept. of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/or/wcd.asp>.

³ Sen. Education Comm. analysis of SB 1194 (2023-24 reg. session) as amended March 18, 2024 at p. 2.

⁴ *Id.* at 3.

This bill seeks to provide the public with information regarding the members of the PAC in order for the public to have an idea of who is providing feedback to the Department. Most of the information required to be posted – name, occupation, title, and employer if employed by a local education agency – seem to be consistent with information posted about members of other advisory groups of the Department. Posting the county of residence of a member could help ensure that the membership of the PAC is diverse, and that a broad swath of the state is represented.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending Legislation: None known.

Prior Legislation: None known.

PRIOR VOTES

Senate Education Committee (Ayes 7, Noes 0)
