



June 1, 2018

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1661 (Limón) as amended on May 17, 2018 – OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Allen:

On behalf of the EdVoice Board of Directors, I write to express opposition for AB 1661, which would eliminate minimum protections that ensure migrant children have effective educational opportunity during the summer months, which are critical in making up lost time for other parts of the school year they are not attending classes.

In many places in California, depending on the local crop or industry, summer is an important time of year to reach migrant children and make up for lost instructional time resulting from the transiency of their families. California has long acknowledged the importance of protecting its migrant children above and beyond the provisions of federal law.

While the Superintendent of Public Instruction sponsoring this bill purports it only makes technical changes conforming to federal law, the measure makes significant policy changes that have been included in the California Education Code intentionally to protect migrant students. This includes, but is not limited to, the criteria that set minimum instructional minutes for summer school programs for migrant children. These are not technical changes, but a repeal of a minimum guarantees of program quality for some of California's most vulnerable youth.

Notably, in addition to eliminating additional California program criteria that exceeds the minimum federal protections, AB 1661 simultaneously authorizes public education agencies to contract with for-profit vendors. Authorizing for-profit companies to provide a reduced level of service to migrant youth without being subject to any meaningful evaluation is not a technical issue and should be subject of an intentional public deliberation by the California Legislature. If such is to be the case, then the committee should consider the simultaneous weakening of accountability. AB 1661 weakens California's standard for program accountability programs serving migrant youth by requiring only an "annual review" rather than an "evaluation."

June 1, 2018
Page 2
AB 1661 ~ Oppose

There are over 100,000 migrant students in California public schools and their academic outcomes are distressing. On the most recent Smarter Balanced assessment, 74% of migrant children in California did not meet the standard for English Language Arts and 81% did not for math. California is systematically failing these children. The state should be focused on ensuring more effective instruction is happening in these programs and strengthening levels of accountability for this group of students, whose families often travel across various local educational agencies throughout the students' academic careers in California public schools. Instead, this bill lowers the bar.

AB 1661 is not a technical bill. This measure, among other policy changes, repeals minimum protections for migrant students, reduces the universe of eligible pupils, and does nothing to ensure equity of opportunity to close the glaring achievement gaps between migrant students and their peers. Accordingly, we oppose this bill.

We urge your no vote.

Respectfully,



Bill Lucia
President