

NEWS UPDATE

Legislation aims to make kindergarten mandatory in California

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Legislation introduced last week would make kindergarten mandatory for all California children.

Assembly bill 2226, introduced by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, would require parents to send their children to school for one year of kindergarten before they attend first grade. The legislation would go into effect in the 2026-27 school year.

Senator Susan Rubio also has introduced a similar piece of legislation – Senate Bill 1056.

“As a public school teacher for over 17 years, I have witnessed firsthand the

detrimental impact on young students who miss out on fundamental early education,” Rubio said. “The voluntary participation for kindergarten leaves students unprepared for the educational environment they will encounter in elementary school.”

Research shows that the majority of students who are not enrolled in kindergarten are Latino, creating an equity issue and worsening the achievement gap, Rubio said.

Currently, kindergarten is not mandatory in California, despite the fact it is considered a grade level and is included in academic content standards and curriculum frameworks. Instead, children must be enrolled in school at age 6.

“Kindergarten is a fundamental piece of early learning,” said Meredith Yeh, co-president of the California Kindergarten Association. “As California expands transitional kindergarten and other preschool opportunities, kindergarten becomes more important than ever in making sure all kids enter first grade ready to succeed.”
