

SUBJECT: Specifying a class size limit for prekindergarten classes in public schools

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Dutton, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley, Huberty,
K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

2 absent — Lozano, M. González

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 12 — 24-6 (Birdwell, Buckingham, Hall, Hughes,
Nelson, Springer)

WITNESSES: No public hearing.

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 25.112(a) specifies, with certain exceptions, that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. Some have called to limit prekindergarten class sizes to help create an optimal learning environment.

DIGEST: SB 2081 would prohibit a public school district, a private entity that operated a prekindergarten program under contract with a school district, or a prekindergarten program provided by a private provider from enrolling more than 22 students in a prekindergarten class.

The prekindergarten class size limit would not apply to an open-enrollment charter school or a campus or program operated under a campus or campus program charter.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

NOTES: The House companion bill, HB 41 by Talarico, was considered by the House Public Education Committee in a public hearing on April 6, finally passed by the House on May 14, and sent to the Senate.