

The Honorable Darshana Patel
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5140
Sacramento, CA 95814

March 11, 2026

RE: AB 1631 (Muratsuchi)

Position: Support

Dear Chair Patel,

The CFT — A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO, supports Assembly Bill 1631 (Muratsuchi), which would require that by the 2028-29 academic year, students complete kindergarten before entering the first grade in California's public education system.

CFT agrees with the intent of the bill: Kindergarten prepares children academically and socially for future academic success. Considerable research shows that children who attend kindergarten receive significant benefits. Achievement and opportunity gaps begin as early as kindergarten, and children who attend preschool perform better than those who do not. Kindergarten becomes even more important for children who do not attend preschool, as kindergarten is where they learn important academic and social skills before entering the first grade.

In comparing the long-term outcomes of children born in states with mandatory kindergarten attendance to states with voluntary kindergarten attendance, children who attend kindergarten are more likely to go to college and earn higher wages, and are less likely to experience poverty as adults. The benefits of an increased availability of kindergarten are also substantially larger for children who are Brown, Black, English language learners, and from immigrant households and lower income families.

A 2011 study, “Who Benefits From Kindergarten? Evidence From the Introduction of State Subsidization,” shows that children from lower income families who attend kindergarten are less likely to be below grade level throughout their academic careers and earn 5 percent higher wages as adults. Kindergarten helps to level the playing field for children who are less likely to receive high-quality childcare or preschool. Children of color with access to kindergarten are also 17 percent less likely to be below grade level for their age, and earn wages 5 percent higher as adults.

According to a 2019 study, “The Returns of an Additional Year of Schooling: The Case of State-Mandated Kindergarten,” Black and Brown children subjected to compulsory kindergarten experience a 5-percentage-point increase in college completion relative to White children. They also experience a nearly 7-percent increase in wages and income relative to White children. There are similar differential impacts on education and income for women. These findings are extremely

important given the presence of large education and earning gaps between Brown, Black, and White adults, and between men and women.

For these reasons, the CFT supports AB 1631. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at tbrown@cft.org.

Thank you,



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Legislative Director

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