



SB 1067 – Universal Math Screener **Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D.**

SUMMARY

SB 1067 will address the math achievement crisis in California by focusing attention where that crisis takes root—in the early grades. Beginning in the 2028–29 school year, the bill requires school districts to screen all K-2 students annually for early math difficulties and provide struggling students with timely, evidence-based intervention. By getting students on track early—when intervention is most effective—this bill will help more students build the foundational math skills they’ll need for long-term success in school, work, and life.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, California adopted a revised Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve. The framework was designed to support high-quality instruction aligned with rigorous standards and informed the state’s 2025 adoption of new math instructional materials for grades K-8—the first statewide adoption in more than 10 years. Although these investments should help improve math instruction, California still lacks a consistent statewide approach to identifying students with early math difficulties and providing timely, evidence-based intervention. As a result, many students—particularly those from low-income communities—fall behind in math and never catch up.

PROBLEM

California is facing a crisis in math achievement. In 2025, just 37% of all of California’s K-12 students performed at grade level in math. Among historically underserved groups, the numbers are even more alarming: only 26% of low-income students, 20% of Black students, and 26% of Latino students performed at grade level. Despite being the epicenter of global innovation, California ranks 43rd in the nation in 4th-grade math achievement and has one of the country’s widest math achievement gaps between low-income students and their more affluent peers. These

challenges were underscored by a 2025 report from the University of California San Diego that one in every eight incoming freshmen needed remedial math.

A key cause of this systemic failure is often overlooked: too many students are not mastering foundational math skills in their very first years of school. Math learning is cumulative, and research shows that students who struggle with math in the early grades rarely catch up without extra help; instead, they tend to fall further behind. This pattern is reflected by California’s own data: in 2025, 46% of third graders were proficient in math, compared with just 33% of eleventh graders. For students, the stakes of this trajectory are very real—those who struggle with early math are significantly less likely to take advanced coursework, graduate from high school, attend college, or enter a STEM-related field.

SOLUTION

Universal screening in K-2—paired with timely, evidence-based intervention—is an essential strategy to improve achievement in math. A math screener is a brief, low-stakes screening tool that can identify which students have math difficulties and need extra support. Evidence from randomized controlled trials demonstrates that students who are identified early and provided with targeted intervention can make meaningful and lasting gains.

In recent years, a growing number of states have included universal screening and targeted support in their broader strategies to raise math achievement, and several are starting to see meaningful results. California recently adopted universal early literacy screening to identify students at risk for reading difficulties and to support early intervention. A comparable approach in math would align the state’s literacy and numeracy strategies and ensure early



SB 1067 – Universal Math Screener Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D.

learning challenges are addressed before they widen into long-term achievement gaps.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL

SB 1067 will establish:

- **Universal Screening:** Beginning in the 2028–29 school year, all students in kindergarten through second grade will be screened at least once per year, unless parents opt out in writing.
- **State-Approved Screening Tools:** The State Board of Education will appoint an expert panel to develop a list of approved screening instruments and establish a review process to evaluate their reliability, developmental appropriateness, and cultural and linguistic suitability. The process will also consider the time required to administer the screener and the timeliness of reporting results.
- **District Selection of Screener:** Local educational agencies will select the screening instruments best suited to their students from the state-approved list.
- **Screening English Learners:** English Learners will be screened in their primary language whenever feasible.
- **Timing of Screening:** Screening will occur early in the school year to allow sufficient time for intervention. Students who enroll after the school year begins must be screened within 45 days of enrollment.
- **Communication with Parents:** Parents will receive screening results no later than 30 days after the assessment, along with guidance on interpreting the results.
- **Guided Intervention and Support:** Students who are identified as having math difficulties will receive evidence-based interventions tailored to their needs, which may include targeted instruction, progress monitoring, early intervention programs, one-on-one or small group tutoring, and further diagnostic assessment if needed. Screening results will

not be used for high-stakes decisions, including student retention or teacher evaluation.

- **Aggregate Data Reporting:** School districts will report annually to the State Department of Education the number and percentage of students identified with math difficulties, including data disaggregated by student group.

SUPPORT

- EdVoice (Sponsors)
- Families In Schools
- Charles Armstrong School
- Hawley Special Education Law Advocacy
- Speducational
- Professor Ben Clarke, University of Oregon College of Education
- Alice Klein, Ph.D., Research Director, WestEd

CONTACT

Kianna Walker
Legislative Aide
Office of Senator Weber Pierson, M.D.
Senate District 39
916-651-4039
Kianna.Walker@sen.ca.gov