

- SUBJECT:** Exempting learning pods from certain local government regulations
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Dutton, Lozano, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley, Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — M. González
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 29 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing.
- BACKGROUND:** Interested parties have noted that the small educational groups or "learning pods" that many parents created for their children in response to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic can provide educational flexibility and other benefits beyond the pandemic context. Concerns have been raised about some local governments' efforts to impose regulation on these voluntary groups.
- DIGEST:** SB 1955 would exempt learning pods from any ordinance, rule, regulation, policy, or guideline adopted by a local governmental entity that applied to a school district campus or child-care facility.
- The bill would define "learning pod" to mean a group of children who, based on the voluntary association of the children's parents, meet together at various times and places to participate in or enhance the children's academic studies, including participation in an activity or service provided to the children in exchange for payment.
- Any group, building, or facility associated with or used by a learning pod would be exempt from any additional local government regulations based on such association or use. An employee, contractor, or agent of a school district or other local governmental entity could not conduct a site

inspection of, investigation of, or visit to a location in which a learning pod met that would not have been conducted if the learning pod did not meet at that location.

A school district could not take action against, deny any benefit to, discriminate in any manner against, or otherwise distinguish any child or parent on the basis of participation in a learning pod. A school district or other local governmental entity also could not require:

- a learning pod to be registered with the district or entity; or
- a person participating in a learning pod to report to the district or entity information on the learning pod's existence or operation.

If any provision of the bill or its application to any person or circumstance was held invalid, the validity of the bill's other provisions would not be affected to the extent they could be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

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.