

2012 California Bills Regarding School Discipline

Compiled by the California Endowment

SB 1235 (authored by Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, and Senator Curren Price Jr., D-Los Angeles and Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus)

This bill would strengthen existing law to require, rather than encourage, schools to take steps to address high rates of suspension. These schools would be required to implement research-backed strategies and programs aimed at reducing behaviors that lead to suspension. This bill would apply initially to schools that suspend 25 percent or more of their total students or of any numerically significant racial or ethnic subgroup, and would eventually include schools that suspend 15 percent or more of their students. This proposal also requires the State Superintendent of public Instruction, using data already collected by the state, to publish an annual list of schools with high suspension rates.

AB 1729 (authored by Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, D-San Francisco)

This bill is aimed at getting school officials to use suspension as a last resort, rather than an initial response to misbehavior. AB 1729 would strengthen existing law that already requires, in most circumstances, that suspensions be imposed only after other alternatives have failed to bring about proper conduct. School officials would be required to document which alternatives were tried before a student could be removed. The bill provides examples of alternatives to suspension and expulsion, including positive behavior supports and restorative discipline.

AB 2242 (authored by Assemblymember Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento)

When school officials suspend or expel a student, they must cite a reason from among those listed in the California Education Code. The top reason cited for suspensions and expulsions is defying the authority of school officials or disruption of school activities. In 2009-10, nearly 40% of suspensions and expulsions fell into this category. This bill would amend current law to state that school officials could no longer expel a student or issue an out-of-school suspension solely for this reason. Instead, this type of misconduct may lead to in-school suspension in a separate supervised classroom.

[AB 2145](#) (authored by Assemblymembers Luis Alejo, D-Salinas, and Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento)

School districts are now required to provide the California Department of Education with the number of suspensions and expulsions issued each year along with the specific provision of the Education Code under which the action was justified. This proposal would require that expulsion and suspension data already collected by the state be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, special education status, English learner status, socioeconomic status, and gender and cross-tabulated by gender and race. The California Department of Education would report this information on its existing public website.

[AB 2537](#) (authored by Assemblymember Manuel Perez, D-Coachella)

There are offenses for serious misconduct, such as bringing a gun to school, that lead to automatic expulsion under federal law. Current state law goes beyond that to require automatic suspension and expulsion for other offenses. AB 2537 would give school officials more flexibility in deciding how to handle certain student types of student misconduct. Under current law, principals and superintendents are required to report certain offenses to local law enforcement and face a fine for not doing so. AB 2537 would change the law to say that a school official may choose to report those offenses, but is not required to do so. It also removes the fine.

[SB 1088](#) (authored by Senator Curren Price Jr., D-Los Angeles and Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus)

This proposal pertains to youth in the juvenile justice system. It would clarify existing law by prohibiting a school from denying enrollment or readmissions to a student on the basis that the youth has had contact with the juvenile justice system. The proposal also would ensure that expelled students are given more than one opportunity to demonstrate that they have completed their rehabilitation plans, so that they can be readmitted to a regular school.