

Senate Bill 607

Keep Kids in School Act

Senator Nancy Skinner (SD-9)

THIS BILL

A growing body of research demonstrates that suspending students, no matter what the age, not only fails to improve student behavior it also greatly increases the likelihood that the student will fail and/or drop out. SB 607 seeks to keep students in school, increase student success rates and reduce drop-out rates.

THE ISSUE

Students can be suspended or expelled from schools for simply refusing to take off their hat or falling asleep during a lecture. These suspensions fall under the category “willfull defiance” and often occur without consideration of the root of the student’s actions.

Research confirms that students of color, minorities, disabled or LGBT students are disproportionately suspended or expelled for low level subjective offenses.

In 2013 the Legislature passed AB 420 to eliminate the suspension of students in grades K through 3rd. Since AB 420 passed, suspensions in elementary schools dropped 60%. Between 2013-2015, more than 15,000 suspensions of K-3 students were prevented, incentivizing schools and districts to adopt alternatives to suspensions and expulsions and keep students in schools.

New funding has assisted schools in adopting alternatives. For instance, \$28 million in the 2016 budget proposal supports a grant program to implement restorative practices and social emotional learning programs to fix the root of the problem for kids.

Los Angeles, San Francisco, Azusa, Oakland, and Pasadena Unified School Districts have proactively eliminated willful defiance as grounds for suspension and expulsion in all grade levels. Research also confirms that excessive use of suspension and expulsion fails to improve student behavior and carries substantial costs.

SOLUTION

SB 607 will improve student outcomes and encourage schools to adopt alternatives to suspensions by:

- Eliminating suspension and expulsion for disruption/defiance for students grades K-12.
- Encouraging schools and districts to adopt non-punitive alternatives to traditional school discipline practices.
- Repealing the July 1, 2018 sunset provision in AB 420 indefinitely.

SUPPORT

PolicyLink (co-sponsor)
Children Now (co-sponsor)
Public Counsel (co-sponsor)
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights (co-sponsor)
Anti-Defamation League (co-sponsor)
Fight Crime, Invest in Kids (co-sponsor)
Youth Justice Coalition (co-sponsor)
Black Parallel School Board (co-sponsor)
Brothers Sons Selves Coalition (co-sponsor)

CONTACT

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