

Date of Hearing: September 12, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
SB 48 (Gonzalez) – As Amended September 9, 2025

[Note: This bill was previously heard by this Committee on July 2, 2025. It has since been amended to address a new topic in this Committee’s jurisdiction.]

SENATE VOTE: 29-7

SUBJECT: Educational equity: discrimination prevention coordinators.

SUMMARY: Requires, contingent upon the enactment of AB 715 of this Session, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), as created by that measure within the Government Operations Agency (GovOps), to employ a Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, a Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, a Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, and an LGBTQ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, all to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires that the OCR, as proposed to be established by AB 715 of the 2025-26 Session, employ the following individuals:
 - a) A Religious Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate;
 - b) A Race and Ethnicity Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate;
 - c) A Gender Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate; and
 - d) A LGBTQ Discrimination Prevention Coordinator, to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.
- 2) Makes the act operative only if Assembly Bill 715 of the 2025–26 Regular Session is enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2026.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution that receives, or benefits from, state financial assistance, or enrolls pupils who receive state student financial aid. (Education Code (EC) 220)
- 2) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to monitor, through its federal program monitoring process, whether LEAs have:

- a) Adopted a policy that prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on the actual or perceived characteristics defined as hate crimes, and immigration status, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. The policy must include a statement that the policy applies to all acts related to school activity or school attendance occurring within a school under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of the school district;
 - b) Adopted a process for receiving and investigating complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying;
 - c) Publicized antidiscrimination, anti-harassment, anti-intimidation, and anti-bullying policies, including information about the manner in which to file a complaint, to students, parents, employees, agents of the governing board, and the general public;
 - d) Provided certificated school employees in schools serving students in grades 7 to 12, information on existing schoolsite and community resources related to the support of LGBTQ students, or related to the support of students who may face bias or bullying on the basis of religious affiliation, or perceived religious affiliation;
 - e) Posted the policy in all schools and offices, including staff lounges and student government meeting rooms;
 - f) Maintained documentation of complaints and their resolution for a minimum of one review cycle;
 - g) Ensured that complainants are protected from retaliation and that their identity remains confidential, as appropriate; and
 - h) Identified a responsible LEA officer for ensuring compliance. (EC 234.1)
- 3) Prohibits a teacher from giving instruction and a school district shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or because of a characteristic listed in EC 220. (EC 51500)
 - 4) Prohibits the SBE and any governing board from adopting any textbooks or other instructional materials for use in the public schools that contain any matter reflecting adversely upon persons on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, or because of a characteristic listed in Section 220. (EC 51501)
 - 5) Requires the CDE, by July 1, 2021, to develop resources or, as appropriate, update existing resources for in-service training on schoolsite and community resources for the support of LBGTQ students, and strategies to increase support for LGBTQ students and improve overall school climate. Requires the resources to be designed for use in schools operated by a school district, county office of education (COE), and charter schools serving students in grades 7 to 12, inclusive. Encourages schools serving students in grades 7 to 12 to use these resources to provide training at least once every two years to teachers and other certificated employees. (EC 218)

- 6) Requires the CDE to display current information, and periodically update information, on curricula and other resources that specifically address bias-related discrimination, harassment, intimidation, cyber sexual bullying, and bullying on its website. (EC 234.2)
- 7) Requires the CDE to develop, and post on its website, a model handout describing the policies addressing bias-related discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying in schools. (EC 234.3)
- 8) Requires a charter school to include in its petition to establish the charter school the procedures that the charter school will follow to ensure the safety of students and staff (EC 47605).
- 9) Requires schools districts, COEs, state special schools and diagnostic centers operated by the CDE, and charter schools to provide annual training, using the online training module provided by the State Department of Social Services (DSS), to their employees who are mandated reporters during the course of the school year, and to develop a process for all persons required to receive training within the first six weeks of each school year, or within the first six weeks of the person's employment. (EC 44691)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “Discrimination in our schools is unacceptable. We must ensure that students, families, educators, and schools that are navigating the state’s existing Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) for discrimination-related complaints have a clear understanding of the process, laws, and timeline. SB 48 intends to establish four coordinators under the Office of Civil Rights that will provide additional support to educators, LEAs, and parents to navigate the Uniform Complaint Procedure process and ensure that complaints are processed in a timely manner.”

New bill. When this bill was heard in this Committee on July 2, 2025, it pertained to immigration enforcement at schools. It has recently been amended to remove those provisions and instead require the establishment of discrimination prevention coordinators, contingent upon the enactment of AB 715 (Zbur and Addis) of the 2025-26 Session.

Office of Civil Rights. California has the responsibility under state and federal law to enforce state and federal civil rights protections in public education.

Federal law vests responsibility for monitoring and enforcing multiple education statutes to state education agencies (SEAs). In California, the CDE is the state agency responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal civil rights laws and regulations. To do so, the CDE maintains an Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), which conducts compliance activities related to:

- Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, and Handicap in Vocational Education Programs, March 21, 1979, (34 CFR, Part 100, Appendix B);
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations (34 CFR, Part 100), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin;

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the implementation of 28 CFR, Part 35;
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the implementation of 34 CFR, Part 106 which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and implementing regulations (34 CFR, Part 104) which prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap;
- California Education Code, Education Equity section 200, et seq; and
- California Code of Regulations, Title 5, section 4900, et seq.

State law and regulations also require the CDE to administer the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) which generally allow individuals to file complaints regarding alleged violations of law with LEAs and appeal their decisions to the CDE if desired. This includes violations of civil rights statutes.

Historically, the federal government has also enforced civil rights laws. However, the Trump administration has virtually eliminated the federal role in civil rights enforcement in education, closing numerous field offices and leaving the fate of hundreds of cases pending with the United States Department of Education unclear.

In light of this diminished federal role, it is reasonable for California to strengthen its compliance monitoring and enforcement of civil rights protections in public education.

This bill proposes to create several discrimination prevention coordinators, to be housed within the OCR proposed to be created by AB 715 within the Government Operations Agency (GovOps). The purpose of this office would be to work directly with LEAs to prevent and address discrimination and bias. It would do so by providing education and educational resources to identify and prevent antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and bias, reporting on the state of discrimination and bias in public schools, recommending strategies to combat discrimination or bias, advising on subsequent action regarding complaints that involve discrimination, and providing protocols to respond to discrimination complaints, among other responsibilities.

The establishment of a new OCR raises a number of governance issues. While the missions of the CDE's compliance functions and the proposed OCR have differences, there appears to be significant duplication in reporting, advising, and implementing correction plans related to complaints. Even with distinct responsibilities, having two state agencies working with LEAs on issues of discrimination may cause confusion and disruption. It is also unclear how these functions would be carried out by GovOps, an agency with no expertise in educational civil rights compliance, unclear authority to engage in compliance activities, and no direct relationship with schools. *The Committee may wish to consider* that the appropriate entity in which to vest these responsibilities is the CDE, consistent with its expertise and its longstanding mandate under state and federal law. Renaming the existing OEO the OCR, and increasing its resources, could accomplish this goal without creating duplication and disruption at the local level.

Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator. AB 715 also creates an Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, and requires that this position:

- Develop, consult on, and provide antisemitism education to teachers, staff, governing board or body members, administrators, and other LEA personnel to identify and proactively prevent antisemitism;

- Make recommendations, in coordination with the executive director of the SBE, to the Legislature, on legislation necessary for the prevention of antisemitism in educational settings;
- Engage and advise on the actions taken by the office on issues relating to antisemitism and the Jewish community; and
- Engage with local educational agencies on the handling of antisemitism.

AB 715 also requires that the United States National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, published by the Biden Administration on May 25, 2023, be a basis to inform the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator on how to identify, respond to, prevent, and counter antisemitism.

Duties of coordinators not identified. Unlike the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator position proposed to be established by AB 715, this bill does not specify the duties and authority of the discrimination prevention coordinators it would establish. ***The Committee may wish to consider that*** if the duties of the coordinators were vary by coordinator position, this would likely create confusion and disruption at the local level.

Related legislation. AB 5 (Zbur), Chapter 220, Statutes of 2023 requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to complete the development of an online training curriculum and online delivery platform by July 1, 2025, and requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide and require at least one hour of training annually to all certificated staff, beginning with the 2025-26 school year through the 2029-30 school year, on cultural competency in supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. Requires the LEA to maintain documentation on the completion of the training by each employee, as specified.

AB 1327 (Weber), Chapter 366, Statutes of 2023 requires the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to report to the Legislature every three years on instances of racial discrimination or harassment, and requires the CIF to develop, in consultation with community organizations that represent the interests of ethnic groups and communities of color, a standardized incident form to track instances of racial discrimination or harassment that occur at high school sporting games or sporting events, and annually post those results on the CIF website.

SB 857 (Laird) of the 2023-24 Session would require the SPI, on or before July 1, 2024, to convene an advisory task force to identify the statewide needs of LGBTQ students and report its findings to the Legislature, the SPI, and the Governor by January 1, 2026.

AB 493 (Gloria) Chapter 775, Statutes of 2019, requires that, no later than July 1, 2021, the CDE develop resources or update existing resources for in-service training on schoolsite and community resources for the support of LGBTQ students, for use in LEAs, including charter schools serving students in grades 7-12. Requires the CDE to periodically provide online trainings on this topic that can be accessed on a statewide basis.

AB 2153 (Thurmond) of the 2017-18 Session would have required schools to provide in-service training to teachers on school site and community resources available for the support of LGBTQ students. This bill was vetoed by Governor Brown, who stated:

I signed AB 827 (O'Donnell) in 2015, which required the Department of Education, as part of its compliance monitoring, to assess whether local schools have provided information to certificated staff serving of grades 7-12 on school site and community resources for LGBTQ students. Current law also requires the Department to monitor local schools to ensure the adoptions of policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

If local schools find that more training or resources on this topic is needed, they have the flexibility to use their resources as they see best.

AB 827 (O'Donnell), Chapter 562, Statutes of 2015, as it passed this Committee, would have required schools to provide in-service training to teachers on school site and community resources available for the support of LGBTQ students. The bill was later amended to require CDE, as part of its compliance monitoring, to assess whether LEAs have provided information to certificated staff serving grades 7-12 on schoolsite and community resources for LGBTQ students.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Debbie Look / ED. / (916) 319-2087