

Date of Hearing: April 27, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 2794 (Gipson) – As Introduced February 18, 2022

SUBJECT: School safety: deescalation specialists: pilot program

SUMMARY: Establishes the School De-escalation Specialist Pilot Program to provide grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) for the creation or expansion of non-police safety programs, and appropriates \$150 million for this program. Also adds to the authorized uses of funds transferred to school districts relative to specified traffic violation fines, the hiring and training of school social workers, school counselors, emotional coaches, and de-escalation specialists as well as training of community volunteers to be mentors or school climate coaches, and professional development of school staff in non-violent de-escalation training. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes additional allowable uses for funds transferred to school districts as a result of specified traffic violations, including the hiring and training of school district social workers, counselors, emotional coaches, and de-escalation specialists; the training of community volunteers to serve as mentors and school climate coaches; and professional development of school staff in nonviolent de-escalation training and techniques.
- 2) Establishes the School De-escalation Specialist Pilot Program (Program) to be administered by the CDE, to provide one-time grants to LEAs for the creation or expansion of non-police safety programs, and appropriates \$150 million for the Program.
- 3) Requires that grant funds be used by LEAs for costs associated with creating or expanding non-police school safety programs, including:
 - a) De-escalation specialist salaries; and
 - b) De-escalation trainings for classified and certificated employees.
- 4) Requires the CDE to:
 - a) Announce, and post on its website, criteria for grants under this Program by March 31, 2023;
 - b) Award grants to selected LEAs before the beginning of the 2023-24 school year;
 - c) Establish standard metrics to ensure consistency in data collection;
 - d) Submit a report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on the expenditure of funds and relevant outcome data that evaluates the impact of the Program; and
 - e) Expend no more than 5% of the funds appropriated for the Program for administration.
- 5) Defines the following terms for purposes of the Program:

- a) “De-escalation training” as any recognized program of training or certification that provides instruction in restorative justice, conflict resolution, community-based public safety, or other nonviolent conflict resolution or public safety training;
 - b) “Local educational agency” as a school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school.
 - c) “Pilot Program” means the School De-escalation Specialist Program.
- 6) Requires the Program to remain in effect only until January 1, 2026 and is to be repealed as of that date.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires that the first 30% of moneys that are collected for specified traffic violations, including those relating to railroad grade crossings, be allocated to a transit district or transportation commission or authority, or the county, in the area where violation occurred, to be used for public safety and public education relating to railroad grade crossings. (Penal Code (PEN) 1463.12)
- 2) Encourages, as comprehensive school safety plans are reviewed and updated, that such plans include primary strategies to create and maintain a positive school climate, promote school safety, and increase pupil achievement, and prioritize mental health and intervention services, restorative and transformative justice programs, and positive behavior interventions and supports. (Education Code (EC) 32282.1)
- 3) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) adopt standards that address the principles of school safety in the preparation of future classroom teachers, school administrators, school counselors, and other pupil personnel services providers, and that these standards include school management skills that emphasize crisis intervention and conflict resolution; developing and maintaining a positive school climate, including methods to prevent the possession of weapons on school campuses; developing school safety plans; and developing ways to identify and defuse situations that may lead to conflict or violence. (EC 44276.1)
- 4) Authorizes the governing board of a school district to establish a school police department under the supervision of a school chief of police, and to employ peace officers to ensure the safety of school district personnel and pupils, and the security of the real and personal property of the school district. Specifies that persons employed and compensated as members of a police department of a school district, when appointed and duly sworn, are peace officers, for the purposes of carrying out their duties of employment. (EC 38000 and 38001)
- 5) Authorizes the governing board of a school district to establish a security department under the supervision of a chief of security, and to employ personnel to ensure the safety of school district personnel and pupils and the security of the real and personal property of the school district. Expresses the intent of the Legislature that a school district security department be supplementary to city and county law enforcement agencies and not vested with general police powers. (EC 38000)

- 6) Requires any school police officer first employed by a K–12 public school district to successfully complete a basic course of training before exercising the powers of a peace officer. Also requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to prepare a specialized course of instruction for the training of school peace officers to meet the unique safety needs of a school environment and for such officers to complete the specialized training within two years of the date of first employment. (Penal Code 832.3)
- 7) Requires each school district or COE to be responsible for the overall development of all comprehensive school safety plans for its schools operating kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12. (EC 32281)
- 8) Encourages that, as school safety plans are reviewed, plans be updated to include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals, community intervention professionals, school counselors, school resource officers (SROs), and police officers on school campuses, if the school district employs these people. (EC 32282.1)
- 9) Authorizes or requires a principal or a superintendent of schools to suspend or expel a student committing any of a number of specified acts. (EC 48900, 48900.2, 48900.3, 48900.4, 48900.7, and 48915)
- 10) Specifies that suspensions of a pupil shall be imposed only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct. Specifies that other means of correction include, but are not limited to, a conference between school personnel, the pupil's parent or guardian, and pupil; referrals to the school counselor, psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, or other school support services personnel; study teams or other intervention-related teams; referral for a psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment; participation in a restorative justice program; a positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions; after school programs that address behavior issues; or other alternatives involving community service. (EC 48900.5)
- 11) Prohibits a pupil in kindergarten through 5th grade from being suspended for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of school personnel and prohibits these acts from being grounds for any pupil from kindergarten through 12th grade to be recommended for expulsion. (EC 48900)
- 12) Prohibits a pupil in 6th through 8th grade from being suspended for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of school personnel until July 1, 2025. (EC 48900)
- 13) Requires school districts, charter schools, and COEs to adopt Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) each year, and requires the LCAPs to address eight state priorities, one of which is school climate, as measured by all of the following:
 - a) Pupil suspension rates;
 - b) Pupil expulsion rates; and
 - c) Other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teacher on the sense of safety and school connectedness. (EC 52060)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

This bill establishes the School De-escalation Specialist Pilot Program and appropriates \$150 million for one-time grants to LEAs, to be provided before the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, to hire de-escalation specialists and to provide training on de-escalation techniques to school staff; and requires the SPI to submit a report to the Legislature on the expenditure of funds and outcomes achieved during the pilot program. Also authorizes the use of funds provided to school districts related to specific traffic violation fines to be used for the hiring and training of social workers, counselors, emotional coaches, and de-escalation specialists, as well as training of community volunteers and school staff on non-violent de-escalation training and techniques.

The Committee may wish to consider:

- 1) Whether LEAs would be willing to hire school staff, as specified, with one-time funds.
- 2) Whether the funds related to traffic violations, as specified, are sufficient to be utilized for the purposes suggested.

Need for the bill. According to the author, “AB 2794 would establish a school safety pilot program and designate trained de-escalation specialists to respond to non-violent student disruptions. The de-escalation specialists described in AB 2794 will be staff members who do not carry weapons but are skilled in restorative justice, conflict resolution, and other techniques that may be used to redirect students when there is conflict. Now more than ever, our focus should be trying to support and improve the social and emotional health of our students.

Law enforcement serves an important role in keeping our schools and students safe and secure. However, when it comes to helping students during a crisis, this bill will provide a proactive approach to mitigate these crises, address disruptive student behaviors, and most importantly help create the highest learning environment possible for our youth. This bill will not replace de-escalation specialists with officers, rather they are encouraged to work collaboratively on responding to various student disruptions. AB 2794 will provide schools with additional tools to de-escalate student conflicts that does not involve exposing students to the school to prison pipeline.

The role of peace officers on school campuses. A safe school environment is critical to effective teaching and learning. Some school districts choose to enhance the safety of their schools by establishing a school police or security department, or by working with a city or county law enforcement agency to have SROs assigned to one or more of the district’s schools. According to POST, 18 school districts in California have established their own police departments and collectively employ 658 peace officers and reserve members. According to the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), the role of SROs includes three primary responsibilities: ensuring a safe and secure campus; educating students about law-related topics; and mentoring students as counselors and role models.

Concerns regarding law enforcement presence on school campuses. In recent years, concerns have been raised regarding the role of law enforcement officers on school campuses, as in some cases, police officers have become involved in administering disciplinary actions. Some contend

that the increase in student-police interactions has resulted in thousands of students being pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline. A 2016 report by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of California notes that student-police interactions may be disproportionately impacting certain student groups.

The NASRO notes that SROs who follow NASRO's best practices do not arrest students for disciplinary issues that would be handled by teachers or administrators if the SRO were not present. They contend that SROs help troubled students avoid involvement with the juvenile justice system.

A 2014 U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) publication, "Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline," notes that schools choosing to use school-based law enforcement officers should ensure that these officers' roles are focused on protecting the physical safety of the school and preventing criminal conduct. The USDOE further recommends that schools ensure that school-based law enforcement officers do not become involved in routine school disciplinary matters.

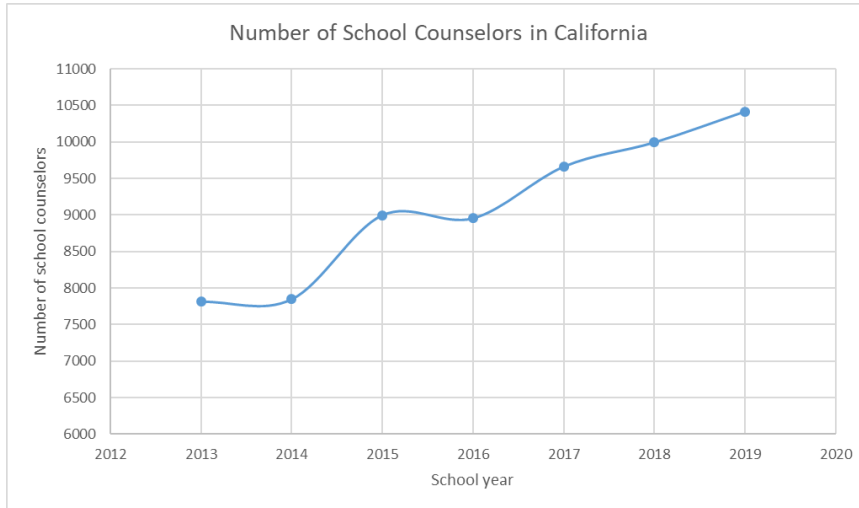
Alternative approaches to preventing school violence. Following the deadly shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida in 2018, a group of over 200 universities, national education and mental health groups, school districts, and more than 2,300 individual experts signed on to "A Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America." This document suggests that rather than having armed officers, metal detectors, or locked doors in schools, that the focus should be on prevention by improving the social and emotional health of the schools. Their eight point plan includes the following elements:

- A national requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault;
- A ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms;
- Adequate staffing (such as counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) of coordinated school- and community-based mental health services for individuals with risk factors for violence, recognizing that violence is not intrinsically a product of mental illness;
- Reform of school discipline to reduce exclusionary practices and foster positive social, behavioral, emotional, and academic success for students;
- Universal background checks to screen out violent offenders, persons who have been hospitalized for violence towards self or others, and persons on no-fly, terrorist watch lists; and
- A national program to train and maintain school- and community-based threat assessment teams that include mental health and law enforcement partners.

This document lays out a more comprehensive approach to preventing school violence, and among other things, requires significant investments in pupil support services.

California lags in providing social emotional support to pupils. California schools lack sufficient numbers of school counselors. According to CDE data, there has been an increase in school counselors employed in California schools since the 2012-13 school year (figure 1).

Figure 1. Increasing number of school counselors in California (CDE data).



Despite the growing number of school counselors, California still lacks sufficient numbers of trained personnel in schools to meet the mental health needs of over six million pupils (Table 1). The American School Counselor Association recommends that schools maintain a ratio of 250 students per school counselor, and California has not met this benchmark.

Clearly California lacks sufficient numbers of trained personnel in our schools to meet the social and emotional needs of over six million pupils.

Table 1. Ratio of school health professionals in the 2018-2019 school year. (Source: CDE)

School health professional	Number of professionals in California schools in 2018/19	2018/19 ratio of students/professional	Recommended ratios by relevant professional associations
School counselors	10,416	576:1	250:1
School psychologists	6,329	948:1	500-700:1
School social workers	865	6,936:1	250:1
School nurses	2,720	2,205:1	750:1

What is school climate? In addition to considering the availability of support staff on school campuses, there is a need to consider the overall school climate in considering the safety and well-being of students. The CDE's School Conditions and Climate Work Group (CCWG) 2017 report recommends the following definition:

School Conditions and Climate refers to the character and quality of school life. This includes the values, expectations, interpersonal relationships, materials and resources, supports, physical environment, and practices that foster a welcoming, inclusive, and academically challenging environment. Positive school conditions and climate ensure people in the school community (students, staff, family, and community) feel socially, emotionally,

and physically safe, supported, connected to the school, and engaged in learning and teaching.

School districts, COEs, and charter schools are currently required to report on school climate, as one of the eight state priorities within their LCAP, based upon rates of suspension and expulsion, as well as “other local measures, including surveys of pupils, parents, and teachers on the sense of safety and school connectedness.”

Model practices in support of a positive school climate. According to the CDE, “Schools that successfully sustain a positive school climate are committed to meeting the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student. A positive school climate is built on caring, trusting, inclusive, and respectful relationships among students, staff, and families. The implementation of positive disciplinary measures that are inclusive and evidence-based begins with the development of such relationships. Good relationships result in a sense of safety, order, and connectedness among members of the school community. When rules and expectations are clearly communicated and suspensions and expulsions are reserved for the most serious offenses, students experience supportive, personalized learning conditions that promote social, emotional, and academic growth.” The CDE suggests that model practices for building a positive school climate may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implement a school climate improvement process;
- Conduct a school climate survey;
- Build capacity for staff support and wellness;
- Provide student supports to promote engagement and sense of safety using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework;
- Strengthen school, district, and community relationships;
- Provide a supportive and engaging physical environment; and
- Adopt positive disciplinary measures.

Impacts of exclusionary discipline policies. Research suggests that harsh discipline practices and the over-policing of students of color that occurs in many schools has undermined the creation of safe and inclusive learning environments. Disproportionalities in suspension and expulsion rates between students of color and their white peers appear as early as preschool and continue through the K-12th grades. Black youth often receive harsher punishments for minor offenses and are more than twice as likely as white students to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest. (Learning Policy Institute (LPI), March 2021).

One study, *Educational and Criminal Justice Outcomes 12 Years After School Suspension*, (Rosenbaum 2018) notes that “school suspensions aim to obtain better behavior from the punished student and maintain school norms by removing students. Suspension removes disruptive students from schools temporarily and may improve school climate by reducing peer

influences to engage in deviant behavior.” The study goes on to note that a body of research has found that suspended students are more likely to:

- Engage in antisocial behavior;
- Have involvement with the criminal justice system;
- Be arrested both during the month of suspension and within a year of suspension; and
- Use marijuana and tobacco.

The study also cites various longitudinal research findings, including:

- Youth suspended in ninth grade were less likely to graduate high school, graduate on time, and enroll in postsecondary education; and
- Twelve years after suspension, suspended youth were less likely to have earned degrees or high school diplomas, and were more likely to have been arrested or on probation.

Some researchers conclude that “suspensions may act more as a reinforcer than a punisher for inappropriate behavior. Other research raises doubts as to whether harsh school discipline has a deterrent value. Frequent use of suspension alone has no measureable positive deterrent or academic benefit to either the students who are suspended or to non-suspended students.” (Losen, 2011). The American Academy of Pediatrics states, “Without the services of trained professionals, such as pediatricians, mental health professionals, and school counselors, and without a parent at home during the day, students with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are far more likely to commit crimes.”

Researchers have pointed out that “many suspended students find school to be challenging and experience suspension from school as a reward. Suspensions may be reinforcing and even incentivizing the very behavior they are meant to correct.” (Rumberger, 2017)

According to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE): “Teachers and students deserve school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning. Creating a supportive school climate—and decreasing suspensions and expulsions—requires close attention to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students. Evidence does not show that discipline practices that remove students from instruction—such as suspensions and expulsions—help to improve either student behavior or school climate.”

Disparities in the rate of school suspensions. The disproportionate incidence of suspensions and expulsions among certain populations of students, including African American students, has gained nationwide attention in recent years. A 2018 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *K-12 Education: Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities*, found that black students, boys, and students with disabilities were disproportionately disciplined in K-12 schools, based upon an analysis of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data.

CRDC data show that there was an overall 2% decline in the use of exclusionary discipline practices in public schools in the U.S. from the 2015-16 school year to the 2017-18 school year. However, there was an increase during this period of school-related arrests, expulsions with

educational services, and referrals to law enforcement. The data also shows a continued disproportionality in exclusionary practices during the 2017-18 school year:

- Black students accounted for 15.1% of total student enrollment in the U.S. and received 38.8% of expulsions with educational services and 33.3% of expulsions without educational services;
- Students with disabilities represented 13.2% of enrollment and received 23.3% of expulsions with educational services and 14.8% of expulsions without educational services;
- Boys accounted for 51.4% of enrollment and received 69.5% of in-school suspensions and 70.5% of out-of-school suspensions;
- 31.4% of Black students received one or more in-school suspensions and 38.2% received one or more out-of-school suspensions;
- 20.5% of students with disabilities received one or more in-school suspensions and 24.5% received one or more out-of-school suspensions;
- Black students with disabilities represent 2.3% of student enrollment, 6.2% received one or more in-school suspensions and 8.8% received one or more out-of-school suspensions; and
- Black students accounted for 28.7% of all students referred to law enforcement and 31.6% of all students arrested at school or during a school-related activity.

The GAO report review of research on the topic of disproportionate disciplinary actions suggest that “implicit bias on the part of teachers and staff may cause them to judge students’ behaviors differently based on the students’ race and sex. Teachers and staff sometimes have discretion to make case-by-case decisions about whether to discipline, and the form of discipline to impose in response to student behaviors, such as disobedience, defiance, and classroom disruption.”

Research on student behavior, race, and discipline has found no evidence that African American over-representation in school suspension is due to higher rates of misbehavior. African American students were referred more often for behaviors that seem to require more subjective judgement on the part of the person making the referral (e.g. disrespect, excessive noise, threatening behavior, and loitering). (Losen, 2011)

California suspensions have declined, but disproportionality remains. CDE data shows that while the number of suspensions and expulsions decreased from 2017-18 to 2019-20, the number of African American students suspended or expelled remains significantly above their proportionate enrollment:

- Total suspensions dropped from 363,406 in 2017-18 to 233,753 in 2019-20;
- African American students made up 5.6% of enrollment in 2017-18 and 5.4% in 2019-20, but received 17.3% of total suspensions in 2017-18 and 17.2% in 2019-20;
- Suspensions for “defiance only” dropped from 59,808 in 2017-18 to 24,920 in 2019-20;

- African American students received 15.6% of all suspensions for “defiance-only” in 2017-18 and 18.7% in 2019-20;
- Total expulsions dropped from 5,369 in 2017-18 to 3,263 in 2019-20; and
- African American students accounted for 14.5% of total expulsions in 2017-18 and 12.9% in 2019-20.

The State has invested in alternatives to improve school climate and culture. In recent years, the Legislature has allocated significant resources specifically designed to improve school climate and reduce exclusionary disciplinary practices. These include significant investments in MTSS to encourage LEAs to establish and align schoolwide, data-driven systems of academic and behavioral supports to more effectively meet the needs of California’s diverse learners in the most inclusive environment.

According to the CDE, California’s MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework for LEAs that aligns academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students with the potential to create systematic change to quickly identify and meet the needs of all students. MTSS affords a full range of academic, behavioral, and social support for all students.

Recent state budgets have included numerous investments related to student supports and school climate, including but not limited to:

- \$3 billion in Community School grants, to establish and expand community schools, defined to include “Collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators, including professional development to transform school culture and climate, that centers on pupil learning and supports mental and behavioral health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, restorative justice, and other key areas relating to pupil learning and whole child and family development;”
- \$1.5 billion for an Educator Effectiveness Block Grant for LEAs to provide professional learning for educators in a range of areas, including “practices to create a positive school climate, including, but not limited to, restorative justice, training around implicit bias, providing positive behavioral supports, multitiered systems of support, transforming a schoolsite’s culture to one that values diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and preventing discrimination, harassment, bullying, and intimidation based on actual or perceived characteristics, including disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, language, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation;”
- \$100 million in competitive grants to LEAs to increase the number of teachers available to serve California state preschool and transitional kindergarten pupils and to provide teachers of these pupils with training in inclusive practices, culturally responsive instruction, supporting dual language learners, enhancing social-emotional learning, implementing trauma-informed and restorative practices, and mitigating implicit biases to eliminate exclusionary discipline;

- \$50 million to the Orange and Butte COEs for support of MTSS efforts, including grants to LEAs to “provide ongoing training and support in the use of trauma screening tools and mental health service referrals, school climate surveys, and the use of survey data;” and
- \$6 million for training LEAs on interpreting data from their local school climate surveys of pupils, families, and educators to inform continuous improvement efforts and better assess community needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning; and for the CDE to develop an optional trauma-informed practice module to be used with school climate surveys.

Recommended Committee amendments. Committee staff recommend that the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Delete the contents of the bill.
- 2) Require, subject to an appropriation of one-time funds for this purpose, the SPI to allocate funding to LEAs, on an ADA basis, for the purchase of training materials and professional development in methods to improve school safety and school climate, including, but not limited to, de-escalation training and techniques.

Arguments in support. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, sponsor of the bill states, “In recent years, concerns have been raised regarding the role of law enforcement officers on school campuses, as in some cases, police officers have become involved in administering disciplinary actions. A 2016 report by the American Civil Liberties Union of California found that schools are increasingly calling on law enforcement to deal with student behaviors such as disruption, truancy, bullying, vandalism, and other violations of campus rules. This report also highlighted several potential civil rights violations when police are brought on to campus to respond. Especially disturbing is how these interactions disproportionately affect students of color and students with disabilities. Law enforcement officials have vitally important work to preserve safety and security throughout our communities, however there are important alternatives to explore for responding to student disruptions that will better serve our schools and students.

California students are struggling with trauma from the pandemic, from social and racial injustice, from poverty, and so much more. What they need at school is support, not punitive discipline or confrontations. This bill is not an effort to defund the police. Law enforcement has a place in keeping our schools safe and campuses secure. But, when it comes to helping students in crisis, de-escalation specialists are better positioned to provide more appropriate support and services to students in need.”

Related legislation. AB 2598 (A. Weber) of the 2021-22 Session would require the CDE to work with an advisory committee to develop a standard model to implement restorative justice practices on K-12 school campuses by January 1, 2024, and require LEAs to implement restorative justice practices using this model by June 30, 2024.

SB 419 (Skinner) Chapter 279, Statutes of 2019, extends the permanent prohibition against suspending a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 3 for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of school staff to include grades 4 and

5 permanently; and to include grades 6 to 8, inclusive, until July 1, 2025; and applies these prohibitions to charter schools.

AB 216 (S. Weber) of the 2019-20 Session would have established the Pupil and Staff Safety Pilot Program, to be administered by the Scale Up MTSS Statewide (SUMS) project, for the purpose of training school staff de-escalation techniques and alternatives to physical restraint and seclusion of students. This bill was held in the Senate Education Committee.

AB 750 (Chen) of the 2019-20 Session would have required school districts and charter schools to have at least one SRO present at each school during regular school hours and any other time when pupils are present on campus. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 1808 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 32, Statutes of 2018, permanently prohibits suspending or recommending for expulsion, a pupil in kindergarten through grade 3 for willfully defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

AB 2067 (Gallagher) of the 2017-18 Session would have required school districts and charter schools to ensure there is at least one armed school resource officer present at each school during regular school hours and any other time when students are on campus. It also prohibits funding this requirement from the district or charter school's Local Control Funding Formula apportionment. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2698 (S. Weber) of the 2015-16 Session would have established the School Climate and Student Achievement Act, and required low-achieving schools to begin an assessment of school climate on or before September 1, 2017, and complete this assessment by July 1, 2018; and would have required the CDE to convene an advisory committee comprised of stakeholders and professionals who have participated in the development and expansion of alternative discipline programs, such as restorative justice and positive behavioral interventions and supports. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2489 (McCarty) of the 2015-16 Session would have required the CDE to develop a standard model to implement restorative justice practices on a school campus and make the standard model available for use by any school district that chose to implement restorative justice practices as part of its campus culture. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1025 (Thurmond) of the 2015-16 Session would have required the CDE to establish a three-year pilot program in school districts to encourage inclusive practices that integrate mental health, special education, and school climate interventions following a multi-tiered framework. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2698 (S. Weber) of the 2015-16 Session would have established the School Climate and Student Achievement Act, and required low-achieving schools to begin an assessment of school climate by September 1, 2017, and complete this assessment by July 1, 2018. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2443 (Baker) of the 2015-16 Session would have added the number of practicing school psychologists working on school climate issues to the indicators used to assess school climate for purposes of LCAPs. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1455 (Campos) Chapter 229, Statutes of 2014, authorizes school officials to refer a victim of, witness to, or other pupil affected by an act of bullying, committed on or after January 1, 2015, to the school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support service personnel for case management, counseling, and participation in a restorative justice program.

AB 420 (Dickinson) Chapter 660, Statutes of 2014, eliminated the authority to suspend a pupil enrolled in kindergarten through 3rd grade, and the authority to recommend for expulsion a pupil enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12th grade, for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. The bill sunset on July 1, 2018.

SB 1396 (Hancock) of the 2013-14 Session would have apportioned funds, contingent upon available funding, to a designated COE to establish a multi-tiered intervention and support program that includes, but is not limited, the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program and restorative practices. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1729 (Ammiano) Chapter 425, Statutes of 2012, reaffirmed that superintendents and school principals have the discretion to implement alternatives to suspension and expulsion and expanded the list of other means of correction that must be implemented prior to suspension or expulsion to address most student misbehavior.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond (Sponsor)
National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform

Opposition

None on file

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