



NURY MARTINEZ

LAUSD Board District 6



School Board Supports Reforming Student Discipline Policies **Resolution Endorses Seven Legislative Bills to Change Laws**

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education voted unanimously on June 28, 2012, to support several measures recently introduced in the state Legislature to help improve student behavior, and provide alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. The resolution, "Reforming School Disciplinary Policies: Restorative Justice and Equity for All Students," was introduced by School Board Member Nury Martinez.

"Student discipline policies should focus on helping pupils improve negative behavior with research-based strategies, appropriate interventions and multiple levels of support," Martinez said. "While there must be consequences, the primary goal should be increasing the number of students who continue their education while reducing the number who are suspended from a school or expelled from an entire District."

A co-sponsor Board President Mónica García said, "Students are pushed out of the school system every day. We need to work with students and families to find solutions that keep students in school. These bills are aimed at reforming an outdated and punitive system by implementing policies of restorative justice and intervention that better support students."

Another co-sponsor, Board Member Steven Zimmer said, "I am proud to stand with students, families and communities across Los Angeles as we aggressively address the school push out crisis. It is long overdue for this District to embrace positive behavioral support and make sure we no longer criminalize school-based behavioral problems. We, our entire school community, need to work together as never before to make sure all students are in school in seats and learning."

Their resolution, approved on Thursday, specifically endorses seven bills under consideration in the California State Senate and Assembly that would strengthen or change existing laws and modify the State Education Code.

The Senate Bills (SB) and Assembly Bills (AB) are:

- SB 1235 would require administrators at schools with high suspension rates to implement school-wide, proven positive behavioral strategies.
- AB 1729 would authorize the Superintendent or a principal to use alternatives to suspension or expulsion, designed to correct student behavior.
- AB 1909 would require, in the case of foster children facing suspension or expulsion, notification of that child's attorney and social worker in addition to informing a guardian or parent.
- AB 2242 would subject a student who had disrupted school activities or has been deemed willingly defiant to varied means of correction, community service or in-house suspension in place of extended suspension or a recommendation for expulsion.
- AB 2145 would require the disaggregation of expulsion and suspension data by student subgroups such as race, ethnicity, special education, English learners and socioeconomic status with the results published on the California Department of Education website.
- SB 1088 would require an additional review for the readmission of expelled students and prohibit school districts from denying either readmission or enrollment solely because of a pupil's contact with the juvenile justice system.
- AB 2616 would define excuses absences and align penalties for chronic truancy with research indicating that schools and parents should take the lead in truancy prevention and intervention.

According to the school board's resolution, California has extremely high rates of suspensions and expulsions that are disproportionately pushing out minority students. Within the state and the District, most suspensions neither involve violence nor drugs and an estimated 40 percent or more are for negative behaviors characterized as "willful defiance."

In addition to supporting the changes to state law and the Education Code, the board's resolution also noted, "That the District is working on creating and implementing strategies to establish positive behavior alternatives and interventions for all students rather than take an unnecessarily punitive approach that encroaches on instructional time for students."

Sincerely,

Nury

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