

# Senate Bill 419

## Defiance/Disruption

Senator Nancy Skinner (SD-9)

### THIS BILL

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An overwhelming body of research confirms that suspending students at any age fails to improve student behavior and greatly increases the likelihood that the student will fail, be pushed out of school, and/or have contact with the juvenile justice system. SB 419 helps keep students in school, increases student success rates, and increases high school graduation rates.

### THE ISSUE

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Students in grades 4 through 12 may be suspended from school for minor misbehaviors, such as refusing to take off a hat, talking back, or falling asleep in class. These needless suspensions are referred to as “defiance/disruption” suspensions and often occur without consideration of the root of the student’s actions.

Defiance/disruption suspensions contribute to racial inequality in our schools. Black students, other students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ students are disproportionately suspended for low-level subjective offenses, such as defiance/disruption. Suspensions also cause California students to lose significant instruction time. A recent study revealed that students lost over 150,000 days of school due to defiance/disruption suspensions in 2016-17.

In 2014, AB 420 eliminated defiance/disruption as a grounds for suspending students in grades K-3 and as a grounds for expulsion for all students. Since AB 420 became law, suspensions of Black students for defiance/disruption has dropped by 70%.

Between 2013-2015, more than 15,000 K-3 suspensions were prevented, and many school districts are more likely to adopt alternatives to suspensions and expulsions and to keep students in schools. Many school districts, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Azusa,

Oakland, and Pasadena Unified School Districts have already eliminated defiance/disruption as grounds for suspension for all grade levels.

New funding has assisted schools in adopting alternatives. For instance, California set aside \$15 million in funds in 2018-2019 to help address root causes of discipline issues for students and to foster a positive and healthy school climate.

### SOLUTION

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SB 419 will improve student outcomes and encourage schools to adopt alternatives to suspensions and expulsions by:

- Effective July 1, 2020, eliminating defiance/disruption suspensions for students in grades 4-5;
- Eliminating defiance/disruption suspensions for students in grades 6-8 from July 1, 2020, until July 1, 2024.

### CO-SPONSORS

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- Alliance for Boys and Men of Color;
- Brothers Sons Selves Coalition;
- Children NOW
- Fix School Discipline Coalition;
- Lawyers Committee For Civil Rights of The San Francisco Bay Area;
- Mid-City Community Advocacy Network;
- PolicyLink; and
- Public Counsel

### SUPPORTERS

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- Alameda County Office of Education
- Alliance For Children's Rights
- American Academy of Pediatrics, California
- American Civil Liberties Union of California
- Anti-Defamation League
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice - California

- Association of California School Administrators
- Bay Area Legal Aid
- Black Parallel School Board
- California Public Defenders Association
- California School-Based Health Alliance
- California School Boards Association
- California State Council of Service Employees
- California State PTA
- Californians United For a Responsible Budget
- Children's Defense Fund-California
- Community Asset Development Redefining Education
- Community Coalition For Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
- Compton Unified School District
- Courage Campaign
- California Rural Legal Assistance
- Disability Rights California
- Disability Voices United
- Dolores Huerta Foundation
- East Bay Community Law Center
- Educators For Excellence - Los Angeles
- Ella Baker Center For Human Rights
- Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
- Equal Justice Society
- Fair Chance Project
- Fathers & Families of San Joaquin
- Fight Crime: Invest In Kids
- Initiate Justice
- Innerscity Struggle
- Khmer Girls In Action
- Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
- Learning Rights Law Center
- Legal Services For Children
- Long Beach Forward
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- MILPA (Motivating Individual Leadership For Public Advancement)
- Movement 4 Peoples' Democracy
- National Action Network Los Angeles
- National Center For Youth Law
- National Juvenile Justice Network
- Pacific Juvenile Defender Center
- Peace Over Violence
- Project Knucklehead
- Restorative Schools Vision Project

- Sacramento Unified School District
- San Diego County District Attorney's Office
- San Francisco Unified School District
- San Francisco Unified School District Community Advisory Committee For Special Education
- Sigma Beta Xi Inc.
- Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
- Special Needs Network, Inc.
- The Education Trust - West
- The Mentoring Center
- The W. Haywood Burns Institute
- Women's Leadership Project
- Youth Alive!
- Youth Forward
- Youth Law Center

## CONTACT

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