

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1659 (Ransom) – As Amended March 9, 2026

Policy Committee: Education Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires school districts to designate a juvenile court school pupil transition liaison as the point person between the juvenile court school (JCS) and the public school receiving the pupil. The liaison is not required to perform all of the required tasks but must work in collaboration with other district, county office of education (COE), and county probation department staff to ensure timely transfer of education records (including acceptance of full or partial credits within two business days for coursework completed while in the JCS), immediate enrollment, and immediate placement in appropriate courses.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Unknown but likely minor and absorbable Proposition 98 General Fund (GF) cost pressures to each school district to designate a juvenile court school pupil point person within the district. However, current law already requires each school district to conduct the various transition activities referred to in this bill but without a point person responsible for connecting the appropriate COE and county probation department staff with the correct district staff to ensure a timely transition.

Potential Proposition 98 GF and non-Proposition 98 GF savings, possibly in the tens of thousands of dollars statewide, through the decreased cost to JCSs and county probation departments to the extent this bill results in a pupil who would otherwise not re-enroll timely and recidivate after transferring out of a JCS now re-enrolls in a comprehensive high school setting and matriculates through the K-12 education system without further incident.

COMMENTS:

According to the Alameda County Office of Education, writing in support of the bill:

While current law mandates that COEs have a designated staff person to serve as a transition liaison for court school students, there is no comparable mandate for school districts. AB 1659 will remedy that omission by ensuring that a school district staff person is identified to partner with COE staff to support students through these transitions, helping them enroll in appropriate courses and get credit for work completed.

According to the California Department of Education (CDE), California COEs operate 51 JCS throughout the state serving approximately 13,000 students annually who are on court-ordered detention. However, many of these students may be enrolled for only a matter of days or weeks, with more than half enrolled for fewer than 31 days according to the Youth Law Center. Further, one in four students who attend a JCS never re-enroll in any form of school, and this population has a graduation rate of 40% compared to the statewide average of 86%. Unsurprisingly, many school district administrators and personnel report educational information and credit transfer for these students is often significantly delayed. Several reports and studies done by the CDE, the Youth Law Center, ForwardChange, and Bishop all recommend or suggest that improved transition services, usually in the form of some type of point person or liaison, are essential to reducing recidivism and improving outcomes.

Prior Legislation. AB 1354 (Gipson), Chapter 756, Statutes of 2019, required COEs to ensure that a student enrolled in a juvenile court school for more than 20 school days has an individualized transition plan and access to specified educational records upon release.

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