
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1659	Hearing Date:	June 3, 2026
Author:	Ransom		
Version:	March 9, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Therresa Austin		

Subject: Juvenile court school pupils: joint transition planning policy: courses of study

SUMMARY

This bill requires school districts in a juvenile court school (JCS) pupil's community to assign a district staff member to serve as the district's point person for transition liaison responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires county offices of education (COEs) and county probation departments to have a joint transition planning policy to coordinate the transition of pupils between JCSs and other public schools. Requires a COE to assign transition oversight responsibilities to existing COE personnel, who shall coordinate with the county probation department and relevant local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure:
 - a) The immediate enrollment of a pupil transferred from a JCS in an appropriate public school in their community, and their immediate placement in appropriate courses;
 - b) The transfer of education records, including an individualized education program (IEP) and pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the pupil's plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 plan, if applicable, within 72 hours of a pupil's release from a JCS;
 - c) The acceptance of full or partial course credits for coursework completed by the student while enrolled in a JCS;
 - d) The implementation of the pupil's transition plan, if one exists; and
 - e) Access to information about postsecondary opportunities, including college financial aid. (Education Code (EC) § 48647)
- 2) Requires LEAs to accept full or partial credit for coursework satisfactorily completed by a student while attending a public school, including JCS. (EC § 48645.5 and 51225.2.)

- 3) Requires LEAs to provide educational records of transferring students to their next LEA within two business days of receiving the transfer notification. The records include, among other items, a transcript updated with full or partial credit for coursework completed by the student. (EC § 49069.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires school districts in a JCS pupil's community to assign a staff member of the school district to serve as the district point person for transition liaison responsibilities.
- 2) Requires the school district to notify the COE and county probation department of the assigned staff member's name and contact information.
- 3) Requires the assigned staff member, and other existing school district personnel as needed to serve the individual pupil, to work in collaboration with the COE transition oversight personnel throughout the calendar year to ensure all of the following:
 - a) The timely transfer of complete and accurate education records, including the pupil's IEP adopted pursuant to the federal IDEA and the pupil's plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if applicable, when a pupil enters the JCS.
 - b) The immediate enrollment in an appropriate public school in the school district when a pupil is transferred from the JCS.
 - c) The acceptance, upon enrollment by the pupil in a public school, of course credits, including partial credits, for coursework completed in the JCS, as specified.
 - d) The immediate placement in appropriate courses, based on coursework completed by the pupil, as specified.
- 4) Restates existing law that requires LEAs to issue full or partial credits on an official transcript within two business days of foster youth transferring between public schools and JCSs.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "Students who are justice-impacted are children who deserve stability, care, and support, especially during major transitions in their lives. AB 1659 provides greater support for these students by ensuring there is a designated point of contact when a student transitions back to their home school district upon release from a court school. This bill strengthens the partnership between the county office of education and the student's home district to put the student first and establish a more effective transition support system. A smooth reintegration process will reduce disruptions to these students'

education and help them stay engaged, focused on their future, and moving toward success.”

- 2) ***What is a juvenile court school?*** According to the California Department of Education (CDE), JCSs are COE operated educational programs located within juvenile detention facilities, serving youths who are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and are temporarily or permanently out of traditional school settings due to incarceration or legal proceedings.

Juveniles who are under the authority of the juvenile court system are required to attend school under California’s compulsory education requirements. JCS students are provided a California standards-based curriculum and must take educational assessment tests required of all students in the state’s public schools. The minimum school day for JCSs is 240 minutes of instruction. These schools offer students a course of study that leads to a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate.

Upon release, or after the court terminates jurisdiction, students of ages sixteen to eighteen who are not exempt from compulsory school attendance are required to continue their public education. These students are provided with planning and transition services critical to a successful transfer back to a public school.

For the 2023-24 school year, CDE reported the total enrollment of 13,203 students across the state’s 51 JCSs, with a mean enrollment of 264.1 students and a median of 131 students per school.

- 3) ***JCS Transition Statewide Work Group Report and Recommendations.*** In 2014, the Legislature passed AB 2276 (Bocanegra, Chapter 901, Statutes of 2014), requiring the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to convene a statewide group with stakeholders from the community, advocacy organizations, and education and probation department leaders to study four specific performance areas impacting pupils transitioning from a JCS back to public schools in their community. The legislation directs the statewide work group to develop a model, study existing successful county programs and policies, report its findings, and provide recommendations for state actions to improve:
- a) Immediate transfer of educational records;
 - b) Uniform systems for calculating and awarding course credits;
 - c) Transition planning; and
 - d) Immediate enrollment of transferring pupils.

The resulting report found, among other things, that communication between COE, school district, county probation, and other stakeholders was inadequate, complete and accurate educational student records were not immediately

transferred, and school districts had difficulty complying with statutes requiring the immediate enrollment of a pupil transitioning from a JCS.

Relative to transition planning, the report makes the following recommendations, among other things:

- a) A student transition team should be established for each student and shall include, at a minimum, a representative from the COE, the pupil's resident school district, and the county probation department.
- b) The student transition team should provide each student with a plan that includes the requisite academic and behavioral actions necessary to establish a clear pathway back to a comprehensive public school in their community.
- c) Identified staff shall be accountable for providing necessary assistance and effective case management to each transitioning student. Each COE, county probation department, and school district shall have one or more individuals specifically identified as the juvenile court student transition liaison/specialist. The transition liaison/specialist from each agency should coordinate their efforts to ensure successful student transition.
- d) Accurate student records shall be available for all students transitioning into and out of a juvenile court facility.
- e) A transitioning student from a JCS shall be immediately enrolled, regardless of the availability of academic records, among other things.
- f) Each school district shall identify one or more persons responsible for ensuring the immediate enrollment of a student transitioning from a juvenile court facility.
- g) School districts and COEs should adopt and comply with the California Model Policy, which provides a partial credit calculation formula, explanations of the policy's provisions, and implementation tools for use by school personnel and social workers.

In the years following the release of the report, several recommendations have gone on to be codified, including requirements for COEs to ensure that a student enrolled in a JCS for more than 20 school days has an individualized transition plan, and that COEs specifically assign personnel to collaborate with county probation departments to be responsible for transition oversight.

This bill seeks to implement another area of recommendations made by the report, namely, for school districts to assign a staff member to serve as the district point person for transition liaison responsibilities.

4) *Related and prior legislation.*

AB 2181 (Gipson, Chapter 703, Statutes of 2024) requires a JCS operated by a COE to exempt a student from local graduation requirements of the COE, and to permit a student to remain enrolled to complete statewide coursework requirements for graduation, under specified conditions.

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

AB 1124 (Cervantes, Chapter 754, Statutes of 2017) permits the education rights holders of students enrolled in JCSs to voluntarily defer or decline the issuance of a diploma for meeting state graduation requirements so that a student may take additional coursework at the JCS or, once released, at a school operated by an LEA.

AB 2276 (Bocanegra, Chapter 901, Statutes of 2014) required the SPI, in consultation with the BSCC, to convene a statewide stakeholder group to develop a model for the immediate transfer of educational records, uniform systems for calculating and awarding credits, transition planning, and the immediate enrollment of pupils who are being transferred from JCSs; and report recommendations for state action to the Legislature by January 1, 2016.

SUPPORT

Alameda County Office of Education (sponsor)
Association of California School Administrators
Back to the Start
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California County Superintendents
California Teachers Association
Children Now
Disability Rights California
East Bay Community Law Center
Fresh Lifelines for Youth
Los Angeles County Office of Education
National Center for Youth Law
Office of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Yolo County Board of Education

OPPOSITION

None received

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