

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1659 (Ransom)

As Amended August 21, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires school districts and charter schools in which a juvenile court school (JCS) pupil will be enrolling to assign a staff member of the district or charter school to serve as the point person for transition liaison responsibilities.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Clarify that the provisions apply equally to charter schools as well as school districts.
- 2) Include double-jointing language to ensure that the amendments made by both this bill and SB 685 (Cortese) of the current legislative session to Education Code Section 48986 become operative if both bills are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

COMMENTS

Juvenile court schools. According to the CDE, the purpose of JCS is to provide mandated, compulsory public education for juvenile offenders who are under the protection or authority of the county juvenile justice system and are incarcerated in juvenile halls, juvenile homes, day centers, juvenile ranches, juvenile camps, or regional youth educational facilities. These schools are operated by COEs. In the 2023-24 school year, over 13,000 students were enrolled across 51 JCS school sites.

Students are often enrolled in JCS for only a period of days or weeks; more than half are enrolled for less than 31 days (Youth Law Center, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*). Nevertheless, JCS enables students to complete course credits leading to a high school diploma. A minimum day program for JCS is 240 minutes, in alignment with public school requirements, and students must take all required public education assessments.

Delayed re-enrollment and credit transfer can impact graduation rates for JCS students. For students transferring out of JCS, delayed re-enrollment in their next school is a serious concern. According to data from the CDE, 1 in 4 students (25%) who attend JCS schools never re-enroll in any form of school. In the 2023-24 school year, this amounted to nearly 3,000 students who dropped out of school before obtaining their diplomas.

Once JCS students are re-enrolled, delayed or inaccurate credit transfer is common. At a minimum this can cause inappropriate course placement, but it can also impact if and when a student has accumulated enough credit for graduation. According to the CDE, graduation rates for former JCS students were only 40% in 2023-24, compared to the statewide average of 86%. Perhaps more starkly, for schools that reported data that year, only 1 former JCS student met the requirements needed to apply to California State University or University of California. Helping JCS students receive the credits they earned, full or partial, is critical to ensuring their long-term success.

District-level liaisons were recommended in a previous report to the Legislature. In 2016, the CDE released *Juvenile Court Student Transition Statewide Work Group: Report and*

Recommendations to the Legislature, pursuant to AB 2276 (Bocanegra), Chapter 901, Statutes of 2014. Their recommendations included the creation of a student transition team, comprised of designated transition liaisons at the COE, county probation department, and school district. While the first two positions have been created, the district personnel positions were never implemented.

Improved administrative collaboration may smooth student transitions. Recently, a number of reports have confirmed the need for system-level collaboration, including:

- 1) Youth Law Center, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, 2023: Investing in transition services and relationships with districts of origin is "imperative";
- 2) FowardChange, *Fewer Chutes, More Ladders*, 2026: System-level coordination is essential to reduce recidivism and improve the lives of youth;
- 3) Bishop, *Educational Planning of Court-Involved Youth*, 2019: Establishing points of contact in each agency can enhance educational planning for court school youth.

This research confirms anecdotal evidence from California school administrators, who have observed that JCS students experience the best outcomes when their home district has a clearly identified person supporting their transitions. Current law requires COEs have designated transition personnel assisting students as they leave JCS, yet there are no corresponding designated personnel at the receiving school district. A warm handoff of the student from JCS to their next school district is difficult without a team of people working at both ends to help the student successfully re-enroll.

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.

Arguments in Support

Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) writes: "When COEs and school districts work together to support smooth transitions, juvenile court school students are more likely to re-enroll promptly, get credit for work completed, and take appropriate courses to help them graduate. Without support, these vulnerable students can fall through the cracks, dropping out of school altogether and even ending up with more juvenile justice system involvement.

Current law mandates that COEs have a designated staff person to serve as a transition liaison for court school students, but there is no comparable mandate for school districts. AB 1659 will remedy that omission by ensuring that school district staff 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.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES:**ASM EDUCATION: 8-0-0**

YES: Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Muratsuchi, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Calderon

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0-4

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bonta, Patterson, Celeste Rodriguez, Ward

SENATE FLOOR: 40-0-0

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNERney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

UPDATED

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