

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING  
AB 2148 (Muratsuchi)  
As Amended April 13, 2026  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Defines a public school employee as a natural person.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Specifies that both of the following mean a natural person:
  - a) A public school employee, including, but not limited to, certificated employees, classified employees, teachers, educators, short-term employees, principals, administrators, counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers.
  - b) A contractor performing services in a public school.

## COMMENTS

*What does this bill do?* This bill seeks to establish that all employees of a school should be natural, human persons.

It is the intent of the Legislature that this bill clarify that all interactions students have with school personnel, including but not limited to teachers, educators, short-term employees, principals, administrators, counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers, certificated employees, classified employees, contractors filling these roles, and other school personnel, while at school or otherwise participating in compulsory education, be with natural persons and not Artificial Intelligence (AI).

*What will AI mean for the education workforce?* AI presents both benefits and risks to the education workforce.

AI may help improve teachers' practice by completing repetitive tasks like grading, lesson planning, scheduling, and routine paperwork, freeing up their time for direct instruction. Analysis by McKinsey and Company suggests that AI could help teachers reallocate 20% to 40% of their time to activities that support student learning.

Research also indicates that teachers are concerned about the impact of AI on their profession (McGehee, 2023). Some fear that in the drive to personalize instruction and optimize for efficiency, teachers, their pedagogical skill, and their human connection with students will be devalued. Some educators fear that ultimately, their jobs will be replaced entirely with AI.

*Existing guidance recommends centering students and educators in AI policies.* In 2025 the California Department of Education (CDE) released guidance on the use of AI in schools. This guidance includes "human-centered AI" as a key principle, emphasizing the need to prioritize student wellbeing. Specific CDE recommendations include but are not limited to: using AI as an enhancer rather than a substitute for the educator's role; mitigating the risk of human-replacement AI; and designing flexible, human-centered systems.

The importance of human-centered AI policies has also been confirmed at the national level. In 2023, the US Department of Education Office of Educational Technology released a report

detailing AI recommendations. The report listed four foundations to building ethical AI policies; Foundation 1 is to "Center People," which they specified includes parents, educators, and students.

*The CDE is expected to release guidance and model policies for AI use in classrooms in July 2026.* SB 1288 (Becker), Chapter 893, Statutes of 2023-24, requires the CDE to convene a working group on the use of AI in California public education. The working group is required to include multiple stakeholders, including current credentialed and classified public school staff, school administrators, university and community college faculty, private sector representatives, and students.

On or before July 1, 2026, the working group is required to release guidance and model policies for the safe and effective use of AI in ways that benefit, and do not negatively impact, students and educators.

On or before July 1, 2027, the working group is required to release a report the Legislature detailing all of their findings and final recommendations. Among other items, the final recommendations are required to include effective practices to support, and avoid risk to, educators and students; strategies to ensure that AI does not exacerbate existing inequities in the education system; and professional development strategies for educators on the use of AI.

As of March 2026, the working group has completed three public meetings, as required by the bill, and appears on track to meet the upcoming deadlines.

### **According to the Author**

As AI and automated decision systems become more common in schools, we must ensure that educators are not forced to use or be evaluated by technology that undermines their professional judgment or puts their jobs at risk. AB 2148 protects educators' autonomy and ensures technology serves educators rather than replacing or penalizing them.

### **Arguments in Support**

According to the California Federation of Teachers, "While AI is a fascinating and often useful technology, it does now and always will fall far short of what a trained and experienced teacher can do. By definition, it will never be able to adequately replace the trust created by the human connection between teacher and pupil, and that trust is the foundation of lasting educational success. Removing that from the process causes a variety of harms to both student and educator that simply cannot be risked."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

According to the Small School Districts Association, "While we appreciate the intent to protect employee autonomy, this bill as written would impose sweeping restrictions that undermine local control, harm students, and conflict with the operational realities of modern public education.

Education technology is no longer an optional supplement to classroom instruction — it is an essential component of how California schools operate. Student information systems, grading platforms, attendance tools, and learning management systems are the infrastructure through which teachers communicate with families, document student progress, submit grades, access curriculum, and comply with state and federal reporting requirements. Preventing school

agencies from requiring staff to use these systems would not merely inconvenience administrators; it would make basic school functions legally unenforceable."

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

This bill has been keyed nonfiscal by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

### **VOTES**

**ASM EDUCATION: 8-0-1**

**YES:** Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Pellerin, Zbur

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Lowenthal

### **UPDATED**

VERSION: April 13, 2026

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