
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2148 **Hearing Date:** June 3, 2026
Author: Muratsuchi
Version: April 13, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Ian Johnson

Subject: Elementary and secondary education: public school employees: contractors: natural persons.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Labor, Public Employment and Retirement*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Labor, Public Employment and Retirement*.

SUMMARY

This bill clarifies that, for purposes of the Education Code, public school employees and contractors performing services in public schools must be natural persons, thereby affirming that interactions between students and school personnel are to be conducted by human beings rather than artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes California’s system of public elementary and secondary education, under which school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools employ personnel to provide instruction and services to pupils.
- 2) Defines AI for purposes of Education Code provisions governing statewide guidance on AI use in schools.
- 3) Requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a statewide working group to develop guidance and model policies regarding the safe and effective use of AI in schools.
- 4) Requires community college instructors and specified staff to be persons.
- 5) Requires school districts to provide for substantial teacher involvement in the selection of instructional materials, including technology-based instructional materials.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Defines a “public school employee” to mean a natural person.

- 2) Specifies that a contractor performing services in a public school also means a natural person.
- 3) Clarifies that the term applies to school personnel, 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.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** 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.”
- 2) ***This bill reflects growing concerns regarding the role of AI in schools, but was substantially narrowed to focus on a core policy declaration.*** As introduced, this bill proposed sweeping restrictions related to AI, automated decision systems (ADS), and educational technology in both K-12 and higher education settings, including provisions prohibiting employers from requiring educators to use educational technology or relying on AI-generated information in employment decisions. However, those provisions raised significant operational, equity, and implementation concerns, including impacts on attendance systems, grading platforms, communication systems, instructional technology, and special education supports.

The bill has since been amended down substantially and now instead focuses narrowly on clarifying that school employees and contractors providing services in schools must be natural persons. As currently drafted, the bill functions primarily as a statement of legislative intent regarding the role of human interaction in public education rather than a comprehensive regulatory framework governing AI in schools.

- 3) ***Broader questions about the appropriate role of AI in education.*** While the bill is now limited in scope, it emerges within a broader and rapidly evolving policy discussion regarding the use of AI in educational settings. AI use in schools has expanded significantly in recent years, with more than half of surveyed educators and students reporting school-related AI use in 2025.

Supporters argue that AI should supplement rather than replace educators, emphasizing that teaching depends heavily on human judgment, emotional connection, mentorship, and trust between students and school personnel. Opponents of the bill’s earlier versions cautioned that overly broad restrictions on educational technology could undermine basic school operations and create inequities in access to instructional tools and student supports.

Current law already directs the California Department of Education (CDE) to convene a statewide working group on AI in schools and develop guidance and model policies related to the safe and effective use of AI by July 1, 2026. As those statewide recommendations are still under development, the Committee may wish to consider whether additional statutory direction regarding AI in schools should await the completion of that stakeholder-driven process.

- 4) ***Existing law and policy generally contemplate AI as a tool to support, not replace, educators.*** Current state guidance on AI emphasizes a “human-centered” approach in which AI enhances, rather than substitutes for, the role of educators. Both the CDE and the U.S. Department of Education have recommended policies that “center people,” including students, educators, and parents, in AI implementation decisions.

Similarly, statewide AI guidance under development is expected to address educator protections, student well-being, data privacy, procurement practices, and strategies to ensure AI does not exacerbate educational inequities. The bill’s remaining provisions are therefore generally consistent with the broader policy direction emerging at the state and national levels that educational systems should preserve meaningful human involvement in instruction and student services while allowing schools to continue utilizing technology as a support tool.

SUPPORT

California Teachers Association
TechEquity Action

OPPOSITION

None received

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