

---

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT**  
**Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair**  
**2025 - 2026 Regular**

---

**Bill No:** AB 2148 **Hearing Date:** June 10, 2026  
**Author:** Muratsuchi  
**Version:** April 13, 2026  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** No  
**Consultant:** Glenn Miles

**SUBJECT:** Elementary and secondary education: public school employees: contractors:  
natural persons

**KEY ISSUE**

This bill adds a definition to the Education Code that a public school employee and a contractor performing services in public schools means a natural person.

**ANALYSIS**

**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. (CA CONST art. IX, §§ 1-16, Education Code (EC) § 1 et seq.)
- 2) Defines “Artificial Intelligence” (AI) for purposes of Education Code provisions governing statewide guidance on AI use in schools to mean an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments. (EC § 33328.5)
- 3) Requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to convene a statewide working group to develop guidance and model policies for the safe and effective use of AI in schools that benefit, and do not negatively impact, educational quality, pupil critical thinking and writing skills, creativity, and the essential work of educators. (EC § 33328.5)
- 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.

**This bill:** provides that both the following mean a natural person: a public school employee, as specified, and a contractor performing services in a public school.

**COMMENTS****1. Background**

According to the Senate Education Committee, which heard this bill previously to this committee:

“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.”

**2. Need for this bill?**

According to the author:

“AB 2148 addresses the lack of clarity in existing law regarding the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in public education employment. The bill clarifies that only natural persons may serve as public school employees or contractors performing services in public schools for purposes of specified protections and requirements under education law.”

**3. Proponent Arguments**

According to the California School Employee Association:

“Not only do educators provide students with personalized learning experiences, they are also trusted and supportive adults that can help students through difficult times. The concept of artificial intelligence replacing this vital public service is no longer out of the realm of possibility, it is a real threat that our members face at the direct expense of our students’ developmental and academic needs. While AI can be a useful tool, it has been shown to hallucinate around 10% of the time, and it can never replace the professional expertise of our educators.”

“This bill would define an “employee” as a “natural person,” thus recognizing the importance of human connection in California’s public education system. This bill’s intent is to ensure that human educators, not AI bots, are the ones teaching and guiding our future generations. In doing so, this bill will guarantee that whatever technological progress may be made, the undeniable advantages of in-person education are never lost in California.”

**4. Opponent Arguments:**

None received.

**5. Dual Referral:** The Senate Rules Committee referred this bill to both the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee.

**6. Prior Legislation:**

SB 1288 (Becker), Chapter 893, Statutes of 2024, requires the SPI to convene an AI working group to develop expanded guidance and a model policy on AI for use by local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools.

SB 241 (Cervantes), Chapter 214, Statutes of 2025, requires that a community college instructor and staff, as specified, be a person who meets specified minimum qualifications but does not prohibit community college staff from using artificial intelligence tools to assist in the operations of a community college or in providing services to community college students.

AB 2370 (Cervantes), Chapter 66, Statutes of 2024, requires that the instructor of record for a course of instruction shall be a person who meets the minimum qualifications to serve as a faculty member teaching credit instruction or a faculty member teaching noncredit instruction, as specified.

**SUPPORT**

California School Employees Association (Sponsor)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
California Federation of Labor Unions  
California Teachers Association  
California Federation of Teachers  
Kapor Center Advocacy  
Teamsters California  
TechEquity Action

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**-- END --**