

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2615 (Zbur and Addis)
As Amended April 27, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Makes changes to requirements regarding instruction, instructional materials, and complaints, including requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), when instructional materials are found to be discriminatory, to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) omit all violating portions of the instructional materials; removing requirements that instruction and instructional materials be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility; and modifying requirements regarding factual accuracy of instruction and instructional materials.

Major Provisions

- 1) Specifies that the requirement that teacher instruction be factually accurate is within the meaning of a provision of current law, that the curriculum and standards to which it is required to align are state-adopted, that limitations on advocacy relates to issues, and that limitations on the expression of personal opinion relate to controversial issues.
- 2) Specifies, with respect to the requirements that instructional materials be factually accurate, that limitations on advocacy relate to issues, and that limitations on the expression of personal opinion relate to controversial issues.
- 3) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to notify an LEA to issue an investigation report to both the complainant and the CDE within 20 days of being notified that it has failed to issue an investigation report.
- 4) Removes requirements that instruction and instructional materials be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility.
- 5) Requires the SPI, when instructional materials are found to be discriminatory, to ensure that LEAs omit all violating portions of the instructional materials.

COMMENTS

Commitments to address concerns with AB 715 in Assembly and Senate Education Committee hearings, also noted in the Governor's signing message. This bill proposes changes to AB 715 (Zbur and Addis), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2025 (AB 715). During hearings on AB 715 in the Assembly and Senate, the authors committed to addressing concerns raised by stakeholders and members. Additionally, the Governor signed AB 715 with a message noting "firm commitments," to address concerns with the measure:

As AB 715 moved through the legislative process, representatives from the entire education ecosystem – including teachers, administrators, school boards, school, staff, student students, and civil rights organizations – expressed deep commitment to the goals of the Bill, along with urgent concerns about unintended consequences. I appreciate the firm commitments made by the authors of AB715 to work quickly on a follow-up measure next year to continue addressing these issues. Public schools play a foundational role in our democracy, and we

must continue to make our schools safe learning environments for all students while fostering critical thinking skills in the context of challenging conversations.

"Factually accurate" instruction. Current law (enacted through AB 715) requires that all "teacher instruction" and instructional materials be:

- 1) Factually accurate;
- 2) Aligned with the adopted curriculum and standards; and
- 3) Be consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias, or partisanship.

Educators have always been expected to provide accurate information in their instruction and follow the state-adopted curriculum. Establishing these expectations as a matter of law, however, raises a number of important concerns. Is it reasonable to require teachers to ensure that everything they say during a school day is factually accurate and free of opinion? Will teachers narrow the curriculum in order to avoid risking disciplinary action? Can fiction, art, and science be taught under the "factually accurate" standard?

As the California School Boards Association noted in their letter of opposition to AB 715, this requirement may cause schools to "hesitate to engage students in thoughtful, academically sound discussions of complex historical or political topics out of fear that their context could be misinterpreted as noncompliant. The threat of complaints and investigations may lead educators to avoid controversial subjects altogether, which would ultimately narrow the curriculum and undermine student learning."

Beyond practical and political concerns, an emphasis on factual accuracy reflects a narrow view of teaching and learning. In some subjects, such as the humanities and the arts, personal opinion, individual interpretation, and creative expression are core parts of both curriculum and instruction. Even in the STEM subjects, instruction should foster creative problem solving, curiosity, and exploration. As technology rapidly changes the workforce and society as a whole, schools will increasingly need to focus on developing students' distinctly human skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, communication, and collaboration with others.

The requirement, as proposed in this bill, that instruction align or be consistent with state-adopted curriculum raises additional concerns. Teachers have always had the ability to introduce new content in order to keep their subjects current, explore new ways of teaching concepts, and make school engaging for students. It is unclear if content beyond the adopted curriculum could be delivered under the requirements of this bill.

AB 715 also extended these requirements to instructional materials, including but not limited to those adopted by an LEA's governing board, which means that all materials used by teachers need to meet this standard. Teachers frequently use materials they develop or find to supplement the adopted materials. Would all materials teachers use have to be factually accurate and free of opinion?

Additionally, the limitation on "advocacy," a term which is not defined, may cause confusion and limit educators' ability to teach. Would a poster of women mathematicians, posted to promote gender equality in STEM, be considered unlawful advocacy by a teacher? Could a

teacher advocate for the right of his undocumented students to attend certain classes with their peers – a legal right threatened by the federal government? Would it be lawful to celebrate Black History Month or Pride Month at school?

Stakeholders have also expressed concerns that the factually accurate requirement will give advocates on different sides of controversial issues a new legal tool to disrupt instruction and harass educators. This could further inflame the already tense political environment in many communities. Recent survey data indicates that this charged political climate is taking a toll on educators, causing teachers stress and leading them to have negative views of the future of public education (RAND, 2025; Pew, 2024).

According to the Author

"AB 2615 advances and reaffirms the goals of AB 715 to strengthen how California schools prevent and respond to antisemitism by ensuring every student feels safe, respected, and protected from hate.

AB 2615 honors commitments made to continue working with stakeholders on four minor and technical issues related to AB 715. As with all proposed legislation, conversation with stakeholders will be ongoing as the bill moves through the legislative process."

Arguments in Support

None on file

Arguments in Opposition

The California Faculty Association writes, "While we appreciate the intent of clean-up legislation, AB 2615 currently fails to address critical concerns resulting from the enactment of AB 715 (Chapter 428, Statutes of 2025), which increases the risk of politically motivated attacks against public education.

Addressing the increased risk of weaponized administrative complaints against teachers and schools remains our utmost concern, as public education is already vulnerable to politically motivated attacks, especially from those who seek to undermine education unions, critical thinking, and our democracy as a whole.

We hope the coauthors will reconsider addressing our concerns, especially given the current political environment and threats to public education. The current law exposes teachers and school districts to vague legal standards that invite harassment and leave discrimination coordinators vulnerable to political influence rather than what is best for students and the education community at large."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, minor and absorbable costs to CDE.

VOTES

ASM EDUCATION: 6-1-2

YES: Patel, Hoover, Castillo, Lowenthal, Pellerin, Zbur

NO: Garcia

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarez, Bonta

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 13-0-2

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Sharp-Collins

UPDATED

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