

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1017 (Reyes)
As Amended June 22, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes foster youth aged 14 years or older to access their educational records.

Major Provisions

- 1) Defines foster youth in accordance with existing law.
- 2) Requires school districts to provide foster youth aged 14 and older access to their student records upon request.

COMMENTS

Age at which students may currently access their educational records. Students may access their own educational records when they are 16 years of age or have completed 10th grade. Prior to this age, parents or legal guardians are able to request and view their student's educational records. Homeless unaccompanied youth are an exception, and may access their educational records at age 14. This authorization was granted partially under the rationale that these students do not have a parent or guardian who can access their educational records for them, making it difficult for students to obtain records they need to advocate for themselves and receive support services (AB 1068 (Bloom), Chapter 713, Statutes of 2013).

This bill would afford foster youth the same rights as homeless youth to access their educational records at age 14, rather than age 16.

Foster youth are more mobile than other students. According to the American Institutes for Research, nearly 40,000 students in foster care were enrolled in California public schools in the 2023-24 school year (Gao et. al., 2025). Of these students, 31% changed schools during the year, and the majority of these changes were to a different district or county. For comparison, 6% of total students statewide changed schools in during the same period.

Current law allows foster parents, relative caregivers, and representatives of state and local child welfare agencies managing the student's care to access the student's educational records. However, changes in foster care placements and moving between schools can leave foster care students without a consistent guardian able to request educational records. Allowing these students to access and maintain their own educational records may empower them to better advocate for their needs as they move through their education.

According to the Author

Foster youth face a number of obstacles across their lives beginning at an early age. Far too often, these obstacles lead to educational disparities that impact their ability to succeed and thrive after they transition out of the system. According to the California Department of Education (CDE), only 60 percent of foster youth graduate from high school statewide, compared to 86 percent of non-foster youth. Frequent school changes compound these challenges—children in foster care move schools an average of eight times, losing up to six months of learning with each move.

Currently, homeless students and unaccompanied youth aged 14 or older have access to their education records. This access helps mitigate disruptions caused by frequent school changes and lack of consistent adult guidance. However, that is not the case for foster students as they can only access their school records if they are 16 years or older. SB 1017 would grant foster youth the same rights provided to homeless students and unaccompanied youth, the ability to access their school records at 14 years old. Timely access to records empowers students to make informed decisions during critical transitions and reinforces the state's commitment to ensuring that foster youth are not disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control. At the forefront of equity is protecting and advocating for our most vulnerable population, and SB 1017 is a step forward in ensuring foster youth have the resources they need to live a successful life.

Arguments in Support

According to the Association of California School Administrators, "Under current law, access to pupil records is generally limited and often requires parent or guardian involvement. While certain students—such as unaccompanied homeless youth—may access records beginning at age 14, the scope for foster youth has not been clearly defined. SB 1017 addresses this gap by aligning foster youth with existing standards and tying eligibility to the full statutory definition in Education Code Section 42238.01(b).

By tying eligibility to the full statutory definition, the bill provides greater clarity and ensures that additional groups of foster youth—such as nonminor dependents, youth under tribal court jurisdiction, those in voluntary placements, and those involved in the juvenile justice system—are included. This clarity will support more consistent implementation and help ensure eligible students are not inadvertently excluded. Expanding access to pupil records also promotes educational continuity and supports foster youth in navigating school transitions and accessing critical services."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, "Potentially reimbursable Proposition 98 General Fund costs, likely minor, to local education agencies to provide additional student records. These costs would be reimbursable only to the extent a local agency files a claim and the Commission on State Mandates determines it is a reimbursable cost."

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Menjivar, Seyarto

ASM EDUCATION: 8-0-1

YES: Patel, Hoover, Ahrens, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Pellerin

ABS, ABST OR NV: Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: June 22, 2026

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FN: 0003458