

Client News Brief

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**NEW LAWS ALLOW MORE TEACHERS TO WORK WITH
AUTISTIC STUDENTS**

Two bills passed and signed into law in 2008 have expanded the range of teachers who can work with autistic students in California. Assembly Bill (“AB”) 131 and AB 2302 amend Education Code section 44265.1 and add Education Code section 44265.2. These laws are effective now.

Previously, only teachers with credentials for moderate to severe disabilities could teach autistic students. Under the new laws, teachers meeting the qualifications set forth below can also teach autistic students.

Autistic three- and four-year-old students may now be taught by:

- teachers holding a valid level 1 or clear education specialist credential,
- teachers who are authorized to provide instruction to pupils with autism, and
- teachers who have met specific competency criteria consisting of either:
 - having provided one year of full time autism instruction to three- and four-year-olds, or
 - having completed three semester units of early childhood special education coursework.

Autistic K-12 students may now be taught by:

- teachers holding a mild/moderate specialist credential, who have either:
 - provided one year of full time autism instruction, or
 - completed three semester units of autism coursework.

School districts and other local educational agencies are required to maintain verification that the competency criteria have been met by teachers working with autistic students.

If you have questions about this new legislation or special education in general, please contact one of our seven offices statewide.

As the information contained herein is necessarily general, its application to a particular set of facts and circumstances may vary. For this reason, this News Brief does not constitute legal advice. We recommend that you consult with your counsel prior to acting on the information contained herein.

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