

New Laws Targeting Antisemitism in Schools Aim to Redefine How Schools Respond to Discrimination

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On October 7, 2025, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 715 and Senate Bill (SB) 48, which together broaden antidiscrimination provisions in the Education Code to further address antisemitism, impose new obligations for local educational agencies (LEAs) to investigate and respond to allegations of discrimination, and create the California Office of Civil Rights to support and monitor LEAs in addressing antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and bias. Both bills take effect January 1, 2026.

Changes to How Districts Respond to Discrimination and Bias

The Education Code has clear and longstanding provisions addressing discrimination and bias. These provisions define what constitutes discrimination and who can be subject to discrimination, and they provide a process for investigation, corrective action, and appeal. This client update focuses on provisions affecting students, instructional materials, and educational and/or school sponsored activities.

The Adoption or Use of Discriminatory Professional Development Materials is Prohibited

Existing law provides that all students must be treated equally when accessing school services and activities, including the right not to be subjected to discriminatory instruction and instructional materials. AB 715 expands on this right by prohibiting LEAs from adopting or approving professional development materials or services that would lead to the teaching or use of instructional materials that unlawfully discriminate on the basis of a protected classification. The Legislature's stated intent is to prevent the adoption and use of professional development and instructional materials that include antisemitic themes or otherwise express discriminatory viewpoints against protected classifications.

Expanded LEA Obligations Regarding Discrimination Investigations

AB 715 also imposes new requirements for LEAs to initiate investigations and take remedial actions, and makes a critical amendment to the appeal process under Uniform Complain Procedures (UCP).

AB 715 removes the requirement of a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group in determining corrective action. Going forward, LEAs must take corrective action when there is substantiated discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities, even when there is no direct harm

to members of a protected group at the time of the incident. The intent here is to expand the rights of interested parties to raise concerns about how a protected group is represented in instruction, instructional materials, or treated in school-sponsored activities.

Building on the existing obligation to investigate allegations of discriminatory instructional materials, AB 715 will require LEAs to conduct an investigation if they know, or have a reason to know, that discriminatory professional development materials were later used in a classroom or an activity. If an individual can draw a connection between a discriminatory professional development material and student instruction, LEAs must investigate. If it is determined that unlawful discrimination occurred, corrective action is required, including the immediate and permanent removal of the discriminatory materials. This same corrective action is required for all instructional materials deemed to be discriminatory, including adopted materials.

Finally, AB 715 makes critical changes to the UCP by permitting a party to a written complaint to initiate an appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction if the LEA fails to complete the investigation within the UCP's regulatory timelines.

New Office of Civil Rights to Provide Support and Oversight

AB 715 establishes the Office of Civil Rights to provide education and resources to identify and prevent antisemitism, discrimination, and bias, to share relevant laws and regulations, and to submit an annual report on the state of discrimination and bias in all local agencies. To do so, the bill requires the appointment of a statewide Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator and SB 48, an accompanying bill, requires the appointment of additional statewide discrimination prevention coordinators for Religion, Race and Ethnicity, Gender, and LGBTQ.

The new Office of Civil Rights will provide technical assistance to LEAs when taking corrective action in response to substantiated allegations of discrimination. Importantly, any instructional or professional development materials found to have resulted in discrimination will be immediately prohibited from use. If those materials are deemed antisemitic, LEAs must consult with the Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator to develop an improvement plan, and to notify the organization that created the material that it too must take corrective action, including reimbursing the LEA for the services provided.

Takeaways

In light of this legislation, LEAs will need to update their discrimination policies, UCP policies, and annual notices. While these bills specifically call out antisemitism, they apply broadly to all forms of discrimination and bias. Additional updates are likely as the scope of the additional Discrimination Prevention Coordinators is codified. LEAs should carefully vet possible professional development providers, review professional development materials, and discuss implementation with teachers and staff in advance to prevent potential allegations of discrimination or bias. Teachers should also be encouraged to only use instructional and supplemental materials approved by the governing board, to avoid potential complaints. Additionally, LEAs should ensure UCP investigations are completed within the specified timelines and that findings and corrective actions are well-documented so that they are easily reportable to the newly formed Office of Civil Rights.

If you have any questions about AB 715 or SB 48, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also subscribe to our [podcast](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#), or download our [mobile app](#).

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.