

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

New Legislation Addresses Ethnic Studies Curriculum, Juvenile Court Pupil Graduation Requirements and Military Dependent Residency

Governor Jerry Brown recently signed into law three bills impacting school districts in the areas of pupil curriculum, graduation requirements for juvenile court school pupils and military dependent pupil residency requirements.

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Assembly Bill (AB) 2016: High School Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Under AB 2016, the Instructional Quality Commission will develop a comprehensive model curriculum for ethnic studies instruction in high schools. The new law will provide all California high school students with increased opportunities to learn about the contributions of minorities in shaping the past, present and future of California and the United States.

A growing body of academic research shows the importance of culturally meaningful and relevant curriculum, particularly in supporting at-risk students. San Francisco Unified School District initiated a pilot ethnic studies program which showed wide-ranging positive effects for students including increased academic engagement, reduced dropout rates, increased performance on academic tests and increased student attendance rates.

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, all public school districts and charter schools offering grades 9-12 will be encouraged, though not required, to offer an ethnic studies course based on the model curriculum. Such a course must be offered as either an elective in the social sciences or English language arts and, if offered, must be made available in at least one year during a pupil's enrollment in grades 9-12. The new curriculum will be developed by California university faculty and public school teachers experienced in ethnic studies. It is expected to be developed by December 31, 2019 and submitted to the State Board of Education for adoption by March 31, 2020.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2306: Juvenile Court Student Graduation Requirements

AB 2306 may enable some juvenile court students to earn their high school diplomas more quickly. The new law requires school districts to exempt former juvenile court school pupils from local graduation requirements that exceed those of the state, and to grant such students credit for those courses earned while in juvenile court school. AB 2306 defines "former juvenile court school pupil" as a student who transferred into a school district from a juvenile court school after their second year in high school.

Currently, students who transition to local high schools from juvenile court schools after completing their sentences can fall behind in graduation requirements as they work to meet local requirements. Under the new law, such students will be placed in the same category as foster care and homeless students who are presently exempt from local graduation requirements. In addition, AB 2306 requires a county office of education to issue a graduation diploma to a pupil who completes statewide coursework requirements for graduation while attending a juvenile court school, even if other local



Roberta L. Rowe
Partner
Fresno Office
rowe@lozanosmith.com



Erin M. Hamor
Associate
Sacramento Office
ehamor@lozanosmith.com



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graduation requirements are not completed.

AB 2306 also provides juvenile court school students the right to file complaints of noncompliance with the local educational agency under the Uniform Complaint Procedures. Notably, students or their representatives may not request transfers solely from juvenile court school to a comprehensive school site to qualify a pupil for an exemption under AB 2306. The bill aims to provide juvenile court students with an opportunity to advance their education and contribute to the economy while lowering overall chances of recidivism.

Senate Bill (SB) 1455: Residency Requirements for Military Dependent Pupils

Existing law requires public school students to attend a school within the school district in which the pupil's parent or legal guardian resides, or is physically employed for a minimum of 10 hours per week, unless otherwise exempted. SB 1455 now further provides that a student will meet residency requirements for school attendance if the student's parent is either transferred or pending transfer to a military installation that is within the boundaries of the school district. The provisions of SB 1455 will apply to students of active-duty members of the United States uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active-duty orders.

In addition, the new law requires a school district to accept enrollment applications by electronic means, including into a specific school, program and/or course. The law's goal is to provide military families transferring from other locations with the flexibility to begin the enrollment process as soon as a military transfer order is given and prior to being physically within the boundaries of the school district. Parents must provide proof of residence within 10 days after their published arrival date via official documentation.

California hosts more than 30 military installations and 168,000 active-duty service members. It is anticipated that school districts immediately surrounding such military installations may be the most affected by the requirements of SB 1455.

If you have any questions about AB 2016, AB 2306, SB 1455, or any other issues impacting California students, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or an attorney at one of our [10 offices](#) located statewide. You can also visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or download our [Client News Brief App](#).