

PRESS RELEASE

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California Governor Signs Legislation to Improve Education Outcomes for Youth Transitioning Home from Incarceration

New law increases supports for youth transitioning back to their local schools.

SACRAMENTO, CA – On Friday, October 11, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Youth Law Center-sponsored AB 1354, bringing new resources to help youth with juvenile justice system involvement reach their educational goals. Youth Law Center is leading statewide efforts to improve education opportunities and outcomes for these youth.

Assembly Bill 1354, authored by Assembly Member Mike Gipson, fills a gap in education supports for youth with juvenile justice system involvement. Under current law, county probation, county offices of education (COEs), and school districts must have a joint planning policy for helping youth transition out of juvenile facilities and back to their community-based school. But with only a joint planning policy required by existing law, no one agency has taken clear responsibility for helping youth to get back to school in their community.

“Youth in juvenile facilities are particularly vulnerable to losing academic ground or even dropping out of school altogether when they are released from juvenile facilities back to their communities,” notes Assembly Member Gipson in his bill statement. “During that vulnerable transition period, these youth need a plan for supports and services to ensure that they transition successfully. AB 1354 will provide the necessary oversight to the transition process and require that a transition plan is developed and implemented to help these youth continue their education when they are released so they can develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life.”

The new law requires COEs, in collaboration with probation, to provide oversight to the transition process, to make sure the local school has immediate access to the students’ academic records, and to provide students with information about college programs in their area. Under AB 1354, the COEs also must facilitate the students’ immediate enrollment in a local school, acceptance of their course credits, and their placement in appropriate classes. All students who have been in a juvenile facility for more than 20 consecutive school days will now be entitled to a transition plan to meet their academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and career needs.

These policy changes support Youth Law Center’s ongoing work in California to strengthen education opportunities for all system-impacted youth and to build alternatives to youth incarceration.



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“Education is vital for youth to thrive, to fulfill their dreams, and to be productive members of society,” says Jennifer Rodriguez, Executive Director of the Youth Law Center. “However, we are currently failing to ensure youths’ successful re-entry to their communities and schools. Despite the correlation between poor educational transition planning and subsequent negative outcomes, systems currently provide minimal or no assistance to youth upon release from a juvenile facility. AB 1354 supports these youths on their path to high school graduation and postsecondary education, and to a healthy adulthood that avoids further contact with the justice system.”

Thanks to the efforts of Assembly Member Gipson and supporters of this bill, California is taking responsibility to ensure that youth who have experienced some of the most challenging childhoods receive the transition supports and guidance they need to continue their education, achieve their dreams, and reach their full potential.

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About Us

The Youth Law Center advocates to transform foster care and juvenile justice systems across the nation so every child and youth can thrive.