

Policy 5145.3: Nondiscrimination/Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 10/01/2014 | **Last Revised Date:** 08/01/2026 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 08/01/2026

CSBA NOTE: The following mandated policy reflects various provisions of state and federal law which prohibit discrimination against students in educational programs and activities based on certain actual or perceived characteristics of an individual.

The California Department of Education, through its Federal Program Monitoring process, reviews districts' uniform complaint procedures (UCP) and other anti-discrimination policies and processes to ensure compliance with mandated policy requirements. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (USOCR) is responsible for the administrative enforcement of federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the department, and requires the adoption of nondiscrimination policies and complaint procedures.

In accordance with various provisions of state and federal law and regulation, and related court cases, discrimination in education programs and activities is unlawful when it is based on certain actual or perceived characteristics of an individual. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on race or ethnicity; ancestry; color; ethnic group identification; nationality; national origin; immigration status; sex; sexual orientation; sex stereotypes; gender; gender identity; gender expression; religion; disability; medical condition; genetic information; pregnancy, false pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery; and parental, marital, and family status. For more information regarding the requirement for district programs and activities to be free from discrimination, see BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities, and regarding the protection of students against sexual harassment, see BP/AR 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment and AR/E(1) 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681-1688) prohibits discrimination based on sex in district programs and activities. Although the Title IX regulations were amended by 89 Fed.Reg. 33474, effective August 1, 2024, these amendments were vacated nationwide by the United States District Court in Tennessee v. Cardona on January 9, 2025. Following this decision, USOCR's February 4, 2025 Dear Colleague Letter clarified that USOCR will enforce Title IX based on the regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024. Therefore, references in this Board policy to Title IX and its implementing regulations are to the Title IX regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024.

For information regarding the prohibition of discrimination as it applies to textbooks, instructional materials, supplemental instructional materials, staff development materials, or other curriculum for classroom instruction, or any book or resource in a school library, see BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities, BP 4131 - Staff Development (certificated staff), BP 4231 - Staff Development (classified staff), BP 4331 - Staff Development (supervisory/managerial staff), BP/AR/E(1) 6161.1 - Selection and Evaluation of Instructional materials, BP 6161.11 - Supplementary Instructional Materials, and BP 6163.1 - Library Media Centers. Also see CSBA's, "Instructional Materials Adoptions: State and local governing board processes, roles, and responsibilities," "Instructional Materials Adoptions: Local governing board responsibilities," and "State Roles, Responsibilities, and Process for Instructional Materials Adoption," and the California Attorney General's, "Guidance to School Officials re: Legal Requirements for Providing Inclusive Curricula and Books."

The Governing Board desires to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities.

This policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to district activity or attendance, to acts which occur off campus or outside of district-related or district-sponsored activities but which may have an impact on or create a hostile environment at school, and to all acts of the Board and the Superintendent in enacting policies and procedures that govern the district.

The Board prohibits, at any district school or activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, against an individual or group based on one, or a combination of two or more, protected characteristics, which include, but may not be limited to, race or ethnicity; ancestry; color; ethnic group identification; nationality; national origin; immigration status; sex; sexual orientation; sex stereotypes; gender; gender identity; gender expression; religion; disability; medical condition; genetic information; pregnancy, false pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or related conditions or recovery; and parental, marital, and family status; a perception of one or more, or any combination, of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more, or any combination, of these actual or perceived characteristics. (Education Code 200, 210.1, 210.2, 210.3, 212, 212.1,

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This policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to school activity or to school attendance occurring within a district school, and to acts which occur off campus or outside of school-related or school-sponsored activities but which may have an impact or create a hostile environment at school.

The Board of Education desires to provide a safe school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The Board prohibits, at any district school or school activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying, targeted at any student by anyone, based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Unlawful discrimination also occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

Unlawful discrimination also includes disparate treatment of students based on one of the categories above with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in school programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

The Board also prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the reporting of unlawful discrimination, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates or participates in the investigation of a complaint or report alleging unlawful discrimination. Retaliation complaints shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as a discrimination complaint.

The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate students' access to the educational program by publicizing the district's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures to students, parents/guardians, and employees. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall post the district's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying and other required information on the district's web site in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students, in accordance with law and the accompanying administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training and/or information on the scope and use of the policy and complaint procedures and take other measures designed to increase the school community's understanding of the requirements of law related to discrimination. The Superintendent or designee shall regularly review the implementation of the district's nondiscrimination policies and practices and, as necessary, shall take action to remove any identified barrier to student access to or participation in the district's educational program. The Superintendent or designee shall report the findings and recommendations to the Board after each review.

Regardless of whether a complainant complies with the writing, timeline, and/or other formal filing requirements, all complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be investigated and prompt action taken to stop the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students.

Students who engage in unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, in violation of law, Board policy, or administrative regulation shall be subject to appropriate consequence or discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion when the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900.4. Any employee who permits or engages in prohibited discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Record-Keeping

220, 221.51, 230, 260; Government Code 11135, 12926; 20 USC 1681-1688, 42 USC 2000d-2000d-7)

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 51500, teachers may not give instruction and districts may not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias. For more information regarding the prohibition of discriminatory bias, see BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities.

Additionally, the Board prohibits teacher instruction and district-sponsored activities that promote discriminatory bias based on any of the characteristics specified above. Discriminatory bias in instruction and school-sponsored activities does not require a showing of direct harm to members of a protected group and members of a protected group do not need to be present while the discriminatory bias is occurring for the act to be considered discriminatory bias. (Education Code 51500)

CSBA NOTE: Title VI (42 USC 2000d-2000d-7) prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including school districts.

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Additionally, unlawful discrimination occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

CSBA NOTE: In addition to the types of prohibited student conduct described above, unlawful discrimination includes different treatment of students with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in district programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

Pursuant to Government Code 53080, as amended by AB 932 (Ch. 628, Statutes of 2025), districts are prohibited from discriminating against any person on the basis of sex or gender in the operation, conduct, or administration of community youth athletics programs, or in the allocation of parks and recreation facilities and resources, or school and recreation facilities and resources, that support or enable such programs.

For more information regarding unlawful discrimination in district programs and activities, see BP 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities.

In addition, unlawful discrimination includes disparate treatment of students based on one of the categories above with respect to the provision of opportunities to participate in district programs or activities or the provision or receipt of educational benefits or services.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph addresses unlawful discrimination which may occur when disciplining students.

For more information regarding student discipline, see BP/AR 5144 - Discipline, BP/AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, and AR 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities).

Because unlawful discrimination could occur when disciplining students, including suspension and expulsion, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that staff enforce discipline rules fairly, consistently, and in a non-discriminatory manner, as specified in Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144 - Discipline, Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, and Administrative Regulation 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students With Disabilities).

The Board also prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who reports or participates in the reporting of unlawful discrimination, files or participates in the filing of a complaint, or investigates, participates, or refuses to participate in the investigation of a complaint or report alleging unlawful discrimination. Retaliation complaints shall be investigated and resolved in the same manner as discrimination complaints.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Education Code 234.1 and 34 CFR 106.8, a district is required to publicize its nondiscrimination policies. Additionally, Education Code 234.1 and 234.6 require the district to make readily accessible on its website its nondiscrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, suicide prevention, and other specified policies and information related to certain state and federal laws and resources, including resources related to neurodiversity developed by the University of California and California State University Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning. In addition, 34 CFR 104.8 requires districts to take "continuing steps" to notify students and parents/guardians that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its education programs or activities.

For further information regarding specific posting requirements, see "Measures to Prevent Discrimination" in the accompanying administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall facilitate students' access to the educational program by publicizing the district's nondiscrimination policy and related complaint procedures to students, parents/guardians, and employees. Additionally, the Superintendent or designee shall post the district's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying and other required information on the district's website in a manner that is easily accessible to students and parents/guardians, in accordance with law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 234.1, 234.6; 34 CFR 106.8)

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training and/or information on the scope and use of the policy and complaint procedures and take other measures designed to increase understanding of the requirements of law related to discrimination. The Superintendent or designee shall regularly review the implementation of the district's nondiscrimination policies and practices and, as necessary, shall take action to remove any identified barrier to student access to or participation in the district's educational program. The Superintendent or designee shall report the findings and recommendations to the Board after each review.

Regardless of whether a complainant complies with the writing, timeline, and/or other formal filing requirements, all complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, shall be investigated and prompt action shall be taken to stop the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address any continuing effect on students.

CSBA NOTE: Policies related to discrimination must be consistent with the First Amendment right to free speech. Education Code 48950 prohibits a district from subjecting a high school student to disciplinary sanctions solely on the basis of speech or other communication that would be constitutionally protected if engaged in outside of campus. However, Education Code 48950 also specifies that the law does not prohibit discipline for harassment, threats, or intimidation unless constitutionally protected. Whether such speech might be entitled to constitutional protection would be determined on a case-by-case basis, with consideration for the specific words used and the circumstances involved. It is recommended that districts consult CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel as necessary. For more information regarding students' rights to freedom of speech and of the press, see BP/AR 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression.

Students who engage in unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, in violation of law, Board policy, or administrative regulation, shall be subject to appropriate consequences or discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion when the behavior is severe or pervasive as defined in Education Code 48900.4. Any employee who permits or engages in prohibited discrimination related to a district activity, attendance, or district-related or district-sponsored activity, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or bullying, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice. Pursuant to Education Code 48900.5, the district is encouraged to have a student who has been suspended, or for whom other means of correction have been implemented pursuant to Education Code 48900.5 for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, as well as the victim, to engage in a restorative justice practice suitable to address the needs of both the victim and the perpetrator, in addition to the other measures specified in the following paragraph. For more information regarding discipline and corrective actions for a student who has committed an act of bullying, see BP/AR 5131.2 - Bullying.

When a student has been suspended, or other means of correction have been implemented against the student for an incident of racist bullying, harassment, or intimidation, the principal or designee may engage both the victim and perpetrator in a restorative justice practice suitable to the needs of the students. Additionally, the principal or designee may require the perpetrator to engage in a culturally sensitive program that promotes racial justice and equity and combats racism and ignorance and regularly check on the victim to ensure that the victim is not in danger of suffering from any long-lasting mental health issues. (Education Code 48900.5)

When appropriate based on the severity or pervasiveness of the bullying or when otherwise required, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parents/guardians of victims and perpetrators and may contact law enforcement.

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 234.1 requires that districts adopt a process for receiving and investigating complaints of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and bullying that is consistent with the district's UCP specified in BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. However, the complaint procedures specified in the Title IX regulations (34 CFR 106.44- 106.45), which were adopted on May 19, 2020 and became effective on August 14, 2020, are required to be used to address any complaint of sexual

harassment, as defined in 34 CFR 106.30, based on conduct that occurred between August 14, 2020 and July 31, 2024, and after January 9, 2025. For complaints initiated between August 1, 2024 and January 9, 2025, it is recommended that districts consult CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel.

For more information regarding sexual harassment against students in the school setting, see BP/AR 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment, and for the Title IX grievance procedures, see AR 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

When a complaint alleges disability discrimination, such a claim may be brought under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the American with Disabilities Act, Title V of the Rehabilitation Act, including section 504, or other federal laws protecting the rights of children with disabilities.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination in district programs and activities shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures, when required by law. However, complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with the procedures specified in Administrative Regulation 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Record-Keeping

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of all reported cases of unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, to enable the district to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive prohibited behavior in district schools.

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