

Senate Bill No. 483

CHAPTER 857

An act to amend Sections 49005.1, 49005.8, 56521.1, and 56521.2 of, and to add Section 56028.3 to, the Education Code, relating to pupil rights.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2024. Filed with
Secretary of State September 28, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 483, Cortese. Pupil rights: prone restraint.

Existing law prohibits a person employed by or engaged in a public school from inflicting, or causing to be inflicted, corporal punishment upon a pupil. Existing law prohibits the use of certain restraint and seclusion techniques. Existing law authorizes staff trained in prone containment to use the procedure on a pupil who is an individual with exceptional needs in a public school program as an emergency intervention. If prone restraint techniques are used, existing law requires a staff member to observe the pupil for any signs of distress throughout the use of prone restraint.

This bill instead would prohibit the use of prone restraint, defined to include prone containment, by an educational provider. The bill would also prohibit the use of prone restraint, including prone containment, on a pupil who is an individual with exceptional needs in a public school program.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as Max Benson's Law.

SEC. 2. Section 49005.1 of the Education Code is amended to read:
49005.1. The following definitions apply to this article:

(a) "Behavioral restraint" means "mechanical restraint" or "physical restraint," as defined in this section, used as an intervention when a pupil presents an immediate danger to self or to others. "Behavioral restraint" does not include postural restraints or devices used to improve a pupil's mobility and independent functioning rather than to restrict movement.

(b) "Educational provider" means a person who provides educational or related services, support, or other assistance to a pupil enrolled in an educational program provided by a local educational agency or a nonpublic school or agency.

(c) "Local educational agency" means a school district, county office of education, charter school, the California Schools for the Deaf, and the California School for the Blind.

(d) (1) “Mechanical restraint” means the use of a device or equipment to restrict a pupil’s freedom of movement.

(2) (A) “Mechanical restraint” does not include the use of devices by peace officers or security personnel for detention or for public safety purposes.

(B) “Mechanical restraint” does not include the use of devices by trained school personnel, or by a pupil, prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, if the device is used for the specific and approved purpose for which the device or equipment was prescribed, which shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(i) Adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports.

(ii) Vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a pupil in a moving vehicle.

(iii) Restraints for medical immobilization.

(iv) Orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a pupil to participate in activities without risk of harm.

(e) “Nonpublic school or agency” means any nonpublic school or nonpublic agency, including both in-state and out-of-state nonpublic schools and nonpublic agencies.

(f) (1) “Physical restraint” means a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a pupil to move the pupil’s torso, arms, legs, or head freely. “Physical restraint” does not include a physical escort, which means a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a pupil who is acting out to walk to a safe location.

(2) “Physical restraint” does not include the use of force by peace officers or security personnel for detention or for public safety purposes.

(g) “Prone restraint” means the application of a behavioral restraint on a pupil in a facedown position for any period of time and includes the procedure known as prone containment.

(h) “Pupil” means a pupil enrolled in preschool, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and receiving educational services from an educational provider.

(i) “Seclusion” means the involuntary confinement of a pupil alone in a room or area from which the pupil is physically prevented from leaving. “Seclusion” does not include a timeout, which is a behavior management technique that is part of an approved program, that involves the monitored separation of the pupil in a nonlocked setting, and is implemented for the purpose of calming.

SEC. 3. Section 49005.8 of the Education Code is amended to read:

49005.8. (a) An educational provider shall not do any of the following:

(1) Use seclusion or a behavioral restraint for the purpose of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.

(2) Use locked seclusion, unless it is in a facility otherwise licensed or permitted by state law to use a locked room.

(3) Use a physical restraint technique that obstructs a pupil's respiratory airway or impairs the pupil's breathing or respiratory capacity, including techniques in which a staff member places pressure on a pupil's back or places the staff member's body weight against the pupil's torso or back.

(4) Use a behavioral restraint technique that restricts breathing, including, but not limited to, using a pillow, blanket, carpet, mat, or other item to cover a pupil's face.

(5) Use prone restraint.

(6) Use a behavioral restraint for longer than is necessary to contain the behavior that poses a clear and present danger of serious physical harm to the pupil or others.

(b) An educational provider shall keep constant, direct observation of a pupil who is in seclusion, which may be through observation of the pupil through a window, or another barrier, through which the educational provider is able to make direct eye contact with the pupil. The observation required pursuant to this subdivision shall not be through indirect means, including through a security camera or a closed-circuit television.

(c) An educational provider shall afford to pupils who are restrained the least restrictive alternative and the maximum freedom of movement, and shall use the least number of restraint points, while ensuring the physical safety of the pupil and others.

SEC. 4. Section 56028.3 is added to the Education Code, to read:

56028.3. "Prone restraint" means the application of a behavioral restraint on a pupil in a facedown position for any period of time and includes the procedure known as prone containment.

SEC. 5. Section 56521.1 of the Education Code is amended to read:

56521.1. (a) Emergency interventions may only be used to control unpredictable, spontaneous behavior that poses clear and present danger of serious physical harm to the individual with exceptional needs, or others, and that cannot be immediately prevented by a response less restrictive than the temporary application of a technique used to contain the behavior.

(b) Emergency interventions shall not be used as a substitute for the systematic behavioral intervention plan that is designed to change, replace, modify, or eliminate a targeted behavior.

(c) No emergency intervention shall be employed for longer than is necessary to contain the behavior. A situation that requires prolonged use of an emergency intervention shall require the staff to seek assistance of the schoolsite administrator or law enforcement agency, as applicable to the situation.

(d) Emergency interventions shall not include:

(1) Locked seclusion, unless it is in a facility otherwise licensed or permitted by state law to use a locked room.

(2) Employment of a device, material, or objects that simultaneously immobilize all four extremities.

(3) Prone restraint.

(4) An amount of force that exceeds that which is reasonable and necessary under the circumstances.

(e) To prevent emergency interventions from being used in lieu of planned, systematic behavioral interventions, the parent, guardian, and residential care provider, if appropriate, shall be notified within one schoolday if an emergency intervention is used or serious property damage occurs. A behavioral emergency report shall immediately be completed and maintained in the file of the individual with exceptional needs. The behavioral emergency report shall include all of the following:

- (1) The name and age of the individual with exceptional needs.
- (2) The setting and location of the incident.
- (3) The name of the staff or other persons involved.
- (4) A description of the incident and the emergency intervention used, and whether the individual with exceptional needs is currently engaged in any systematic behavioral intervention plan.
- (5) Details of any injuries sustained by the individual with exceptional needs, or others, including staff, as a result of the incident.

(f) All behavioral emergency reports shall immediately be forwarded to, and reviewed by, a designated responsible administrator.

(g) If a behavioral emergency report is written regarding an individual with exceptional needs who does not have a behavioral intervention plan, the designated responsible administrator shall, within two days, schedule an individualized education program (IEP) team meeting to review the emergency report, to determine the necessity for a functional behavioral assessment, and to determine the necessity for an interim plan. The IEP team shall document the reasons for not conducting the functional behavioral assessment, not developing an interim plan, or both.

(h) If a behavioral emergency report is written regarding an individual with exceptional needs who has a positive behavioral intervention plan, an incident involving a previously unseen serious behavior problem, or where a previously designed intervention is ineffective, shall be referred to the IEP team to review and determine if the incident constitutes a need to modify the positive behavioral intervention plan.

SEC. 6. Section 56521.2 of the Education Code is amended to read:

56521.2. (a) A local educational agency or nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency serving individuals with exceptional needs pursuant to Sections 56365 and 56366, shall not authorize, order, consent to, or pay for the following interventions, or any other interventions similar to or like the following:

- (1) Any intervention that is designed to, or likely to, cause physical pain, including, but not limited to, electric shock.
- (2) An intervention that involves the release of noxious, toxic, or otherwise unpleasant sprays, mists, or substances in proximity to the face of the individual.
- (3) An intervention that denies adequate sleep, food, water, shelter, bedding, physical comfort, or access to bathroom facilities.
- (4) An intervention that is designed to subject, used to subject, or likely to subject, the individual to verbal abuse, ridicule, or humiliation, or that can be expected to cause excessive emotional trauma.

(5) Restrictive interventions that employ a device, material, or objects that simultaneously immobilize all four extremities.

(6) Prone restraint.

(7) Locked seclusion, unless it is in a facility otherwise licensed or permitted by state law to use a locked room.

(8) An intervention that precludes adequate supervision of the individual.

(9) An intervention that deprives the individual of one or more of the individual's senses.

(b) In the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, the individualized education program team shall consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior, consistent with Section 1414(d)(3)(B)(i) and (d)(4) of Title 20 of the United States Code and associated federal regulations.