

# Equity Issues



In 2019, the Legislature enacted the most substantial changes to California's charter school laws since passage of the original California Charter Schools Act in 1992. These changes resulted from increased demands from district *and* charter parents, educators, administrators, and school board members, as communities throughout California faced the significant impacts of unregulated charter school growth, as well as increasing concerns that charter schools do not serve all students.

Included in the new laws are significant changes that require charter schools to serve all students, and give authorizers more tools to ensure that they are doing so, including:

## Charters Must Plan to Serve

### **ALL Students**

*(Effective July 1, 2020)*

AB 1505 strengthens existing law by adding a requirement that charter school petitions (including renewal petitions) contain a description of how the petitioner will achieve a balance of English learners and students with disabilities, along with the previously required racial and ethnic balance, that is reflective of the school district (or county, in the case of countywide schools).

## Authorizers Can Deny Renewals for Failure to Serve All Students

*(Effective July 1, 2020)*

AB 1505 also allows authorizers considering charter school renewals to assess whether a charter school is excluding some students in a way that may result in the artificial inflation of the charter school's performance on the California School Dashboard. To reach a finding that a charter school is excluding some students, authorizers may request data from the California Department of Education (CDE), and the CDE will provide the data as described in detail in the law.

## Illegal to Deny Enrollment or Push Out Students

*(Effective Immediately)*

SB 75 states, with no ambiguities, that a "charter school shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in a charter school for any reason..." and "[a] charter school shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the charter school to disenroll from the charter school or transfer to another school for any reason..."

SB 75 also prohibits charter schools from requesting or requiring that a pupil's records be submitted to the charter school prior to enrollment, including the IEP of a student with disabilities. SB 75 establishes a complaint process that allows parents to report discrimination to the authorizer.

## Must Communicate with Families in Home Language

*(Effective Immediately)*

If 15% or more of the pupils enrolled in a public school speak a single primary language other than English, SB 75 requires that all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parent or guardian of any such pupil by the school or school district be written in English *and* the family's primary language, and the parent or guardian must be allowed to respond either in English or the primary language.

These changes represent a significant overhaul of existing laws, and it is important that they are implemented correctly from the start. Use our new rapid response hotline for **questions** or to **report new charter school petitions or requests to expand** in your district:



(650) 525-4362



charterquestions@cta.org



[www.cta.org/charters](http://www.cta.org/charters)