

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 80

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 151

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 80—Relative to Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 80, Dickinson. Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Day

This measure would designate December 4, 2013, as Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Day.

WHEREAS, More than 700,000 suspensions involving over 365,000 students occur in California's public schools each year; and

WHEREAS, More than 1.8 million students are truant in California public schools each year; and

WHEREAS, African American students represent only 6.5 percent of the enrollment in California public schools but receive 19 percent of the total suspensions; and

WHEREAS, Students with disabilities face the highest risk of suspension of any students in California; and

WHEREAS, Children in foster care are more likely to be suspended and experience problems with chronic absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, Suspension rates have been increasing since the 1970s, with racial disparities in suspension rates increasing at very high rates; and

WHEREAS, Suspension and chronic absenteeism are linked to academic failure, higher school dropout rates, and involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems; and

WHEREAS, Almost one-half of all suspensions in California are for disruption and defiance, rather than for acts of violence or acts involving weapons or drugs; and

WHEREAS, Research shows that schools with high rates of suspension do not have better attendance or academic performance than demographically similar schools with much lower rates of suspension; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of evidence-based and promising practices to respond to disruptive student behavior and improve school climate, such as Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Restorative Justice, have allowed schools to reduce their rates of suspension and improve school climate; and

WHEREAS, Court-based interventions, such as truancy courts, have shown promise in reducing chronic absenteeism and improving academic performance; and

WHEREAS, Juvenile courts are actively engaged in monitoring the educational needs of children under their jurisdiction, and juvenile court judges are encouraged to take an active role in their communities to encourage adequate support and services for at-risk youth as well as to develop a close liaison with school authorities; and

WHEREAS, Children in foster care with more stable placements experience better educational outcomes and are more likely to graduate; and

WHEREAS, The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, has focused resources of the State Department of Education to assist school districts in California to implement new approaches to school discipline and attendance that will lead to safer and more effective schools in California; and

WHEREAS, The Judicial Council has determined that keeping students in school and out of our court system is an important objective for all of California, and is hosting a December 4, 2013, summit to bring collaborative teams from many California counties together to plan reforms that will address the impact of existing school discipline policies and the challenges of chronic absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, The Assembly and the Senate are committed to working together to reduce unnecessary suspensions and ensure that all students in California have an opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive school environment; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, that the Legislature hereby designates December 4, 2013, as Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court Day, during which multidisciplinary teams from across California will gather to develop collaborative plans to improve school discipline practices and school attendance so that children in California will succeed in school and avoid involvement in criminal activity; and be it further

Resolved, that the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.