

March 25, 2019

Senator Connie Leyva
Chair, Senate Committee on Education
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 419 (Skinner) Pupil discipline: suspensions: willful defiance.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Leyva:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, strongly supports proposed legislation SB 419 (Skinner) to prohibit out-of-school suspensions that can put children at greater risk for school failure and other adverse consequences of being kept out of school.

Specifically, SB 419 (Skinner) would extend prohibitions on suspensions currently in place for younger children to also prohibit the suspension of a pupil in grades 4 through 8 for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of those school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. SB 419 would also, until January 1, 2025, prohibit the suspension of a pupil enrolled in a school district or charter school in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, for those acts.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics School Health Council “Statement on Out of School Suspension and Expulsion: “The adverse effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion on the student can be profound. The student is separated from the educational process, and the school district may not be obligated to provide any further educational or counseling services for the student... If the student’s parent(s) work, there may be no one at home during the day to supervise the student’s activity, making it more likely that the student (1) will not pursue a home-based education program; (2) will engage in more inappropriate behavior; and (3) will associate with other individuals who will further increase the aforementioned risks...out-of-school suspension and expulsion represent an enormously costly and largely unsatisfactory solution to behavior problems in school, whether from the standpoint of the school district, the student, or the community. Out-of-school suspension and expulsion have short- and long-term consequences that are best avoided if at all possible.” (2013)

One highly negative consequence of out-of-school suspensions is their contribution to chronic absenteeism, disproportionately affecting African-American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Pacific Islander students.

Chronic absenteeism can occur as early as preschool and kindergarten and has been shown to be related to grade retention and poor academic achievement, particularly for social skills and reading. Chronic absenteeism is also associated with engaging in health risk behaviors, including smoking cigarettes or marijuana, alcohol and other drug use, and risky sexual behavior, as well as with teen pregnancy, violence, unintentional injury, and suicide attempts.

SB 419 (Skinner) would reduce the incidence of suspension, leading to improved educational outcomes, reduced chronic absenteeism and better health for California's children.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support SB 419 (Skinner) and urge you to vote AYE. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Senator Nancy Skinner