

A Policy Briefing on Civil Rights in Education

CTA believes that all students should have equal access to a high-quality public education free from discrimination or bias reflecting their economic status, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, status or other characteristics.

Equal Access to All Educational Opportunities

Every student attending a public school in California is entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities. This access shall not be denied because of gender discrimination, ethnicity, language, special needs, immigration status, or socio-economic status.

A Fully Integrated Society

The nation and the state must eliminate by statute and practice, barriers of race, color, national origin, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, economic status and genetic characteristics that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others. These rights include liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States.

Immigration

Immigration policies should guarantee human rights and protect the integrity of the family unit without discrimination; we support immigration policies that keep families together. Regardless of immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education free from harassment. California has always been a place for dreamers and we support safe-haven schools and sanctuary cities that reflect and embrace the diversity of our students and their families, as well as the rich language and cultural assets they bring to our communities.

Criminalization of Students

CTA denounces police brutality and the criminalization of students. CTA opposes policies and practices that support institutionalized racism, white privilege, white supremacy, poverty, disproportionality in school suspensions and expulsions, physical violence against our students, and other factors leading to the criminalization and demoralization of students. Students of color, foster youth, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities and special needs disproportionately end up in the criminal justice system as a result of: 1) the misapplication and rigidity of zero-tolerance policies; 2) culture of high stakes testing that identifies students for remediation and academic tracking; 3) Under-investment in on-site social services; 4) A lack of thoughtful and imaginative interventions that meet the educational and emotional needs of students in at-risk situations.

Public School Choice

Districts should also offer open enrollment for public schools of choice if the plan: 1) does not lead to the privatization of the public schools; 2) reflects the academic and individual educational needs of students; 3) promotes equal educational opportunity for all students and operates in ways that facilitate better racial, ethnic, and socio-economic balances in the public schools; 4) provides adequate resources to ensure quality education programs for every student; 5) and utilizes collective bargaining procedures.

Exploitation

CTA believes the exploitation of children, women and workers is inhumane and unjust. This exploitation takes the form of poor working conditions, sub-par wages, extraordinarily long hours and unsafe working places; CTA also opposes conditions that subject young people to physical or mental abuse, violence, and unwarranted detention or incarceration. The Association supports the rights of youth to safely access education and other human services during conditions of war, occupation, natural disaster and civil strife. The Association also supports programs and other efforts to prevent and alleviate the effects of such trauma upon children and youth.