

California Chapter 2

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The Quorum

October 2021: Lawsapalooza

We made it to the end of the legislative session! The deadline for Governor Newsom to sign bills that made it to his desk was October 10th. This legislative session the Governor signed 770 bills and vetoed 66. Below is a highlight of some new laws that will affect children and families. The legislature will reconvene on January 3rd, 2022.

Improved mental and behavioral health support in schools: AB 309 requires the California Department of Education, in conjunction with the State Department of Healthcare Services, to develop mental health model referral protocols addressing the timely referral by school staff of students with mental health concerns. SB 14 includes mental and behavioral health days as excused absences for students for school attendance. And SB 224 requires schools offering one or more courses in health education to pupils in middle or high school to include mental health instructions in those courses.

Ethnic Studies is now a high school requirement: In addition to English, math, and science, high school students will have to take a course in ethnic studies to get a diploma starting in 2029-30. AB 101 is aimed at making school curriculum more equitable and reflective of social justice. Of note, LAUSD voted *last year* to require a course in ethnic studies as a graduation requirement by the 2023-24 school year.

Increased housing support for youth in foster care: AB 592 will provide additional housing supports to non-minor dependents participating in the Extended Foster Care Program. This bill is particularly aimed at providing welcoming and supportive housing for LGBTQ youth, who face the additional stressors of bullying and family rejection.

Water devices have a new lead standard: AB 100 requires that drinking water end point devices sold in California meet a certain new/lower “lead free” standard.

The Quorum is a monthly policy spotlight. For any inquiries, please email Chapter 2 legislative and policy analyst, Karinne Van Groningen, at KVanGroningen@mednet.ucla.edu.