

Superintendent Thurmond is committed to addressing institutional racism and the inequities that have caused disproportionate learning gaps for students of color.

While the California Department of Education is in the process of reviewing the lawsuit, the State Superintendent of Schools and the California Department of Education (CDE) have been focused on finding ways to reduce suspensions, especially for students of color. These efforts include a variety of activities to address root causes and also systemic responses. Important examples include how CDE continues to encourage educators to be more aware of mental health concerns, which may have an impact on school behavior.

During the pandemic, CDE held a webinar series to address the disproportionality of disciplinary actions in Early Childhood Education, so this conversation can be started at the earliest ages. To support the field, State Superintendent Thurmond and the CDE are providing grants for reducing chronic absenteeism and restorative justice under the Learning Communities for School Success grant program (Prop 47), which was authorized by AB 1014 – a bill he authored in the legislature and is now overseeing its implementation. At this time, five cohorts of grantees have been funded, totaling 115 grants and distributing over \$120 million in funding.

Superintendent Thurmond knows that more work is needed and will continue to focus on remedying the disparities that exist as well as addressing the inequities exacerbated by the pandemic.

Also, as I'm sure you are aware, the SSPI launched a new effort to support and improve Black student achievement in the state of California with the creation of a task force: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr21/yr21rel82.asp>