



Cal-TASH extends sincere condolences to the family and friends of Max Benson, who reportedly stopped breathing while being placed in prone restraint for over an hour at his private school, Guiding Hands, in El Dorado Hills, CA. In light of this tragic death, Cal-TASH also encourages all Californians to become educated about the current and proposed legislation related to the use of restraint and the evidence-based interventions that are alternatives to restraint and seclusion.

AB 2657 was signed into law earlier this year and allows a school to use behavioral restraints or seclusion only if a student's behavior means there is a clear and present danger of serious harm to the student and/or others. It does not allow the use of restraints or seclusion for coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation. AB 2657 also requires schools to report data annually on the use of restraint and seclusion to the California Department of Education.

In November 2018, federal legislation known as the Keeping All Students Safe Act was proposed in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate (H.R. 7124/S. 3626). This legislation, if passed in both the House and Senate, would prohibit the use of any physical restraint that restricts breathing.

While there is no evidence that restraint or seclusion are effective in reducing student behaviors that may precipitate the use of either technique, it has been demonstrated that the use of these aversive interventions can result in emotional and physical trauma, serious injury, and death. Further, there are over two decades worth of research in supporting the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to proactively teach students to learn appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral skills.

Cal-TASH urges Californians to do the following:

- Contact their U.S. Representative and Senator and urge them to vote "yes" on the Keeping All Students Safe Act.
- Contact their State legislators and encourage them to make sure that AB 2657 is being implemented accordingly in all public and private schools throughout the state.
- Contact Boards of their Local School Districts to ensure that professional development is being provided to all teachers to facilitate compliance with AB 2657, and to promote the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Please act now before another tragedy occurs. We owe it to all students and especially to the memory of young Max Benson. Let's make 2019 the year that all students are safe, welcome, and supported in their schools!