



PUBLIC ADVOCATES



A Brief History of *Williams v. State of California*

- May 17, 2000 — the 46th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* — the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Public Advocates, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), and other civil rights organizations, along with Morrison & Foerster LLP, filed a class-action lawsuit, *Williams v. State of California*, on behalf of public school students against the State of California, claiming the State and its agencies were denying thousands of California students their fundamental right to an education under the California Constitution by failing to give them the basic tools necessary for that education.
- August 13, 2004 — After more than four years of litigation, the parties announced a settlement agreement. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared, “Today is a landmark day for California’s neglected students. I am here to tell you they will be neglected no more.”
- September 29, 2004 — Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law five bills implementing the legislative proposals set forth in the Settlement Agreement (SB 6, SB 550, AB 1550, AB 2727, and AB 3001).

The Settlement Legislation

- The new standards and most of the accountability systems established by the *Williams* Settlement Legislation apply to all California public schools. Each and every student has a right to “sufficient textbooks,” a school in “good repair,” and a qualified teacher.
- Districts must perform self-evaluations to ensure compliance with the textbook and facilities standards, and then share the results of their evaluations and teacher misassignments and vacancy reviews with the public in their annual School Accountability Report Cards. Parents, students, teachers, and others are also empowered by a new Uniform Complaint Process to ensure schools and districts meet the new standards and provide sufficient instructional materials, qualified teachers, and safe, healthy school facilities.
- In addition, schools ranked in deciles one to three, inclusive, on the 2006 base Academic Performance Index (API) receive additional funds and oversight.

Positive Results from *Williams* Implementation

Comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data from the first two years of *Williams* implementation illustrate how teaching and learning conditions in California’s public school classrooms materially improved as a direct result of the *Williams* standards and accountability systems. See [Williams v. California: The Statewide Impact of Two Years of Implementation](http://www.decentschools.org/settlement/WilliamsReportWeb2007.pdf) at www.decentschools.org/settlement/WilliamsReportWeb2007.pdf.

For more information on *Williams v. California* go to www.decentschools.org or contact Brooks Allen (408) 569-5895/ballen@aclu-sc.org or Liz Guillen (916) 442-3385/lguillen@publicadvocates.org.