



Free Period Products in California’s Low-Income Middle and High Schools A Factsheet to Support on Assembly Bill 10 Implementation

[Assembly Bill 10](#), Authored by Assembly Member Christina Garcia, was passed in 2017 and went into effect in January of 2018. This new law requires public schools that are Title 1 and serve pupils grades 6 to 12 make period products available, at no charge, in their restrooms. To assist in implementing the bill, Western Center on Law and Poverty, a leading proponent of the bill, has prepared this factsheet.

What was the purpose of AB 10?

No one makes the choice to have a period or not to have a period and using a period products while menstruating is also rarely a choice. The average box of tampons costs \$7. Purchasing a bargain brand doesn’t always work out costing less, because those products are less sturdy and need to be changed more often. As a result, menstrual product costs are rarely minimized or reduced – they are a constant, unrelenting burden on the incomes of low-income families, when then can be afforded. When their families can’t afford period products, the consequences are harsh. Some menstruating children may have to make a choice to reduce the time between changing the menstrual product, this choice can have a deathly health consequences caused. If a family doesn’t have enough period products on hand when needed, it can result in the shame of caused by menstrual leaking. What’s worse, lack of adequate period products can keep California’s poorest children from being able to attend school regularly and can be further isolating for a children who, because they are poor, are already ostracized by their peers. AB 10 seeks to eliminate one of the burdens caused by poverty on low-income California pupils, whereby supporting their participation in school and extra-curricular activities.

What Schools Are Required to Provide Free Period Products?

Only Title I funded schools, those schools with a higher percentage of low-income pupils, are required to provide period products for free in their restrooms. For a list of those schools required to comply with AB 10, [click here](#).

Can Schools That Are Not Required to Provide Free Period Products Still Offer Them?

Yes, there is nothing stopping schools that are not required to provide free period products by AB 10 from doing so anyway. Doing so will increase equity and school preparedness for all students.

Are Schools Complying with AB 10?

We conducted a review of over 100 schools receiving Title I funding and found no evidence that the schools informed their communities, parents or pupils of the new law, but that does not mean that they didn’t provide information through more direct forms

of communication with students and pupils. Also, communication with the school community also does not indicate whether or not schools are complying with the law.

What Can School Communities Do to Increase Awareness about Period Product Rights?

Research has found that children in low resourced settings are often uncomfortable and unready when mensuration begins. The lack of available information makes this natural part of life seem taboo and leads to the lack of conversation and dialogue. Middle and High Schools should be monitored to ensure that they are complying with the letter of the law, but they should be also be encouraged to comply with the spirit of the law to. To do so, they should seek to create school environments that remove the stigma of menstruation and that no pupil will lack access to a period product when then need it at school. To achieve this, schools should educate their communities about the new requirement. To increase awareness about we recommend the following:

- Verify that your school is required to comply: To check whether your school meets the 40% pupil poverty threshold, this link listing Title I schools should be helpful (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/TA/AC/PL/tier1.asp>). This list will be may not be constant and will need updating, however as of 2017 this is the most comprehensive list of schools that are required to abide by AB 10.
- If you do not know who to contact at your school, you can consult the list of California public school administrators (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ds/pubschls.asp>).
- Request a meeting, send an email communication or write a letter asking for confirmation that the school is in compliance with the requirements of AB 10 and that information about its compliance be shared with the community on the school's website and through the school's direct communication with parents and pupils.
- If you believe that your school administrator would benefit from published reports documenting the crisis facing pupils when they lack free period products, you may consider sharing these pieces from *Time Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, or *NYA Today*.
- Distribute the attached [sample] flyer at your school site or create your own! Share ideas and learn from each other by joining the Facebook page for the Alliance for Period Supplies (<http://www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org>).

What Can I do if I learn that My School Isn't Complying with AB 10?

If you learn that a Title 1 funded school is not providing period products free of charge in the restrooms, please let us know. You can contact us directly at contact below.

For More Information:

This factsheet was prepared by Sherman Goldblum. For more information Western Center's Advocacy to Improve the Lives of Low-Income Girls and Women, please visit www.wclp.org, or contact Jessica Bartholow at jbartholow@wclp.org or 916-282-5119.



Free Period Products Are Required

After January 1, 2018, all Title 1 Middle Schools and High Schools are required to make an adequate supply of free period products available in their restrooms. Our school is a Title 1 School and so is required to provide period products for free. If the restroom runs out of free period products, contact: _____

[Name of Campus Staff Responsible]

For more information about our free period product rights, contact: _____.

[Name of Campus Club or Organizers]