

Jett Hawkins Law

Public Act 102-0360

The Jett Hawkins Law (Illinois Public Act 102-0360) prevents schools from prohibiting hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists.

According to a study by [Princeton University](#), Black students are more likely to be suspended for discretionary reasons, such as dress code or long hair violations.



Black students are almost four times as likely to be suspended from school as white students.



Black students are three times as likely to be removed from the classroom but kept within school as white students.



Black students are three times as likely to be expelled as white students.

These punishments place students on a trajectory toward poor academic performance, leading to higher dropout rates, gang involvement, and getting arrested before age 21.

In 2021, 4-year-old Gus “Jett” Hawkins was told that his braids violated the dress code policy at his school in Chicago. Jett’s mother, Ida Nelson, worked with Jett’s school on revising an outdated handbook policy and also began raising awareness regarding the impact that stigmatizing a child’s hair can have on their educational development. She advocated that hair is an extension of an individual’s race and is deeply connected to cultural identity. As a result of Jett’s story and his mom’s advocacy, Public Act 102-0360, sponsored by Senator Mike Simmons (D-Chicago), was signed into law on August 13, 2021.

Illinois has an urgent and collective responsibility to **achieve educational equity** by **ensuring that all policies, programs, and practices affirm the strengths** that **each and every child brings** within their **diverse backgrounds and life experiences**, and by **delivering the comprehensive supports, programs, and educational opportunities they need to succeed**.

