

# Shining lights of public education legislation

Returning a student's test with a gold star is a time-honored tradition, a sign of recognition for a job well done. There are few equivalents for the adults who help create the policy conditions for student success. CSBA aims to change that by introducing its 2023 Gold Star bills — some of the most outstanding education bills from this year's legislative session. For their timeliness and insight to the needs of California schools, CSBA awards gold stars to the following legislation:

## Assembly Bill 247 – School Facilities Bond

▶ *Authored by Assemblymembers Al Muratsuchi, Mike Fong and Lori Wilson*

Studies show that California needs to spend at least \$3 billion annually to maintain school facilities — and more than \$100 billion in state and local funds over the next decade to cover modernization and new construction costs. AB 247 would place the Kindergarten through Community College Public Education Facilities Bond Act on the 2024 statewide election ballot. If approved by voters, the act would provide \$14 billion in state matching funds for TK-12 schools and community colleges to improve school safety, invest in disaster mitigation, adapt to the effects of climate change and create 21st-century learning spaces.

## AB 414 – Digital Equity Bill of Rights

▶ *Authored by Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes*

California has a moral, legal and economic interest in ensuring all students have access to a high-quality education. The lack of broadband access undermines the state's ability to achieve this goal and threatens its civic well-being and economic prosperity. AB 414 establishes digital equity as a civil right and classifies internet access as an essential service to which all California residents are entitled.

## AB 557 – Remote Board Meetings

▶ *Authored by Assemblymember Gregg Hart*

Wildfires, floods, earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic established the need for remote meetings when emergencies prevent local agencies from meeting in-person. AB 557 extends the ability of local agencies to meet remotely, while also providing safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability. CSBA-sponsored AB 557 is a simple but important tool for local governments to remain accessible to the public during a governor-declared state of emergency and to continue to provide essential services to affected residents.

## AB 1023 – Cybersecurity

▶ *Authored by Assemblymember Diane Papan*

Cyberattacks are on the rise and schools, which hold a tremendous amount of sensitive information, are being targeted with increasing frequency. Yet, existing California law does not designate school districts and county offices of education for support from the California Cybersecurity Integration Center (Cal-CSIC), the state agency charged with responding to cyberattacks.

CSBA-sponsored AB 1023, would ensure that Cal-CSIC is required to provide direct cybersecurity assistance to TK-12 schools. The additional support will allow local educational agencies to prepare for and respond to cyberattacks more effectively and better protect data for students, staff and families.

## Senate Bill 28 – School Facilities

▶ *Authored by Sen. Steven Glazer*

In addition to the \$100 billion needed over the next decade for TK-12 and community college facilities, California's four-year universities would also benefit from facilities funding. SB 28 would place a \$15 billion general obligation bond on the 2024 state ballot to provide facilities support for TK-12 schools and community colleges. The bill also includes funds for California's public university system.

## SB 765 – Teacher Retention

▶ *Authored by Sen. Anthony Portantino*

Like most states, California is experiencing a severe teacher shortage. SB 765 would help stem the teacher shortage crisis by streamlining the process for retired teachers to return to the classroom. CSBA co-sponsored SB 765 would temporarily waive the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) salary cap restriction and the 180-day mandatory waiting period LEAs must observe before hiring a recently retired teacher. Together, these two changes would provide a modest, yet much-needed tool LEAs can use to address California's school staffing shortages.