

# California schoolnews

Weekly Update

March 3, 2021

*Opt-in to receive texts about important education events and COVID-19 developments by texting CSBA4Kids to 52886.*

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## COVID-19 update: Newsom, legislature announce \$6.6B package to reopen schools



On March 1, Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders announced a **\$6.6 billion budget package** that provides a path to reopening schools while retaining local discretion over the return of in-person instruction. The bill is not perfect but addresses many **concerns CSBA has raised** in discussion with the Administration

and the Legislature and reflects the collective advocacy of CSBA and the state's education management organizations. **Key amendments include allowing for the expenditure of funds prior to resuming on-campus instruction so schools can more effectively prepare, and it is now explicit that new requirements will not impact existing agreements** in local educational agencies that have already resumed in-person

instruction or have plans to do so shortly. **Issues remain, however, including the refusal to pay down the June deferral, no liability protection for LEAs, no minimum funding for small districts and the paraprofessional hiring requirement.**

In order to incentivize the resumption of on-campus instruction by April 1, the agreement amends [Assembly Bill 86/Senate Bill 86](#) in regard to the **\$2 billion allocation for reopening schools. To receive their full allocation of the funding, LEAs must resume on-campus instruction or have an approved plan to do so by April 1. LEAs will lose 1 percent of their funding allocation for each day after April 1 in which they are not providing in-person instruction; recipients must start in-person instruction by May 15 at the latest or forfeit all funding.** The new deal does not require LEAs to resume in-person instruction or override existing collective bargaining agreements. The revised bill is expected to get the Governor's signature by the end of the week. [Learn more »](#)

[Read CSBA CEO & Executive Director Vernon M. Billy's statement on the reopening plan »](#)

**In other COVID-19 developments:**

- The Governor's office announced today the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has [approved a grant application to partner with the state to cover the cost of COVID-19 testing for students covered by Medi-Cal, which represents approximately half of all California students.](#) To aid in defraying the costs associated with testing students not covered by Medi-Cal, the state announced separately that the **Valencia Branch Lab will offer schools tests at \$21 per test** (previous cost was \$55). The Medi-Cal coverage is retroactive to Feb. 1, 2021 and will continue for 60 days after the end of the federal public health emergency. In addition, the Department of Health Care Services received approval to deliver COVID-19 testing and reimburse the testing exclusively through the Medi-Cal fee-for-service delivery system, carving it out from all Medi-Cal managed care contracts when testing occurs in schools. This will **standardize how the tests are delivered to Medi-Cal children in schools and will ensure a consistent reimbursement rate across delivery systems.** The California Department of Public Health has released a [fact sheet with testing-related frequently asked questions](#) and answers. [Learn more on the state's school testing website »](#)
- Vaccine priority for K-12 school staff continues to be established. As of **March 1, at least 10 percent of California's vaccine supply was to be dedicated to education workers.** The Governor's office has clarified that education workers include teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, administrators and child care workers, among others — a key point of CSBA advocacy. **Single-use codes** are being used for education staff to make appointments online via the state's vaccination site, [MyTurn](#). **Monday's proposed bill codifies education workers' spot in Tier 1b** and the reservation of a minimum of 10 percent of available vaccines in each county for education workers. [Learn more »](#)
- Last week, the State Board of Education [voted to seek flexibilities related to standardized testing requirements.](#) It also asked staff to explore options for assessing student learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. While blanket waivers allowing states to opt out of testing were given by the U.S. Department of Education last year, the same exemptions **will not be allowed** this year. **If granted, the state's flexibility request would decouple state assessments**

from federal accountability requirements, waive administration of the state's science test, waive federal penalties for testing participation rates less than 95 percent and extend the testing window for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress and the English Language Assessments for California. [Learn more »](#)

## Legislative Action Week is just around the corner



Time is running out to sign up for the legislative advocacy event of the year — now, in a virtual format! This year, CSBA is doing things a little differently to accommodate for the restrictions caused by the pandemic. From **Monday, March 15 through Friday, March 19, CSBA will schedule virtual advocacy meetings between**

**school governance leaders and members of the California Legislature and their staff.** CSBA staff will provide talking points and advocacy tips — all you have to do is log on from your home or office. [Learn more and register »](#)

## School boards in action: A CSBA blog series about you



We want to recognize you! Throughout the pandemic, **local educational agency boards have continued working to support programs and initiatives that offer students the academic and social-emotional opportunities they need** — no matter which mode of instruction they are in. Each week, CSBA will feature a

**roundup of LEAs' successes on our blog.** We have also launched a new series called **5 questions** where board members have a chance to share the accomplishments of their LEAs and their experiences during this challenging time in their own words. Check for **new posts every Tuesday and Friday.** Want to share what your board has accomplished in our 5 questions series? Email [editor@csba.org](mailto:editor@csba.org). [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

FPPC Form 700 due April 1, 2021



The **deadline for submitting the 2020 Annual Form 700 for most school district and county office of education board members is April 1, 2021.** New board members who assumed office between Oct. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2020, and filed an assuming office statement, are not required to file an annual statement until April 1,

2022. To assist members in completing their Form 700, CSBA has updated its “**Guide to Reporting Gifts, Honoraria and Travel Payments**” to help members identify and report potential gifts. The guidance also contains links to helpful information from the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to accurately fill out each schedule of the Form 700. [Read the CSBA guide](#) | [Access Form 700](#) »

## CCBE announces new county board governance training



New this year, CCBE is offering a two-track virtual **professional development training for both newly elected/first-term and veteran county board members.** This county board governance training will help you hit the ground running and provide new county-focused learning opportunities in governance, equity in education,

special education, county board appellate role, charter schools, legislative advocacy and more. Veteran board members will gain knowledge and a greater understanding of the impact of social media, virtual meetings, charter oversight and the pitfalls to avoid. The training will be **held virtually every Tuesday beginning March 9 through March 30 from 8:30 to 11 a.m. plus one session from 3:30 to 5 p.m.** Live sessions will be recorded and available for registered attendees only to view asynchronously. Each session will be two and a half hours long. [Register for the training](#) »

## CSBA President Suzanne Kitchens featured in PPIC webinar on opening California schools



Reopening California’s schools will be the topic of discussion at Public Policy Institute of California’s latest Speaker Series on California’s Future. CSBA President Suzanne Kitchens will participate in a panel discussion with other statewide education leaders **on how and when to reopen K-12 public schools,** as well as how to **address**

**concerns about equity, learning loss, and the physical and mental health** of students and school staff. The online event takes place on **Thursday, March 4, from 11 a.m. to noon.** [Register for the webinar](#) »

## Latest *California School News* newsletter available online



Miss the February issue of *California School News*? It included information on a slew of **new bills introduced in 2021–22 legislative session** and pondered the possibility of COVID-19 vaccines for students. CSBA's **Masters in Governance team offered practical tips and resources on conducting virtual board**

**meetings** and policy experts examined training needed to effectively implement Next Generation Science Standards. The issue also looked at how districts are engaging with African American families. [Read the newsletter »](#)

## Districts can diversify investments with OPEB Solutions Program



The OPEB Solutions Program is a full-service GASB-compliant, IRS-approved trust program designed to **help you safely and securely set aside funds to address and lower your Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability.**

This program gives districts local control of assets, providing you with the flexibility to make contributions as deemed appropriate and the ability to access and withdraw funds to pay for OPEB expenses at any time. [Learn more »](#)

## COVID-19 resources

Stay up to date with the latest news and resources related to COVID-19 on [CSBA's dedicated webpage](#) and with articles frequently posted on the newly redesigned [CSBA blog](#).

## Virtual events

### 2021 CCBE County Board Governance Workshop

March 9-30 | [Register here](#)

### Governance with an Equity Lens: A Systemic Approach to Closing Equity

## Business Services



myers • stevens



Fagen Friedman & Fulfrost LLP

**Gaps in Public Education**

March 27 | [Register here](#)

**MIG Course 4: Human  
Resources/Collective Bargaining**

May 21-22 | [Register here](#)

[View complete calendar](#)

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