

# California schoolnews

Weekly Update

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## State budget: Legislative Analyst's Office responds to Governor's January Budget Proposal



In December 2023, the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its "2024–25 Fiscal Outlook," projecting the state's budget deficit over the three-year fiscal period of 2022–23, 2023–24 and 2024–25 at \$68 billion, with a drop in the Proposition 98 Guarantee by \$21 billion. **But on Jan. 10, 2024, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the three-year budget**

**deficit at \$37.86 billion — a nearly \$30 billion difference.**

The LAO on Jan. 13 provided its **annual review of the Governor's budget**, which continues to offer differing assessments of the size of the state's budget deficit and what options lay before the Legislature in bridging the gap. **In its explanation of the differences between the two projected budget deficits, the LAO stated it is "largely due to differences in what we consider to be baseline changes. The largest of these changes impacts schools and community colleges."** Describing the Governor's approach as "plausible, but optimistic," the LAO writes that the **Governor relies on higher budget revenue projections to the tune of \$15 billion, a reasonable dip into the state's reserves and significant spending-related solutions, which may "pose challenges."** Concerningly, the LAO highlights that the Governor's "budget lacks a plan for implementing proposed reductions to schools and community colleges, and some other solutions are unlikely to yield the anticipated savings." [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

CSBA is partnering with Capitol Advisors to present the **Budget Perspectives Workshop: Governor's Budget 2024–25** in locations throughout the state. [Register »](#)

## Register for CSBA's webinar on crisis communications for school safety incidents



Join CSBA on **Jan. 23 at 12 p.m. for the webinar "Crisis Ready: School communications before, during and after a safety incident."** Clear and consistent communication is important to engaging and informing students, families and the community — and is especially critical in times of crisis. Join CSBA for an informative webinar on **best practices for crisis communication and strategies that can be used by local**

**educational agencies large and small — and which may be especially useful for small districts without a formal communications team.** Learn from experts in the field from LEAs across the state in Davis Joint Unified School District, Oxnard SD, Rosemead SD and the executive director of the California School Public Relations Association (CalSPRA). A Q&A session with the panelists will follow the discussion. [Register now »](#)

## Legal update: Third District Court of Appeal holds that service as union officer constitutes protected activity



On Jan. 9, 2024, the Third District Court of Appeal issued its decision in *Visalia Unified School District v. PERB*, **upholding the Public Employment Relations Board's determination that mere service as a union officer constitutes protected activity for purposes of employee complaints of retaliation.** While holding that

Visalia USD did, in fact, retaliate against the employee in question, **the court ultimately held in favor of the district, finding that it proved that it would have terminated the employee for poor performance regardless of the retaliation.** This was based on the record of the employee's long history of poor performance.

In the PERB decision at issue, PERB stated that it was overruling its own prior precedent that, under the Educational Employment Relations Act, something more than mere service as a union officer is required for an employee to be engaged in a protected activity. **CSBA's Education Legal Alliance filed an amicus brief in the case, emphasizing that PERB's decision would mean that union officers are effectively always engaged in protected activity, regardless of their actions.** The court's decision has potential policy implications, including making it more difficult to impose legitimate discipline on poorly performing employees who serve as union officers. The court dismissed such policy concerns, noting that it believed PERB would carefully evaluate each retaliation claim on the merits, rather than finding retaliation in every case where the employee being disciplined is a union officer. **CSBA will provide a more thorough analysis of this decision in the February issue of *California School News*.**

## Celebrating School Board Recognition Month



January is School Board Recognition Month, a time to salute the more than 5,000 California school district and county office of education board members — the largest group of elected officials in the state — that aid in supporting student success by establishing their local educational agency's mission, vision, policy, priorities, budget and benchmarks.

To continue the celebration, **San Mateo Union High School District Board President Ligia Andrade Zúñiga shares her “why” in the latest video in CSBA's What's Your Why? series.** “It's not an easy time to be a school board member, but it's an important time to be a school board member,” Zúñiga said. **“I encourage people that don't see themselves in the process to run for one of these positions, especially for our young people in our communities, to know that they also can make a difference.”** [Watch Zúñiga's What's Your Why? video »](#)

## State update: Attorney General issues legal alerts on inclusive education and rights of transgender and gender nonconforming students



During the week of Jan. 8, California Attorney General Rob Bonta issued two legal alerts to public school leaders related to **inclusive education** and the **rights of transgender and gender nonconforming students**. The Jan. 8



alert provides “guidance to local school districts, charter schools, county offices of education and other interested parties

regarding the obligation to provide curricula, instructional materials and books that are inclusive and reflect the roles and contributions of our diverse population.” It lays out an overview of these laws, the specific responsibilities of local educational agencies, and the role of the Office of the Attorney General in enforcing them. The Jan. 11 alert was issued to “**remind all school boards that forced gender identity disclosure policies — which target transgender and gender nonconforming students by mandating that school personnel disclose a student’s gender identity or gender nonconformity to a parent or guardian without the student’s express consent — violate state law.**”

#### In other state news:

- The California Department of Education (CDE) **invites educational partners to complete its survey on Alternate Dispute Resolution in Special Education.** The CDE strives to foster productive partnerships between families and schools to support and improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Critical to these partnerships is the **prevention and resolution of disagreements when they arise. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is a voluntary process for resolving disagreements in special education. Individualized Education Program (IEP) facilitation is one type of assistance that falls under the umbrella of ADR and can be used to prevent conflict** as well as resolve it. California currently does not offer IEP facilitation services at a statewide level and is **working with a broad array of stakeholders to develop a statewide IEP facilitation network model in alignment with Senate Bill 129**, referred to as “state-sponsored neutral facilitation.” [Take the survey »](#)

## Federal update: \$90 million granted across California for clean school buses



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Jan. 8 **announced the selection of five applicants in California to receive over \$88 million through EPA’s first Clean School Bus Program Grants Competition.** The awards, made through President Joe Biden’s Investing in America agenda, will **help selectees purchase clean school buses in eight school districts across California.** By accelerating the transition

to low- and zero-emission vehicles, these awards will improve air quality for children and their families and advance environmental justice while boosting the economy and creating good-paying jobs. The grants have been awarded to Porterville Unified School District, Los Angeles USD, San Diego USD and Kern High School District. [Learn more »](#)

#### In other federal news:

- The Federal Communications Commission **announced** that the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will begin winding down with enrollment ending Feb. 8, 2024.** Without additional appropriations, current ACP funds are expected to run out by April 2024.
- The Federal Trade Commission **published** in the Federal Register **proposed changes to the implementing regulations for the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act.** Interested parties must file comments no later than **March 11, 2024.** CSBA staff will be reviewing the proposed changes and potentially submitting comments on the regulatory changes.

## Save with the GO Bond Refunding Pool



For more than 30 years, California school districts and community college districts have **saved time and money by issuing tax and revenue anticipation notes (TRANS) through the California School Cash Reserve Program Authority sponsored by CSBA and the California Association of School Business Officials,** the largest pooled TRAN financing in the nation. The GO Bond Refunding Pool follows

in this tradition by allowing districts **to unlock taxpayer savings by driving down costs** through an easy-to-use shared financing platform. [Learn more »](#)

Stay up to date with the latest news and resources on the [CSBA blog](#).

### Virtual events

#### Student Board Member Trainings

Advocacy and Engagement | Jan. 29 |

[Register](#)

Transition Planning, Legacy Building, and Next steps | April 15 | [Register](#)

#### Student Board Member Governance Q&A and Networking

Feb. 12 | [Register](#)

March 4 | [Register](#)

#### MIG Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction

Feb. 21-22 | [Register](#)

### Sponsors

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

Feb. 26-March 18 | [Register](#)

**Governance with an Equity Lens**

March 1-4 | [Register](#)

**MIG Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review**

March 13-14 | [Register](#)

**The Brown Act**

March 26 | [Register](#)

**MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2**

April 3-4 | [Register](#)

## In-person events

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

Feb. 3 | Sunnyvale | [Register](#)

**MIG Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review**

Feb. 10 | Monterey | [Register](#)

**The Brown Act**

Feb. 20 | Riverside | [Register](#)

**Recentering Governance Practices with an Equity Lens**

March 1-4 | West Sacramento | [Register](#)

**2024 CSBA County Board Governance Workshop**

March 8-9 | Sacramento | [Register](#)

**MIG Course 3: School Finance**

March 9 | Monterey | [Register](#)

**MIG Course 5: Community Relations & Advocacy/Governance Integration**

March 16 | Sunnyvale | [Register](#)

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

April 6 | Monterey | [Register](#)





**Coast2Coast Federal Advocacy Trip**  
April 8-10 | Washington, D.C. | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)



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