

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

April 2, 2025

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Legal update: Federal FERPA letter explained



The **Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO)** is a division of the U.S. Department of Education tasked with, among other things, the administration of federal laws related to student privacy in schools and other local educational agencies that receive federal funds. Each year, two laws — the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment — require

the SPPO to provide notice to schools of their obligations related to student privacy matters.

This year, in addition to the notice, a cover letter was released on March 28, 2025, by the acting director of the SPPO that includes details of several “priority concerns” that the SPPO will take “proactive measures to address.” The letter concludes with a section describing “assurance of compliance.” In taking proactive action to enforce FERPA, the SPPO **requested that each state education agency** (the California Department of Education, in the case of California) **submit “documentation such as ‘reports, information on policies and procedures, annual notifications, training materials or other information necessary’ to provide assurance that the State Education Agency and their respective LEAs are complying” with the law.** This requested assurance will focus specifically on the areas of concern noted in the letter. The letter requests that state education agencies submit this assurance of compliance information by April 30, 2025. Consequently, **LEAs may be receiving requests for their information related to FERPA compliance in the coming days.** [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

Legislation introduced to address the impacts of AB 218



CSBA's persistent advocacy to address the impact of Assembly Bill 218 (Chapter 861, Statutes of 2019) took a major step forward when Sen. Ben Allen (D–Santa Monica) **amended Senate Bill 832 last week to help safeguard the solvency of local educational agencies.** Allen, a former Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District board member, **included several important policy proposals to help address the**

ongoing financial impacts of Assembly Bill 218 and allow victims of childhood sexual assault to receive compensation for their suffering while insulating LEAs from the threat of bankruptcy based on claims dating back decades that are difficult to investigate and insure.

With input from CSBA, the bill was amended to propose changes to AB 218 statutes, which would:

- **Extend the timeline public agencies have to pay: 25 percent of the upfront damages and the rest over 20 years.**
- **Create a rebuttal presumption of validity for the judicial obligation bond validation process and allow the validity process for that bond to start earlier.**
- **Extend the amount of time schools have to pay emergency apportionment loans.**
- **Extend payment intercept mechanisms currently only available to the California School Finance Authority to school districts, community college districts, LEAs and education joint powers agencies in order to increase their credit rating.**
- **Increase the evidentiary standards for AB 218 cases that are more than 20 years old to clear and convincing evidence with corroborating evidence more than just the plaintiff's testimony.**

Questions may be directed to advocacy@csba.org

2025 AEC workshop proposals are now being accepted



The time is now to **submit a workshop proposal to present at CSBA's 2025 Annual Education Conference and Trade Show**, happening Wednesday, Dec. 3, through Friday, Dec. 5, in Sacramento. AEC is the premier platform to showcase innovative programs and successful strategies that are making a difference in districts or county offices of education. Governance leaders across the state want to hear

from you!

Proposals should be aligned with one of this year's conference strands, which include Empowering Students in a Digital World; Fostering Strong Community Partnerships; Holistic Health, Safety and Wellness; Pathways to College, Career and Beyond; Strategic Governance for Student Success; and Strategies for Financial Resilience. **Applications are being accepted through May 2.** [Learn more »](#)

Golden Awards application period opens



Applications are now being accepted **for CSBA's Golden Awards Program!** These awards honor the hard work and dedication of governing boards and local educational agency staff in creating innovative programs that improve student achievement and well-being in the state's preK-12 public schools.

The **Golden Bell Awards** reflect the depth and breadth of education programs and governance decisions supporting these programs that address students' changing needs and support optimal outcomes. **More than 20 entry categories cover the full range of school programs.** The **Golden Gavel Awards** honor an individual and a **governance team** that demonstrate exceptional governance and boardsmanship, **and the Golden Quill Awards** recognize the important role education journalists play in creating awareness in the community. [Visit the Golden Awards website for more on the application process »](#)

State update: CDE under federal investigation for alleged FERPA violations



On March 27, the **U.S. Department of Education's Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO)** **announced** that it had launched an



investigation into the California Department of Education (CDE) for alleged violations of **Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)**, a federal law intended to protect students' educational information by limiting its

disclosure to third parties and allowing parents access to their children's records.

The SPPO alleges that local educational agencies in California may “be violating FERPA to socially transition children at school while hiding minors’ ‘gender identity’ from parents. Given the number of LEAs that appear to be involved, SPPO is concerned that CDE played a role, either directly or indirectly, in the widespread adoption of these practices, which appear to be required by the recently enacted California Assembly Bill 1955.”

In response, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony **Thurmond** gave the following statement that appeared in [CalMatters](#) and other publications: “**Assembly Bill (AB) 1955 prohibits local educational agencies from mandating that staff disclose students’ gender identity to parents without student consent, unless otherwise required by state or federal law. AB 1955 does not mandate nondisclosure.** Based on the plain language of both laws, there is no conflict between AB 1955 and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which permits a parent access to their student’s written records upon request. **Our students must be safe in order to learn. I have heard from so many students and families whose safety has been impacted by forced outing policies.** To our LGBTQ+ youth and families, I want to make sure that you hear us as loudly as we hear you: You are heard, you are protected, and you are loved.”

In other state news:

- The [list of 2025 California Distinguished Schools](#), which includes 336 schools across 34 counties, was released on March 25. According to the CDE, the program recognizes schools in two categories: those doing exceptional work to close the achievement gap and those demonstrating exceptional student performance.

CSBA recognized for its coverage of LEAs



The **California School Public Relations Association’s 2025 Excellence in Communication Award Program** has recognized CSBA’s coverage of some of the most pressing issues facing local educational agencies today, as well as one of its initiatives to humanize and highlight the work of trustees in their own words.

Feature articles “[Supporting newcomer students: LEAs strive to help this growing population succeed in school and life,](#)” “[California Public Records Act: How a well-intentioned law is being misused to burden](#)

LEAs” and “**Shutting doors, opening dialogue: School closure guidance and best practices**” were among the awardees, as was CSBA’s “**What’s Your Why?**” video series, which features school district and county office of education board members explaining why they became trustees and what motivates them to continue to serve California’s public schools.

Coverage you need to ensure student and district safety



Accidents happen. Are your students covered? To help members best address insurance-related issues, **CSBA has joined forces with California’s leading provider of student accident and sickness insurance.** Myers-Stevens & Toohey is a full-service administrator based in Southern California that has worked closely with local educational agencies for over 35 years. **CSBA’s sponsored catastrophic injury**

coverage is affordable and can be extended to cover all school activities, including travel to and from home and school. [Learn more »](#)

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

Virtual events

Ethics Assembly Bill 2158

April 7 | [Register](#)

Student Board Member (SBM) Advancing Budget Priorities and Advocacy

April 7 | [Register](#)

Executive Assistant (EA) Rho: Understanding Culture 1A/1B

April 17-18 | [Register](#)

Masters in Governance (MIG) Course 5: Community Relations & Advocacy/ Governance Integration

April 23-24 | [Register](#)

The Brown Act

April 25 | [Register](#)

SBM Legacy and Transition Planning for Policy Initiatives

Sponsors



April 28 | [Register](#)



In-person events

2025 CSBA County Board Governance Workshop

April 11-12 | Sacramento | [Register](#)

Small School District Financial Workshop

April 12 | Redding | [Register](#)

MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2

April 19 | Riverside | [Register](#)

MIG Course 4: Human Resources/ Collective Bargaining

April 26 | Visalia | [Register](#)

Coast2Coast

April 28-30 | Washington, D.C. | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)



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