

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

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CSBA's Back-to-School Digest for governance teams



Back-to-school season is an exciting time for all in the school community as a new academic year begins. **CSBA has created a Back-to-School Digest to provide essential resources to assist school boards and superintendents in jumpstarting the new year with critical information and in navigating some of the most pressing topics facing public education.**

This resource contains a selection of relevant work from CSBA's Research and Education

Policy Development, Policy and Governance Technology Services, Legal and Communications departments on topics such as **school safety, funding and finance, curriculum and instruction, the state budget, compliance with recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, good governance practices, the California Mathematics Framework, artificial intelligence, chronic absenteeism** and more. [Read the Back-to-School Digest »](#)

Legal update: Court decision prevents federal implementation of anti-DEI policies



On Aug. 14, a judge for the United States District Court of Maryland issued a **decision vacating two U.S. Department of Education (ED) documents that contained new legal requirements for schools to receive federal funding. Specifically, the decision relates to the ED's Feb. 14 Dear Colleague Letter and the April 3, "Reminder of Legal Obligations Undertaken in Exchange for Receiving Federal**

Financial Assistance and Request for Certification under Title VI and *SFFA v. Harvard*," both of which maintained that the use of race by an educational institution, essentially in any way, including through diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs violates federal anti-discrimination laws, and may result in loss of federal funding for schools. The April 3 document additionally required certification by each state education agency that the state and its local educational agencies are not operating DEI programs that conflict with the ED's current interpretation of Title VI, in order to receive funding.

To date, the ED has been unable to enforce these documents due to temporary injunctions in three separate cases. **The decision in this Maryland case now permanently prevents the federal government from enforcing these ED documents, based on the judge's findings that they both are in violation of procedural as well as constitutional requirements.** The federal government may decide to appeal this decision, but they have not yet done so.

The California Department of Education issued a "[Further Update Regarding Trump Administration's Anti-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Directives and California's Title VI Compliance](#)" to county and district superintendents on Aug. 15 summarizing the outcome in the case (as well as responding to earlier guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Justice) and reaffirming its previous stance that the ED documents are unlawful and that California schools are and have been in compliance with the law.

Legislative update: Legislature considers problematic classified staff legislation



Senate Bill 494 (Cortese, D–Santa Clara) undermines the authority of school district and



county office of education boards by **removing their final decision-making authority to demote, suspend or terminate a classified staff person. Instead, the bill places classified personnel decisions with an unelected administrative law judge (ALJ)**, thereby

removing the authority of local educational agencies and their duly elected governing boards to render critical personnel decisions.

This bill inhibits local control by delegating that authority to an unelected entity. The bill would also **make the decision of the ALJ final, thus further removing the authority of the school district and county board of education**. In doing so, SB 494 would establish a one-size-fits-all approach, creating a blanket requirement for many disciplinary matters and increasing the number of appeals that will occur at the local level, regardless of the merits of the case. **It would also mandate that the ALJ be paid entirely by the LEA, but selected jointly by the LEA and the employees' representative.**

Currently, hearing officers are determined by an LEA's collective bargaining agreement, which is negotiated at the local level. SB 494 turns that local process upside down and will affect the timeliness of resolving sensitive personnel matters. This is especially true for small and rural LEAs, where the cost and availability of an ALJ will place a substantial burden. **Should SB 494 reach Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk, CSBA will activate membership through an Action Alert.**

California Schools summer issue available online



The summer edition of CSBA's *California Schools* magazine features an **in-depth look at how local educational agencies prepare for and responded to wildfires**; a **dive into the state's new math framework** and its approach to learning; and how **a diverse student body can contribute to improved school outcomes**. Also in this issue, CSBA CEO & Executive Director **Vernon M. Billy posits that it is time for the**

state to do more to help LEAs close the achievement gap, Oakland Unified School District shares its academic progress using bond funds, and an interview with Public Policy Institute of California President and CEO Tani Cantil-Sakauye. [Read the issue »](#)

Webinar: Prioritizing investments for students' long-term success



Register for this CSBA webinar on Sept. 3 at 11 a.m. that will offer insights on how to navigate funding uncertainty and prioritize investments with the greatest long-term benefits for students. Learn practical approaches to determining Academic Return on Investment (A-



ROI) and explore potential questions to ask district staff to ensure thoughtful, strategic budgeting decisions. This webinar is **specifically designed**

for board members interested in enhancing their strategic budgeting skills and scenario planning to better prepare for funding volatility. Joining CSBA are researchers from WestEd and Fresno Unified School District's board president who will speak about the board role and the district's explicit focus on student outcome-focused governance. [Register now »](#)

Register for CSBA's Executive Assistant training program



Registration closes Aug. 26 for the Sigma Cohort of CSBA's **Executive Assistants Certification Program** — a high-impact development experience created for executive assistants (EAs) who are ready to lead with influence, strategy and confidence. This program is designed for EAs who want to go beyond the task list and step fully into their roles as strategic partners. **Through expert-led**

sessions, peer collaboration and real-world tools, participants gain the skills, mindset and network needed to thrive in today's high-demand executive environments. For EAs looking to sharpen their leadership abilities, increase their organizational impact, or connect with a powerful community of professionals, the Sigma Cohort is where that journey begins. [Learn more and register »](#)

State update: California Green Ribbon Schools Recognition Program request for applications



The **California Green Ribbon Schools recognition award** honors TK-12 schools, school districts, and county offices of education that demonstrate exemplary achievement in three key areas: resource efficiency, health and wellness, and environmental and sustainability education.

This recognition is part of a broader statewide effort to identify and promote effective practices

that enhance student engagement, academic performance, graduation rates and career readiness.

Each year, the California Department of Education (CDE) designates the top five highest-scoring applicants as Green Achievers — the state's highest honor — who are celebrated at the annual California School Recognition Program ceremony. The survey and the online application period will close on Nov. 17. [Learn more »](#)

In other state news:

- The **CDE invites local educational agencies to take part in High School Voter Education Weeks, Sept. 15-26.** Since California launched its preregistration program in September 2016, nearly 1.4 million students have preregistered to vote, which has resulted in more than 1.1 million eligible voters. For further resources and opportunities, [read more in the July 30 letter](#) from the CDE and the California Secretary of State.

Total School Solutions can help with Facilities Master Plans



Up-to-date facilities can support the educational and programmatic goals of local educational agencies. **A Facilities Master Plan provides a district with vital information regarding current and future needs for student housing, quality of existing facilities, and facilities renovation and expansion requirements to meet its educational and programmatic goals.** The master plan also assists in identifying funding

needs for capital improvement and developing financing options. **Total School Solutions Facilities Master Plans include** accurate projections regarding enrollment, careful determination of school site capacity, educational specifications to ensure programmatic needs are served, a detailed needs assessment, and conclusions and recommendations about the availability and timing of financing and funding. [Learn more »](#)

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

Virtual events

Executive Assistant (EA) Sigma: Understanding Culture 1A/1B
Aug. 28-29 | [Register](#)

Ethics Assembly Bill 2158
Sept. 3 | [Register](#)

The Brown Act
Sept. 3 | [Register](#)

Masters in Governance (MIG) Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction
Sept. 10-11 | [Register](#)

Sponsors



PIPER | SANDLER

EA Sigma: Governance 2A/2B

Sept. 18-19 | [Register](#)

2025 CCSA Fall Virtual Workshop

Sept. 19 | [Register](#)

In-person events

County Board Conference

Sept. 5-7 | Monterey | [Register](#)

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

Sept. 6 | Torrance | [Register](#)

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

Sept. 6 | Stockton | [Register](#)

MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2

Sept. 20 | Torrance | [Register](#)

MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2

Sept. 20 | Stockton | [Register](#)

Education Workforce Housing Bootcamp

Oct. 15 | San Jose | [Register](#)

Education Workforce Housing Bootcamp

Oct. 24 | Covina | [Register](#)



[View complete calendar](#)