

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

July 8, 2026

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Legislative update: Legislature passes bill to implement Governor's education governance reform



The Legislature **passed [Assembly Bill 181 \(Alvarez and Patel, D-San Diego\)](#) on June 29, reaching an agreement on Gov. Gavin Newsom's education governance reform proposal.** Seen as an important first step to creating greater state alignment and coherence in education governance, **it transfers the day-to-day management of the California Department of Education (CDE) from the state**

superintendent of public instruction (SSPI) to a newly established and gubernatorially appointed education commissioner. These statutory changes are a result of numerous reports highlighting the conflicting issues with a double-headed

governance system.

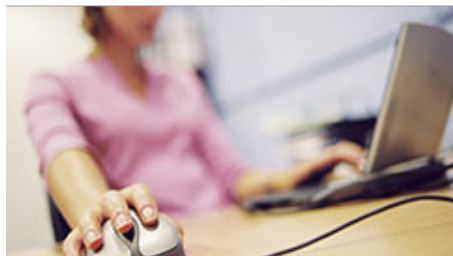
Specifically, AB 181:

- Establishes the position of education commissioner, who will be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate and is urged to have demonstrable experience managing a larger public or private organization and experience in public education leadership.
- Tasks the education commissioner with oversight and management of the CDE, including developing recommendations for a second phase of education governance consolidation and streamlining.
- Maintains the Office of the SSPI and makes it a voting member of the State Board of Education (SBE) by removing a position appointed by the Governor.
- Adds the SSPI as a voting member of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, increasing its size from 18 to 19 members.
- Adds two members to the SBE to be appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the Assembly, increasing the SBE from 11 to 13 members.

CSBA has a Support position on AB 181, as it represents an important first step away from a patchwork of disconnected state programs and toward a unified strategy of support that will help local educational agencies accelerate student outcomes and close persistent achievement gaps.

But AB 181 is not the full solution. It clarifies a singular governance structure, but effective governance reform cannot stop at reassigning authority. **California needs a system that clearly indicates the state's goals, how its agencies will coordinate, how agency progress will be measured, what supports LEAs will receive, and how the state will address duplicative, ineffective or misaligned programs.** [CSBA's SOS for Student Achievement: Close the State Accountability Gap legislation](#) aligns with, extends and enhances the objectives of AB 181 by reforming not only who runs the system but the system itself. [Learn more »](#)

State update: State releases model AI policy



On July 6, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond sent [a letter](#) to local educational agency leaders announcing **the release of the California Department of Education's (CDE) model policy on artificial intelligence (AI) in education.** The model policy, developed through the collaborative work of the California AI in Education Working Group, “gives LEAs and charter schools a ready-to-adapt

template covering the basic legal, ethical, and logistical considerations recommended for any school AI policy, regardless of size, location, or demographics. It addresses key areas such as academic integrity and disclosure, limits on AI detection software, privacy by design, legal compliance, educator discretion, parent and guardian review rights, and AI literacy as a core academic competency,” according to the letter. The letter also states that compliance with the policy is not mandatory and **“the CDE encourages local-level**

modifications that reflect the uniqueness of the students, schools, and communities served.” [Access the policy »](#)

In other state news:

- As part of Senate Bill 848, which took effect on July 1, **the CDE has posted resources and guidance to support abuse prevention education. The resources are designed to increase awareness and understanding of appropriate boundaries** in adult-to-pupil, school personnel-to-pupil, volunteer-to-pupil, and pupil-to-pupil interactions and relationships; **detection and indicators of inappropriate behaviors** in adults and pupils; **strategies to reduce risk** and establish healthy boundaries; and **options for reporting** child abuse, sexual abuse and assault, inappropriate interactions and relationships, and how to safely seek assistance. It is important to note that LEAs may provide annual instruction to all students but “**parents and guardians retain the right to excuse their child from all or part of this instruction through the existing opt-out process described in Education Code Section 51938.**” [View the resources »](#)

Registration is open for 2026–27 CSBA training programs



Now is the time to **register for CSBA's 2026–27 professional development and governance training programs!** These **highly regarded learning opportunities** are designed to support **board members, board leaders and governance professionals in strengthening their knowledge, leadership skills and commitment to effective governance.** From CSBA's flagship professional development

program **Masters in Governance**, to deep dives into the **Brown Act** and **Ethics**, to upskilling for **board presidents** and **executive assistants** — CSBA trainings gives you and your board the tools to govern effectively and support student achievement. [View all trainings »](#)

New study examines how school governance has changed since pandemic



A June report by the Brookings Institution, ***Local control, national conflict: School boards in the COVID 19 and cultural war era***, analyzes what happened during the turbulent first half of this decade. Relying on media reports, a survey of board members and school board election results, **researchers found that while conflicts over COVID-19 and culture war issues were**

widespread, not all communities were impacted to the same extent. Key findings detailed in the report show that school board members across many types of communities and school districts reported **sharp increases in conflict** between school boards and community members during the pandemic — conflicts that have only partially subsided in the years that followed; the **nature of conflict differed by community**, with politically purple areas and large districts experiencing the most visible upheaval; and **heightened conflict did not translate to measurable changes in voter turnout** in school board elections, suggesting limited broad-based political mobilization. [Read more](#) »

Maximize your budget, lower administrative costs and streamline the procurement process



Since 1998, BuyBoard has been providing local educational agencies with increased purchasing power, lower administrative costs and compliance with legal requirements. **BuyBoard vendors have been awarded contracts for products and services through a competitive procurement process, thereby giving members the opportunity for bulk discounts, combined with the ease of online shopping.** Find everything

from classroom teaching aid supplies and equipment and furniture to custodial supplies and equipment or field lighting products. [Learn more](#) »

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

In-person events

Masters in Governance (MIG) for County Offices of Education (COE) Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement | Policy & Judicial Review

Aug. 14 | Woodland | [Register](#)

MIG COE Course 3: Finance & Facilities

Aug. 15 | Woodland | [Register](#)

Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) University

Aug. 18 | West Sacramento | [Register](#)

MIG COE Course 4: Community Relations and Advocacy | Governance Integration

Sept. 24 | Marina del Rey | [Register](#)

Sponsors



2026 CSBA Counties Conference
Sept. 25-27 | Marina del Rey | [Register](#)

2026 Annual Education Conference and Trade Show
Dec. 3-5 | San Diego | [Register](#)

Virtual events

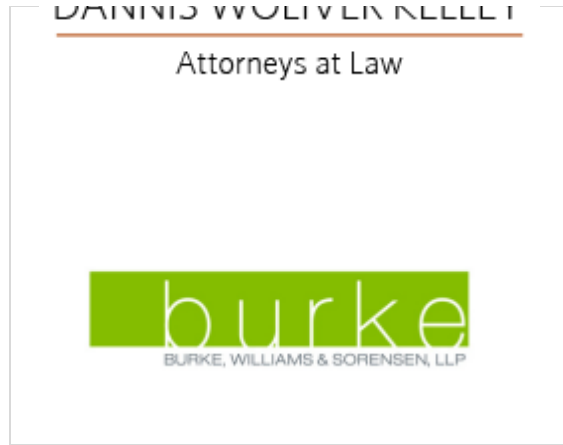
Executive Assistant (EA) Upsilon: Understanding Culture 1A/1B
Aug. 20-21 | [Register](#)

MIG Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction
Sept. 8-16 | [Register](#)

EA Upsilon: Governance 2A/2B
Sept. 10-11 | [Register](#)

MIG Course 2: Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review
Sept. 22-30 | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)



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