

# California schoolnews

Weekly Update

February 23, 2022

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## COVID-19 update: CSBA advocates for clear COVID-19 exit strategy for schools



CSBA President Dr. Susan Heredia and CEO & Executive Director Vernon M. Billy sent a letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom on Feb. 22 advocating for an “exit strategy” for K-12 schools that can be referred to by board members and school and district staff as parents and other stakeholders question continued COVID-19 mitigation measures.

"The COVID-19 mitigation and relief measures your administration recently implemented for schools are set to expire on March 31, including your recent executive order on 30-day emergency substitute credentials, student teachers, long-term substitute assignments and financial incentives for retiree teachers. In addition, governing boards and superintendents require clear direction on the future of independent study and remote learning once Assembly Bill 130 sunsets. Finally, as you've surely noticed, compliance with universal school masking rules is fraying in various parts of the state," the letter states.

**CSBA is urging the Governor to present a comprehensive exit strategy at the Feb. 28 press conference that is scheduled to address the masking mandate.** This will allow time to help educate parents and the public about the reasons for continuing or desisting with current COVID-19 mitigation measures. [Read the full letter »](#)

#### **In other COVID-19 developments:**

- At a Feb. 17 press conference, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a "more sensible and sustainable health care approach based on lessons learned to prepare for the unknown." **The SMARTER Plan addresses: shots, masks, awareness, readiness, testing, education and Rx** (medical prescriptions). Gov. Newsom did not address the school masking mandate in the main portion of the press conference, but in response to a reporter's question, clarified at several points that **a date when the masking mandate will eventually be lifted will be announced on Feb. 28 — but the mandate itself will not be lifted on that date.** [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)
- The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights recently released a **fact sheet on elementary and secondary public schools' obligations to give appropriate evaluations and services to students with disabilities during the ongoing pandemic, including responsibilities related to providing compensatory services.** These obligations fall under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. "Parents/caregivers are entitled to request their school convene a group of persons knowledgeable about their child to determine whether their child is receiving FAPE [free appropriate public education] and whether their child's current services should be changed to respond to any harm caused to the student by the pandemic, such as the impact of loss of services on skills, mental health and trauma concerns, or the physical health effects of long COVID (post-COVID conditions)," OCR said in its announcement. [Learn more »](#)

## Legislative update: Pension relief for school employers



Budget hearings continue in Sacramento as the Legislature makes its way through Gov. Gavin Newsom's January Budget Proposal. As the hearings and negotiations move forward, **CSBA is putting a spotlight on the most important issues for schools. Among the top priorities is pension relief for school employers.** Unlike other local governments where benefits are negotiated locally, school employee pension

benefits and employer contribution rates are determined at the state level. **With school employer obligations scheduled to double for certificated staff, state General Fund assistance remains desperately needed.**

**As local governance leaders communicate with their state representatives, here are a few key talking points to stress:**

- Employer CalPERS and CalSTRS pension contributions are increasingly burdensome for schools.
- Without relief from the state, rising obligations will crowd out desperately needed investments in educational programs aimed at closing achievement gaps, improving student learning, and attracting and retaining the best and brightest staff.
- School leaders urge the Legislature and Gov. Newsom to commit non-Proposition 98 General Fund allocations to the CalSTRS and CalPERS systems on behalf of schools to help lower current and future rates.

## Late start goes into effect July 1



Senate Bill 328 (2019), also known as **the late start bill goes into effect July 1, 2022**. The bill mandates that **the school day cannot begin before 8 a.m. for middle schools, and 8:30 a.m. for high schools**. However, there is an **exception built in for “rural school districts,” which would exempt them from the late start requirements**. Unfortunately, the bill does not define “rural,” leaving many districts

**wondering if the late start requirements will apply to their schools**. Compounding the confusion is the fact that there are a multitude of definitions for “rural” found in various statutes, regulations and programs.

**In an attempt to address this shortcoming, school boards in rural areas are adopting resolutions declaring themselves to be “rural” for purposes of SB 328.**

These resolutions provide details about the community and describe how the district fits within one or more myriad definitions that could apply. Because each district is unique, there is no template resolution to rely upon, but **CSBA members that subscribe to the [District and County Office of Education Legal Services](#) program can contact [legalservices@csba.org](mailto:legalservices@csba.org) for assistance with preparing resolutions** specific to their situation. **[Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)**

## U.S. Department of Education updates

On Feb. 15, **the Education Department opened applications for Javits Gifted and Talented Program** for fiscal year 2022. Up to \$6.6 million in new grants will be awarded for five-year projects that support evidence-based research, demonstration projects, innovative strategies and



additional similar activities. According to the department, this year's applications will need to develop "new information that assists schools in the identification of, and provision of services to, gifted and talented students (including economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals who are multilingual learners, and children with disabilities) who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment

methods." State and local educational agencies and the Bureau of Indian Education are among eligible applicants. **Applications are due on April 4, 2022, and a pre-application webinar is being held on Feb. 24 for those interested.** [Learn more »](#)

The Education Department has also published an update to its [FAQ document on Every Student Succeeds Act accountability system requirements](#). The FAQ can support state and local educational agencies, schools and other stakeholders as they work on implementing assessment and accountability systems this academic year. [View the FAQ »](#)

## Black History Month spotlight: Building a pipeline of Black school counselors



Recognizing the benefits of a diverse teacher workforce, local educational agencies throughout the state have developed career pathways and partnerships with higher education institutions to establish pipelines of well-trained teachers of color. **The advantages of also having a diverse counseling staff, however, are often overlooked.** Caroline Lopez-Perry, associate professor and fieldwork

coordinator for the California State University, Long Beach school counseling program, said **students tend to do better when they're able to connect with a counselor who understands their cultural worldview. Her program has taken steps to diversify its school counseling cohorts, like, demystifying the processes of graduate school, and helping students understand the role of a school counselor in issues of diversity, social justice and advocating for educational equity.** "Something a lot of school counselors of color are looking for is a commitment from schools to equity and allowing counselors to use their skills to build upon that," Lopez-Perry said. [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

## CSBA Delegate Assembly election: Ballots due March 15

Ballots for this year's CSBA Delegate Assembly, in subregions that have elections, were mailed to school districts and county offices of education by Feb. 1. **Completed ballots should be returned to CSBA's West Sacramento office and must be postmarked**



[election »](#)

by the U.S. Postal Service no later than **Tuesday, March 15**, to be valid. All districts, county offices of education and candidates will be **notified of the results by April 1**. Run-off elections will be conducted in the case of tie votes. All new and re-elected Delegates are eligible to attend the May 21–22 Delegate Assembly meeting. [Learn more about CSBA's Delegate Assembly and candidates for](#)

## CSBA's business partners can help your LEA with COVID-19 mitigation



CSBA has partnered with the [COVID Trakker](#); [Crisp Imaging](#); [LifeWings Peak Performance LLC \(LWPP\)](#); [The Maclean Group](#) and [R-Zero](#) to provide a package for districts and county offices of education to address **COVID-19 mitigation strategies**. Services include [COVID-19 Tracing and Updates](#) by COVID Trakker; Crisp Imaging's [PPE and Document Scanning](#) program, which provides custom-designed

products like protective acrylic barriers, infographics and masks, as well as document scanning and management; the [Safer Air Initiative](#) by LWPP, which combines aerosol studies, ventilation, engineering and medical management to offer HVAC strategies for COVID-19 mitigation; the Maclean Group's [Air Purification and Safety Supplies](#) program, consisting of Delos ventilation and air purification equipment, N95 and surgical masks and sanitizing products; and R-Zero's [Hospital-Grade UV-C Disinfection](#) program, which uses a germ-killing UV-C light at a fraction of the cost of comparable products sold in hospitals. [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 [CSBA blog](#).

## Virtual events

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

March 2-3 | [Register](#)

**2022 CCBE County Board Governance**

## **Workshop**

March 11-12 | [Register](#)

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

March 15-16 | [Register](#)

## **Legislative Action Week**

March 15-17 | [Register](#)

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

March 25-26 | [Register](#)

## **In-person events**

### **2022 CCBE County Board Governance Workshop**

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

### **2022 Leadership Institute**

July 22-23 | Los Angeles | [Register](#)

## **External event**

### **Save the date: 2nd Annual California Association of Black School Educators Institute: Implicit Bias & the Systematic De-Education of Black Boys**

July 10-13 | Napa