

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

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Legislative update: LAO estimates budget deficit has surged to \$73 billion



The state Legislature's nonpartisan **Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO)** on Feb. 20 **released an update** on the state's budget deficit, estimating that the deficit has grown by \$15 billion to \$73 billion. In response to Gov. Gavin Newsom's January Budget Proposal, last month the LAO estimated the state's budget shortfall to be \$58 billion, as compared to the Governor's estimated budget deficit of about \$38 billion — a \$20 billion

difference. **Using updated state revenue data, the LAO expressed greater**

uncertainty on whether the state will realize the revenues it needs to meet the Governor's budget projections come May. May is when the state releases the revision to the Governor's January Budget, predominantly reflecting personal income tax revenues in the prior tax year. Citing "weak cash collections" in the months of December and January, the LAO has downgraded their projections to reflect these drops in revenue.

This also reflects the recently released [February Finance Bulletin](#) by the state's Department of Finance (DOF), which provides an economic update, a status on the state's labor market and a window into the state's revenue status and whether revenues are meeting state budget projections. Similar to the LAO's revised budget deficit estimates, according to DOF, revenues are approximately \$5.9 billion below the 2024–25 Governor's Budget forecast for January, primarily due to personal income tax revenues at \$4.7 billion below the state's forecast.

As the Legislature begins their budget hearings, **CSBA Governmental Relations will continue to keep members apprised of budget developments and opportunities for advocacy.**

Legal update: Appeals court backs student in case challenging appropriate IEP



On Feb. 15, 2024, the **Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Ninth Circuit)** issued a decision in *Los Angeles Unified School District v. A.O.*, a case which involves a 3-year-old deaf and hard of hearing student with cochlear implants, who sought special education services from the district. The student's parents challenged the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) provided by the district

and an administrative law judge (ALJ) found in favor of the parents. When the district filed an action in federal district court to have the ALJ's decision reviewed, the district court agreed with the ALJ on most but not all counts. The parties then appealed and cross-appealed to the Ninth Circuit, challenging different aspects of the district court's decision.

In a 2-1 decision, the Ninth Circuit affirmed the district court's decision in part and reversed it in part, essentially affirming the ALJ's decision in all respects. The court concluded that the district's plan to provide speech therapy for 30 minutes per week in one to 10 sessions and audiology services for 20 minutes per month in one to five sessions "fell short of the IDEA because it failed to specify clearly the frequency and duration of offered services" as required by law. The court also considered whether the district's program offered a "meaningful educational benefit" to the student and concluded that it did not. Similarly, the court found that the plan provided by the district, under which the student would have had to spend about 85 percent of time in school in a segregated classroom with other deaf and hard-of-hearing students, did not meet the "least restrictive environment" or mainstreaming requirement of IDEA. Lastly, the court disagreed with the district court but rather affirmed the ALJ that the district's description of the mode of delivering the proposed speech and language therapies as "direct services

(collaborative)” was “opaque” and did not afford the student’s parents enough information to fully evaluate the proposal for their child.

The dissenting judge disagreed with all the findings made by the majority and specifically relied on an argument made by the ELA in its amicus brief that the “reverse mainstreaming” promoted by this decision is not clearly aligned with California law. [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

Federal update: Updated Equity Action Plan identifies key focus areas

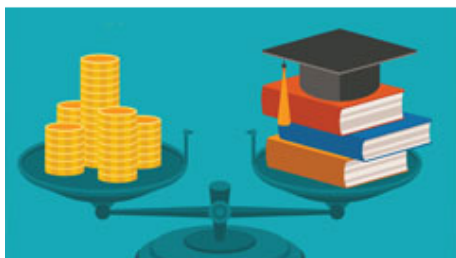


The U.S. Department of Education **released** the **2023 update to its [Equity Action Plan](#)** on Feb. 14. Through public engagement efforts, the department found **five areas of focus for the 2023 plan, including improving college access and completion rates for underserved students; ensuring equitable resources for learning recovery; expanding educational opportunities for justice-impacted individuals**

to improve outcomes; advancing equity in career and technical education; and increasing mental health resources in underserved communities. Progress made to advance equity since the release of the 2022 plan is also covered. [Learn more »](#)

- The U.S. Department of Education and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services are inviting **applications for the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program**, which aims to improve results for children with disabilities through providing technical assistance, supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research. The **priority for the funding is model projects to develop equitable family engagement with underserved families of children with disabilities.** Applications are **due by April 24.** [Learn more »](#)

LAO gives special budget presentation to CSBA Superintendent Advisory Council



A special **presentation on the 2024–25 state budget from the Legislative Analyst’s Office highlighted the Feb. 15 meeting of CSBA’s Superintendents Advisory Council**, a quarterly gathering of administrators from around the state who weigh in on the latest education issues. The convening **also featured analysis of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) updates and reporting requirements,**

revenue options to support increased school funding, proposals to mandate electric school buses and ongoing initiatives from CSBA's Education Legal Alliance and Governmental Relations teams. Budget conversations took center stage when Deputy Legislative Analyst Edgar Cabral offered an extensive review of the Governor's Budget Proposal for TK-14 schools and potential options for addressing the state's revenue shortfall. [Read a full recap of the discussion on the CSBA blog »](#)

What's Your Why? with San Bernardino COE Board Vice President Gwen Dowdy-Rodgers



San Bernardino County Office of Education Board Vice President Gwen Dowdy-Rodgers is committed to helping students overcome the challenges they may face. Dowdy-Rodgers won't give up on students "because no one gave up on me."

"What's Your Why?" is a series of video vignettes featuring school district and county office of education board members describing why they became trustees and why they continue to serve California public schools. [View Dowdy-Rodgers and other videos from the "What's Your Why?" series »](#)

February edition of *California School News* online now



Governance teams' role in March 15 layoff notices, ways that local educational agencies are working together to better support African American youth, a breakdown of the latest federal Civil Rights Data Collection and a recap of CSBA's recent webinar on crisis communications are included in the February issue of *California School News*. Also covered is **San Diego County Office of Education's**

suicide intervention toolkit, a report on rural education needs and successes, enrollment trends, involuntary student transfers and State Board of Education, California School Dashboard, budget and legal updates. [Read the newsletter »](#)

Expert MAA and LEA billing assistance

Student-centered services and medical care in the school-setting are pivotal to student success. **Practi-Cal offers the most comprehensive Medi-Cal and Medicaid Administrative Activities (MAA) billing services** available to



local educational agencies. Its broad range of expertise allows it to **identify areas of reimbursement often overlooked by others and simplifies the complicated billing process**, while minimizing your efforts — all with no up-front costs to the district. [Learn more »](#)

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

Virtual events

Student Board Member Governance Q&A and Networking

March 4 | [Register](#)

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

March 13-14 | [Register](#)

The Brown Act

March 26 | [Register](#)

MIG Course 5: Community Relations & Advocacy/Governance Integration

April 8-May 6 | [Register](#)

Executive Assistants Certification Program Xi Cohort

April 11-June 21 | [Register](#)

Student Board Member Trainings

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

The Role of the School Board in Achieving Equity Through Strategic Budgeting

April 19-20 | [Register](#)

In-person events

Recentering Governance Practices with an Equity Lens

March 1-May 4 | West Sacramento |

Sponsors



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PIPER | SANDLER



[Register](#)

2024 CSBA County Board Governance Workshop

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

MIG Course 3: School Finance

March 9 | Monterey | [Register](#)

What Executive Assistants and Board Presidents Need to Know About the Brown Act

March 11 | Castro Valley | [Register](#)

MIG Course 5: Community Relations & Advocacy/Governance Integration

March 16 | Sunnyvale | [Register](#)

The Role of the School Board in Achieving Equity Through Strategic Budgeting

March 22 | West Sacramento | [Register](#)

Small School District Financial Workshop

March 23 | Orland | [Register](#)

April 6 | San Bernardino | [Register](#)

April 20 | Fowler | [Register](#)

MIG Course 4: Human Resources/Collective Bargaining

April 6 | Monterey | [Register](#)

Coast2Coast Federal Advocacy Trip

April 8-10 | Washington, D.C. | [Register](#)

MIG Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction

April 13 | Redding | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)



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