

California schoolnews

Weekly Update

January 7, 2026

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Register for CSBA January Budget Proposal webinar; Read CEO's statement

Upcoming CSBA Webinar

CSBA is urging Gov. Gavin Newsom to use his final budget cycle to reimagine California's scattered state education system and establish a nation-leading reciprocal accountability model. "Simply put, California's TK-12 education system is too scattered to succeed — and students are paying the price," said CSBA CEO & Executive Director Vernon M. Billy in a statement ahead of the January

Budget Proposal, which will be released by Jan. 10. **"CSBA has been leading the call for a seismic shift in how the state operates, urging policymakers to move beyond disconnected programs, funding gimmicks and underfunded mandates, and**

instead take responsibility for aligning state agencies, policies and budgets around a single goal: closing the achievement gap.

“CSBA continues to call for a state-level operations and support plan that establishes clear goals and benchmarks for state agencies, aligns policy and budget decisions with those goals, and includes transparent reporting and regular, independent evaluations of effectiveness,” Billy continued. “This approach would strengthen local control, reduce duplicative paperwork, and shift the state’s role from compliance enforcement to a concierge, service-oriented model that provides high-quality support — not dictates — to local educational agencies working to improve student outcomes.” [Read the full statement »](#)

During a [webinar](#) held by CSBA at 11 a.m. on Jan. 12, staff will respond to the Governor’s January Budget Proposal. The webinar will help attendees understand key TK–12 fiscal and policy signals in the proposal; track what to watch as the process moves forward; and prepare for coordinated advocacy during the most influential windows of the budget cycle. [Register for the webinar »](#)

Federal update: President signs Secure Rural Schools Act



President Donald Trump validated a sustained and ultimately successful CSBA advocacy effort in support of the nation’s rural schools and communities when he signed S 356, the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Reauthorization Act (Crapo, R-ID), on Dec. 18, 2025. Secure Rural Schools provides payments to counties and public schools on federal forest land, sustaining services and school programs and preventing the closure of numerous isolated rural schools. Nationally, more than 4,400 rural schools across 41 states receive SRS funds.

CSBA has vigorously supported SRS since its inception, pushing to extend the period between reauthorization votes and making the issue a priority during the CSBA-ACSA Coast2Coast Federal Advocacy Trips. Without reauthorization, California’s rural schools would have lost critical funding, depriving students of needed support, exacerbating the state’s achievement gaps and diminishing economic opportunities in rural communities. California Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Richvale), who [passed away](#) on Jan. 5, led the effort in the House of Representatives to pass the Act, essentially the same bill as the Senate version the President signed in December. [Learn more on the CSBA blog »](#)

In other federal news:

- On Dec. 11, the President signed an [executive order](#) titled “Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence,” preemptively blocking state-level regulation of the technology among other actions.
- Separately, 23 state attorneys general, including California’s, on Dec. 17 [filed comments](#) with the Federal Communications Commission “opposing the

preemption of state laws” on AI following a notice of inquiry issued by the agency on the topic in September.

- The U.S. Department of Education recently announced the opening of **the Presidential 1776 Award scholarship contest for high school students**. Three winners will receive scholarships totaling \$250,000.

Legal update: Parental notification of students' gender identity



In a decision granting a **motion for summary judgment issued on Dec. 22** in the case *Mirabelli v. Olson*, a federal district court judge in San Diego ruled that parents have the constitutional right to be notified when their child requests to change their gender presentation at school and that school districts cannot prohibit teachers from sharing information about a student's gender with

parents. The case is a class action lawsuit involving teachers and parents who object to policies that prevent school employees from disclosing information regarding a student's gender identity without the student's consent.

In its decision, the first California case to make this holding, the court held that these policies violate parents' substantive due process rights under the 14th Amendment to make decisions related to the education, medical care and religious upbringing of their children and their First Amendment rights to direct the religious upbringing of their children. Further, the court held that these policies violate teachers' First Amendment rights to free exercise of religion by prohibiting them from sharing information about students with parents. **The case has been appealed and a temporary stay issued. Once a final decision is issued and appeals exhausted, CSBA will review its relevant sample policies to determine whether any revisions are necessary.** [Learn more on the CSBA blog »](#)

Resources for School Board Recognition Month



January is School Board Recognition Month, a time to celebrate California's more than 5,000 school district and county office of education trustees. CSBA encourages local educational agencies, community organizations, mayors and other local officials to **designate January as a time to recognize their hard-working school board members** and educate the public about the important role that school boards play in student

achievement. **Access a sample press release to spread the word to local news outlets, a sample proclamation for city officials and a social media toolkit** to show appreciation to your LEA's board [on the CSBA website »](#)

CSBA AI Taskforce releases recommendations



CSBA's **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Taskforce** has released four new briefs offering insights on AI procurement, using AI to reduce administrative burdens, the board's role in decisions around AI and guidance for the use of AI tools by teachers.

Additionally, newly published letters by AI Taskforce Chair Susan Markarian and CSBA

CEO & Executive Director Vernon M. Billy give background on the taskforce and the critical work its members have undertaken in the past two years to provide LEAs with the resources necessary to consider the technology in a responsible, safe and equitable way. [Read the briefs and letters on the CSBA website under the "Recommendations from the CSBA AI Taskforce" section »](#)

What's Your Why with Florencio Briones, El Monte Union HSD



El Monte Union High School District trustee Florencio Briones makes a point to engage with students and other members of the community to develop meaningful relationships and build trust and a deeper understanding of the work of school board members. "I think that's what's key, is building those relationships and helping young people understand that the work that we do in our

community, it matters," Briones said in CSBA's latest What's Your Why? video.

“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 Briones' interviews and others »](#)

Raise funds needed for real property acquisitions and capital improvements

CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION Program

CSBA's Certificates of Participation program assists California school districts, county offices of education and community college districts in their efforts to raise funds for capital equipment or real property acquisitions and improvements and allows capital project finance or loan refinancing without voter approval. Finance construction, renovations, equipment, energy projects and more with fast and efficient

financing. [Learn more »](#)

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

Virtual events

Executive Assistant (EA) Training Program Tau cohort: Understanding Culture 1A/1B

Jan. 22-23 | [Register](#)

Masters in Governance (MIG) Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction

Jan. 26 and Feb. 23 | [Register](#)

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

Jan. 28-29 | [Register](#)

Board Presidents

Feb. 4 | [Register](#)

The Brown Act

Feb. 6 | [Register](#)

MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2

Feb. 11-12 | [Register](#)

Sponsors



EA Tau: Governance 2A/2B

Feb. 19-20 | [Register](#)

MIG Course 4: Human

Resources/Collective Bargaining

Feb. 25-26 | [Register](#)



In-person events

MIG Course 1: Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction

Feb. 21 | Chico | [Register](#)

Feb. 21 | San Jose | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)