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Legislative update: Details emerge about Newsom’s education governance proposal

Earlier this month, **the state released its budget trailer bill language, which provides a clearer picture of what Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed in January regarding potentially moving the responsibility of overseeing the California Department of Education (CDE) from the state superintendent of public instruction (SSPI) to the State Board of Education (SBE).**

For the last 175 years, the SSPI has been the figurehead of the state’s public education system, serving as its executive director and administrator of state and federal programs



and funding. However, numerous reports over the past 50 years have highlighted the fragmented way in which the state has governed public education with a governor and SSPI both elected as state constitutional officers — creating a bifurcated governance structure over public education. It only becomes more convoluted when the role of the SBE is considered — of which all members are appointed by the governor.

Gov. Newsom has proposed a paradigm shift in how the state oversees public education at the state level. Specifically, the Governor proposed the following:

- Remove all the statutory authority of the SSPI as executive director over the CDE and as secretary to the SBE and replace that position with an education commissioner to be appointed by the governor
- The education commissioner will be vested with the authority to oversee all state and federal grants and programs and will report to the governor and SBE
- Provides the governor the ability to appoint 16 deputies to the education commissioner and transfers SBE staff to the CDE, which will be overseen by the education commissioner
- Eliminates one voting position on the SBE and replaces it with the SSPI, which currently serves as an ex-officio member, and elevates the SSPI from an ex-officio member to a voting member on the California Community College Board of Governors
- Establishes a deputy SSPI and three new associate superintendents that will be appointed by the SBE, as well as one additional deputy superintendent and another undescribed employee to be appointed by the SSPI

[Read CSBA's response to the Governor's education governance proposal »](#)

State update: CDE reiterates parental rights under FERPA



On Feb. 11, **the California Department of Education (CDE) sent a [letter](#) to local educational agency leaders reiterating facts about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and California law.** “As previously and continuously stated, there is no evidence to support the Trump administration’s allegation that ‘the CDE coerces school districts to withhold information’ from parents,” according to a

CDE [press release](#).

Per FERPA, upon their request, parents of minor students have the right to inspect and review their child’s education records with the exception of records excluded from FERPA, which are outlined in the letter.

“As we have noted in previous communications to you about FERPA, [Assembly Bill] 1955 does not contradict parents' rights to request to inspect and review their students' education records under FERPA, even if they contain information related to a student's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression,” the letter states. “Moreover, no other provisions of California law, such as state privacy or antidiscrimination laws, contradict or override the right of parents to request their students' education records subject to FERPA.” [View the letter »](#)

In other state news:

- The **CDE announced the 2026 California Green Ribbon Schools awardees**, including 26 schools, 12 districts and one county office of education. Five recipients earned the highest distinction, Green Achiever. Those honorees are San Bernardino City Unified School District's Captain Leland F. Norton Elementary; Moraga School District's Joaquin Moraga Intermediate; National SD; Ravenswood City SD; and Lycée Français de San Francisco, a private school. [See the list of all awardees »](#)
- The **Community Engagement Initiative posted a request for applications for its seventh cohort of LEAs that will participate in a two-year process working toward “more authentic relationships and improved local decision-making.”** The application portal will open March 2 with an informational meeting and close April 17. [Learn more »](#)

Legal update: Court rules U.S. Department of Education cannot withhold California funding while lawsuit moves forward



On Feb. 11, the **U.S. District Court for the Northern District Court of California issued a temporary restraining order (TRO)** in the case *State of California v. U.S. Department of Education*. California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed the **lawsuit** following the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) determination that the California Department of Education (CDE) is in violation of the Family Educational

Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). More information on the investigation and findings is described on the [CSBA blog](#).

The TRO prevents the ED from withholding federal education funds to California while the lawsuit moves forward. The court's decision on the TRO acknowledged that at this time there is no specific evidence that funds will be immediately withheld, but “[n]onetheless, given the number of California public school students potentially affected, the fact that the Federal Government has been equivocal regarding whether and when it may take action, and the opportunity for significant harm to the entire California education system, this dispute requires temporary judicial intervention until the matter can be fully briefed, and heard.”

Federal update: Education Department guidance on funding for teacher workforce strategies



On Feb. 9, the **U.S. Department of Education published guidance** for state and local educational agency leaders “emphasizing existing flexibilities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to use Title II, Part A (Title II) funds to implement innovative teacher workforce strategies, including strategic staffing models,” according to a **press release**. “These strategies are designed to

improve academic achievement and student outcomes by strengthening educator support and expanding instructional options.”

Instead of the traditional one teacher-one classroom model, strategic staffing involves having at least two educators responsible for a group of students during the same blocks of time during the academic day. Examples of models that could be implemented to meet local needs include educator pipelines, induction and mentoring for new educators, differentiated roles and compensation and more. [View the guidance »](#)

The February newsletter is here



Read the latest edition of *California School News* to learn about state budget developments, the Governor’s call for the reorganization of the California Department of Education, governance teams’ role in March 15 staffing layoff notices and new CSBA resources to guide local educational agencies as they consider implementing artificial intelligence technology. The issue also includes

a preview of the CSBA Counties Governance Workshop, happening March 11-12 in San Diego; information on **sample policies regarding supporting highly mobile students and those with disabilities**; and highlights programs from Stockton Unified School District for Black History Month and Sacramento County Office of Education for Career Technical Education Month. [Read it now »](#)

Black History Month spotlight: Important considerations for closing literacy gaps among Black students

The California Department of Education hosted a **webinar in January to equip local educational agency leaders, educators and other stakeholders with best practices and actionable strategies to improve literacy outcomes for Black students.**



With Black History Month in full swing, now is a perfect time for administrators and governance teams to revisit the discussion between two experts who spoke on how the state's pivot to the science of reading, state leaders' calls for all students to be able to read by third grade, recent state funding initiatives, teacher training investments, legislation, new screening requirements and more are a promising start.

However, it's how these things translate to the classroom that will make all the difference. [Read more on the CSBA blog »](#)

CTC moves forward extension of substitute teacher time limits despite concern from the field



The **California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) on Feb. 12-13 discussed and moved forward the extension of substitute teaching time limits**, revised Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) standards and the new TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework among other items.

Staff presented revised recommendations for extending substitute teacher time limits from 30 to 60 days, including an option for a fully credentialed teacher and an alternate pathway to earn the existing Emergency Career Substitute Permit for individuals who do not yet meet the Career Substitute Permit's three-year experience requirement. **Public commenters mostly disapproved of the recommendations for excluding special education classrooms and not offering enough flexibility.**

"To expect a small school district administrator to be able to undertake additional administrative tasks to seek out a waiver is placing additional burdens on an already burdened position," said CSBA Legislative Director Chris Reeve. "This is something that has been a product of our sponsored bill, where we tried to reach agreement on a temporary approach. **The proposed regulations are a permanent approach and will create greater disparities across the state, and so we strongly urge the commission to table this for further discussion.**" [Read the meeting recap on the CSBA blog »](#)

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

Ethics Assembly Bill 2158

Feb. 27 | [Register](#)

March 23 | [Register](#)

April 8 | [Register](#)

Masters in Governance (MIG) Course 5: Community Relations & Advocacy/Governance Integration

March 11-12 | [Register](#)

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

March 16 and April 13 | [Register](#)

Legislative Action Week

March 17-19 | [Register](#)

Executive Assistant (EA) Tau: Job Mechanics 3A/3B

March 19-20 | [Register](#)

In-person events

Education Workforce Housing Bootcamp

March 6 | Napa | [Register](#)

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

March 10 | San Diego | [Register](#)

2026 CSBA Counties Governance Workshop

March 11-12 | San Diego | [Register](#)

Sponsors



Education Workforce Housing 101

Workshop Series: Part 1

March 13 | Palo Alto | [Register](#)

March 20 | Los Angeles | [Register](#)

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

March 14 | Chico | [Register](#)

March 14 | San Jose | [Register](#)

MIG Course 3: School Finance Part 1 and Part 2

March 28 | Chico | [Register](#)

March 28 | San Jose | [Register](#)

[View complete calendar](#)