

What Makes a School Excellent in Small School Settings



Tim Taylor
Executive Director
Small School Districts' Association

This newsletter focuses on Inspiring Excellence in our Schools. It aligns with the announcement in early January when CDE announced the 2022-23 California Distinguished Schools, which will be celebrated this Spring in Disneyland. Congratulations to our member

districts who received that incredible honor.

So, it got me thinking about how great leaders inspire and create excellence on their campuses.

1. Leadership.

A strong leader makes a school great. They inspire, listen, communicate exceptionally well, offer support and guidance, and are trusted. They are the driving force for excellence. A secret sauce of a great district and school leader: they love kids and love being kid-like to create a culture that is positive, safe, and fun. When I visit a great school or district, every great leader does silly, fun, random, and motivating things to let everyone know that this school is AWESOME.

Lastly, great leaders embrace their community and do not need an LCAP requirement to involve their communities.

So, dress up in a mascot and dance with your staff and kids!

2. Unified Staff.

Great teachers are like the starting lineup for a team. They are honest, trusting, and committed to the school's mission and goals. The rest of the team is on the roster, making the school from good to great. The team roster includes paraeducators, office staff, maintenance and operations, bus drivers, and volunteers, and they bring home the championship. You will not have an inspiring school of excellence without the starting lineup and roster unified and family-like! Every great school has an excellent front office, the grounds and facilities are meticulous, the food service teams are incredible, and all the kids love the bus ride to and from!

3. Students First Organization.

Easy to say "students first," but difficult for governing board, leaders, and adults to stay 100% committed to that. Top schools do, and it starts with the school board. If you attend a meeting regularly and the board spends most of its time on adult-only issues, that sets the tone for the rest of the district. Great schools have a Superintendent and School board who are all about the students. Again, that seems simple, but few fully commit and understand that significant value! Excellent schools do!

4. Site Leaders who understand data, instruction, and professional development.

An incredible instructional leader leads a great school. The formula is simple:

- Hire great staff.
- Align professional development to address their areas of growth or expansion.
- Monitor and celebrate student achievement.

So many leaders spend very little time in classrooms, shoulder-to-shoulder coaching teachers and using local data to individualize student success and areas to focus on. Being a site leader is extremely tough—the great ones block out time every week to inspire excellence by being in the classrooms.

5. Entrepreneurial Environments.

Being entrepreneurial is not just about getting more revenue. A school district must embrace an environment where teachers and staff feel safe to innovate, try things, fail, and bounce back. The best schools I have visited all have unique niches that make students feel so amazing and loved that they can't wait to be at school. It is because the administration gives teachers and staff the freedom and support to create and develop inspiration and excellence. The board and administration are also entrepreneurial in that they don't just rely on Proposition 98 funding. They apply for grants, raise funding for their foundation, connect with local businesses, and are incredible networkers at the state level.

So that is the secret sauce of districts and schools that inspire excellence. Enjoy our newsletter highlighting excellent SSDA schools.

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Get Ready for the Annual SSSA State Conference



The SSSA 2023 Annual State Conference will take place at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Downtown Sacramento, Sunday, March 5th through Tuesday, March 7th. If you missed out last year, you are in for a treat this year. The conference has something for everyone, new breakout sessions, keynote speakers, a fundraising golf tournament, and casino night. You won't want to miss it!

Breakout Sessions Explained

This year's conference intends to inspire excellence in education. There will be a total of six different breakout strands: SEL, Curriculum, New/Veteran Superintendents, Finance/Funding, Board Best Practices, and Community Engagement. Each breakout session will have one to three speakers that will share their expertise on the specific topic. The session will be 50 minutes in length with a 10-minute question-and-answer segment session.

Also, this year, we will be introducing a new breakout session, the Half Hour Power Hour. In 30 minutes or less, you will explore the topics that interest you. In total, there will be 36 breakout sessions at the 2023 conference, which aims to provide something for everyone. Take a look at our conference website for the in-depth agenda that showcases the different breakout strands and their schedules.

Keynote Speakers

We welcome Dr. Pedro Noguera to the 2023 SSSA Conference. Dr. Noguera is the Emery Stoops and Joyce Kings Stoops Dean at the USC Rossier School of Education. He is a sociologist whose research focuses on how social and economic conditions influence schools. Dr. Noguera will be speaking at the conference on Monday, March 6th, from 8:45 AM to 9:35 AM.



On Monday afternoon, we will host a County Office Panel. This panel includes five notable Superintendents, Torie Gibson of Amador County Unified School District, Patty Gunderson of Lassen County Office of Education, Mike Martin of Modoc County Office of Education, Stacey Adler of Mono County Office of Education, and Richard DuVarney of Tehama County Department of Education. Their panel will be held after lunch, from 12:40 PM to 1:40 PM. They will share their insights on how you can work best with your county office.

Entertaining Events for Everyone

Kicking off the conference on Sunday, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, is the annual golf tournament, also known as the Swing Fore Scholarships, at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex, located at 3645 Fulton Avenue, Sacramento, California. The golf tournament is the perfect venue to catch up with your colleagues while participating in fun competitions. You can truly embrace the fun by purchasing prizes, all proceeds go to scholarships for small school district students. [Register here for the Golf Tournament.](#)

Receptions will be held throughout your stay at the conference. SSSA President Terri Rufert will open the conference with a Welcome Reception Sunday, from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM, we will honor and celebrate our colleagues with special awards. The coveted teacher of the Year Award will be given on Sunday night in the Grand Nave Ballroom. Other awards, such as the Executive Assistant of the Year Award and the Binderup Award, will be presented on Monday.

Finally, join us Monday night in the Grand Nave Ballroom of the Sheraton Grand Hotel for Casino Night! Play blackjack, enjoy a treat in the dessert bar, take a picture with your colleagues in the photo booth and win prizes.



LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL



CASINO NIGHT!

MARCH 6, 2023

8:00 PM - 11:00 PM

At the SSSA 2023 Annual State Conference



Register Today!

Attend the 2023 SSSA State Conference by registering here. There are three options when registering, so feel free to email us for assistance identifying which option applies to you. Our in-depth agenda can be found on our website. Finally, make sure to book your stay at the Sheraton Grand Hotel after you register.



Students, Staff, and Teachers in Small Districts Inspire Excellence in Education



When it comes to education, unconventional strategies can often pay off in unexpected ways. This is especially true in small school districts throughout rural parts of California, where students, teachers, and staff come together to inspire each other and promote excellence in education.

A prime example of inspiring excellence in education comes from Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union Elementary School District. Located in LA County, this rural district has one TK-8 school with 170 students, and one teacher, Terra LaFayette, has gone above and beyond. Not only does LaFayette teach math, science, and history to 7th and 8th grade students, she is the school's only Special Education RSP teacher. In addition, LaFayette is the school's Administrative Designee, the coach of the robotics team, and the leader of the school's annual trip to Washington D.C.

"She [Terra] is energetic, enthusiastic about providing the best learning experiences for our students, and a great collaborator. She has been with the district for many years and is passionate about the school and community," said Hughes-Elizabeth Superintendent Susan Denton in an email.

Other teachers in California have also gone above and beyond to help their districts. At Spratling Middle School in Hughson, teacher Brian Hughes teaches 6th grade math and language arts, as well as coaching boys and girls basketball, advising the Student Council, and being selected as the 2022 Love Stanislaus County Teacher of the Year. Mr. Hughes is also a PBIS team member and serves as the head teacher when principal Debbie Ruger is away.

"Brian is always willing to help with events and school activities," wrote Ruger via email. "He greets each student at the door for class, and he spends his lunch opening the gym to play basketball with the students. He's supportive of students, parents, and staff, and embraces new curriculums and instructional strategies as they are implemented."

It's not just teachers that inspire their students, however. In some districts, the students encourage each other. At Spratling Middle School, the Student Council prepares an annual turkey dinner—which sold 367 dinners in 2022—and hosts spirit days and Red Ribbon week. The Spratling Student Council also cleans up the campus, hosts fundraising events during holidays, and assists with community service projects such as a canned food drive.

Spratling Principal Ruger also highlighted 8th grader Yosgart Toledo-Farias, who serves as the student body president. Toledo-Farias is in his second year in the school's leadership program and represents the school on various committees, including the School Site Council. He also attends all board meetings as a school leadership representative.

"Yosgart leads by example and is an excellent school representative who is well-respected by both staff and students," Principal Ruger stated. "He also takes initiative by taking care of various school needs and concerns. For example, he recently wrote a well-thought and articulated letter to administration on behalf of the student body, raising questions and concerns regarding the school dress code. He's a strong academic student and maintains a positive attitude."

Other students across the state have also stepped up to leadership roles within their communities. For example, at Santa Barbara Unified High School, senior Malia Alzina recently secured 500 pairs of Bombas socks to donate to teachers and students in need.

"When I attended Adams Elementary School, we were taught John Wooden's pillars of success.

As part of those pillars, we learned that it's the little details that make big things happen. I

remember learning about the first lesson John Wooden would teach his players; how to put on

your shoes and socks correctly. He taught his players that one little wrinkle in their socks could

turn into a big blister. He wanted his players to know that it's the details that matter. Your

attention to the details in our lives are what make us feel connected and want to be the very best we can be, thank you!" wrote Alzina in a letter to the school.

Alzina also served as the photographer and videographer for the New Superintendents and High School Principals Summit in the summer of 2022.

SSDA is proud to focus on the students and staff that have reached out to inspire others in their districts. For more information on the SSDA 2023 State Conference, please visit www.ssda.org.

~By Brett Bunge



Prepare for Tomorrow's Uncertainties with Proactive Prefunding Approach



Ryan Nicasio
Senior Vice President
PARS

School districts will continue facing fiscal challenges in the coming years including pending reserve caps, rising CalSTRS/CalPERS contribution rates, the approaching "fiscal cliff," salary inflation, and/or declining enrollment. All factors that will strain district budgets. In preparation of these potential fiscal issues, many districts have successfully begun prefunding their Other Post-Employment Benefits ("OPEB" or retiree health benefits) and/or their pension costs through an irrevocable trust. These trusts allow districts to set aside funds for these critical obligations while potentially providing relief to the General Fund during difficult times.

With the prospect of rising liabilities and availability of one-time funds, why is an OPEB/pension trust a good option for districts? Here are five important reasons:

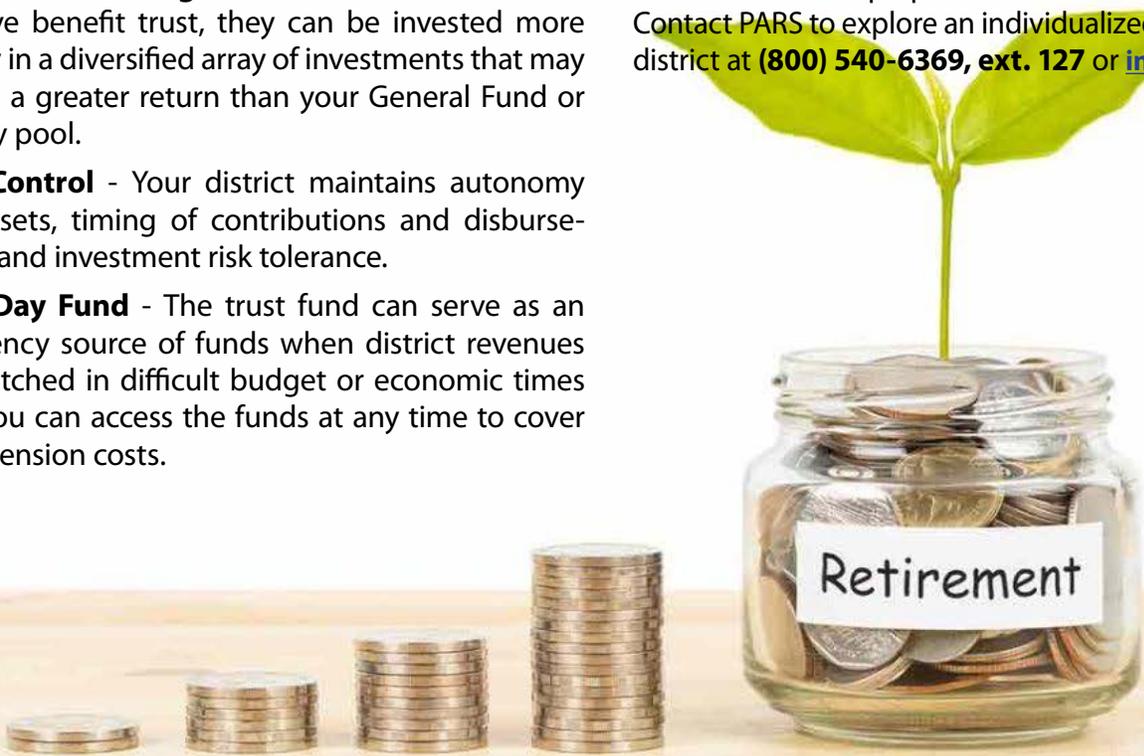
1. **Stabilize Costs** - Access funds at any time to reimburse for OPEB/pension costs to help offset rising costs and reduce possible strain on the General Fund.
2. **Diversified Investing** - Since assets are held in an exclusive benefit trust, they can be invested more broadly in a diversified array of investments that may achieve a greater return than your General Fund or treasury pool.
3. **Local Control** - Your district maintains autonomy over assets, timing of contributions and disbursements, and investment risk tolerance.
4. **Rainy Day Fund** - The trust fund can serve as an emergency source of funds when district revenues are stretched in difficult budget or economic times since you can access the funds at any time to cover OPEB/pension costs.

5. **Partnership with CSBA** - PARS and CSBA are proud partners on the **OPEB Solution Program**, which has been thoughtfully designed to provide districts with a flexible solution that will fit the unique needs of each district.

PARS is a pioneer in the concept of OPEB/pension prefunding and is the largest private provider of this service in the nation. With over 500 prefunding clients and over \$4.9 billion in assets in our OPEB/pension prefunding trusts, you will be able to count on the superior consulting and administrative services from our California-based team, which our clients have experienced since our founding, nearly 40 years ago.

During times of economic uncertainty, districts have also turned to PARS as the leading expert on early retirement incentives. The **PARS Supplementary Retirement Plan (SRP)**, can be used by districts to cut costs, reduce the need for lay-offs, and achieve other workforce management goals. PARS has helped over 370 school districts achieve their fiscal objectives through the creative design and implementation of a SRP. PARS' commitment to districts is to be fully transparent and upfront with the results of the SRP analysis. PARS will explore options with you to best meet your goals, but if the numbers don't work, PARS will advise against it and recommend a timeline for when it may be beneficial to conduct a new analysis.

Now is the time to prepare for economic challenges ahead. Contact PARS to explore an individualized solution for your district at **(800) 540-6369, ext. 127** or info@pars.org.



Are You Ready To Revitalize Your Workforce and Prepare for the Pending Fiscal Cliff?

School districts continue to face challenges with declining enrollment, rising STRS/PERS costs and the pending "fiscal cliff." In an effort to mitigate some of the long term effects of these fiscal challenges, districts need to prepare now and plan for the future. The PARS early retirement incentive program, PARS Supplementary Retirement Plan (SRP), has helped hundreds of school districts reduce their labor costs and revitalize their workforce while eliminating or reducing the need for layoffs in many cases. PARS also helps districts address their long-term liabilities to help mitigate STRS/PERS cost increases and create a rainy-day fund for the future through the PARS OPEB Solutions Program and innovative pension prefunding trust, the Pension Rate Stabilization Program (PRSP).

To learn more and to obtain a complimentary analysis, contact PARS at: (800) 540-6369 ext. 127 or info@pars.org; www.pars.org.

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at just \$150 per year...**

- Annual conference every spring
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- Professional development in marketing, public relations, and crisis communication

Overview of Governor's 2023-24 January State Budget Proposal



Abe Hajela, Partner
Capitol Advisors Group

On January 10th, Governor Newsom released his January budget proposal and provided a largely upbeat assessment of California's fiscal condition based on budget

resiliency actions (expanding reserves, reducing liabilities, one-time spending, etc.) in prior years. For K-14 education there were no big surprises in this budget proposal – despite an overall General Fund revenue shortfall compared to the 2022 Budget Act, reductions to the Proposition 98 Guarantee are modest and cuts to ongoing programs are avoided. In fact, the LCFF and most ongoing categorical programs (such as special education) receive an 8.13% COLA. In short, mostly good news for K-14 public education despite lower revenues than anticipated in the last Budget.

Remember, this budget proposal kicks off a six-month process to develop the 2023 Budget Act and much can change before we get to a final budget. The economic and revenue conditions in California are particularly volatile right now, and everything from significant revenue gains to dipping into a recession are still possible over the next months and years. We will know much more when the budget is revised in May.

For K-12 education, below are some of the highlights from the Governor's proposal:

- **Proposition 98 Guarantee for 2023-24** – Projected to be \$108.8 billion, roughly \$1.5 billion lower than in the 2022 Budget Act.
- **8.13% COLA for LCFF, County Office Funding and Select Categorical Programs** – The Administration proposes an 8.13% COLA for these programs, but the final statutory COLA is not calculated until April.
- **Implementation/Expansion of Newer Programs Maintained** – The Governor plans to continue scheduled implementation of transitional kindergarten, universal meals, ELOP, workforce training, Special Education, etc.
- **Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant** – A reduction of about \$1.2 billion and redirection of these and other one-time funds to help cover the costs of the LCFF COLA in 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- **School Facilities Program** – Slight decrease of \$100 million to the current \$2.1 billion proposed for the SFP in 2023-24.

Overview

In presenting his January budget proposal, Governor Newsom was primarily focused on describing how the values and priorities of his Administration and the Legislature would continue to be implemented despite a reduction in revenues. Newsom largely credited fiscal discipline over the last several years for the strong condition of the California budget, including large budget reserves, eliminating budget debt and paying down long-term liabilities, and a high percentage of one-time spending instead of increases to ongoing commitments. While the Governor reiterated his commitment to addressing fundamental issues such as climate change and homelessness, he also indicated that the state does not have the resources to create significant new programs. This may lead to an interesting dynamic with a California Legislature that contains many new members who are likely to want to introduce bills to further their own priorities.

General Fund Revenues, Expenditures and Reserves

General Fund (GF) revenues are forecast to be \$29.5 billion lower over the three-year budget period as compared to the 2022 Budget Act. For 2023-24 specifically, the revenue shortfall is \$22.25 billion, with GF revenues forecast at about \$210 billion rather than the \$232.5 billion anticipated in the 2022 Budget Act. Note that this revenue shortfall is not particularly relevant to the resources available for K-14 spending, which is discussed in detail below. With a prior year balance of about \$21.5 billion and some adjustments to budget reserve transfers, total GF expenditures for 2023-24 are proposed to be \$223.6 billion.

While the State maintains healthy GF budget reserves (not including Prop 98 Reserve) totaling \$27.1 billion in the January proposal, the Newsom Administration intends to close the current budget shortfall without tapping into these budget reserves. Governor Newsom notes that there is significant uncertainty in the economic forecast, and while this budget proposal does not project a recession, a more negative forecast is certainly possible. Retaining budget reserves puts the State in a better position to respond if economic conditions deteriorate in the coming months or years.

Without delving into the details (again, because this shortfall is less relevant to K-14 expenditures), the Governor proposes to cover the budget shortfall through a mixture of funding delays and reductions, as well as funding shifts that relieve pressure on the General Fund. For the most part, the Governor stretches out the timeline to implement some recent policy objectives and rescinds some inflationary adjustments to programs in future years.

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Proposition 98 and Reserves

We continue to be in Test 1 throughout the budget period for purposes of calculating the Proposition 98 Guarantee. This means that the Guarantee is based on a percentage of GF revenues and is not adjusted for the decrease in enrollment. Factoring in the rebench of Proposition 98 to account for TK expansion, the Test 1 percentage is 38.6% of GF revenues. For 2023-24 that is projected to be \$108.8 billion, a \$1.5 billion decrease compared to the 2022 Budget Act. Over the three-year budget period (2021-22 through 2023-24) there is a total decrease in the Proposition 98 Guarantee of \$4.7 billion compared to the 2022 Budget Act. However, due to other base adjustments, reductions in reserve deposits (discussed immediately below), one-time solutions and the utilization of other one-time funds (discussed under LCFF below), the Administration calculates that almost \$6 billion of Proposition 98 funds are available for expenditure in the budget year.

While the 2022 Budget Act projected a total balance of \$9.5 billion in the Proposition 98 reserve, transfers to the reserve were adjusted downward in the January budget proposal. With smaller transfers in the current and budget years, the revised balance is a little more than \$8.5 billion by the end of 2023-24. Note that the revised reserve balance of \$8.1 billion in 2022-23 is still sufficient to trigger school district reserve caps in 2023-24.

LCFF, COLA and New Equity and Accountability Proposals

The Administration proposes an LCFF COLA of 8.13%, which is obviously very high but also in line with the inflation rate. This COLA applies to both school district/charter school and county office LCFF models. The final statutory COLA is not calculated until April, so it is not yet clear whether or not the actual statutory COLA will be higher or lower than 8.13%. This COLA is supported by ongoing resources available in the budget year, which are primarily due to 2022 Budget Act one-time allocations, which are now available for ongoing purposes and some reductions in cost due to lower ADA. However, the Governor also proposes using more than \$600 million in one-time resources to support the ongoing cost of LCFF in 2022-23, and another \$1.4 billion in one-time resources to support the ongoing cost of the LCFF in 2023-24. In part, these one-time resources are available based on a proposed reduction in funding for the Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant of \$1.2 billion, discussed below.

While little detail is included, the Governor also proposes to accelerate learning gains and close opportunity gaps by adding an equity multiplier as an add-on to the LCFF. This proposal is in response to legislation proposed by Assembly Member Akilah Weber (D-San Diego) last year to add LCFF resources for the lowest performing subgroup of students. The pro-

posal states that funds will be allocated based on school-site eligibility using a more targeted methodology than the existing supplemental grant eligibility. The Administration also proposes to improve K-12 accountability and the continuous improvement system through amendments to the LCAP and Differentiated Assistance processes.

Maintaining Recent Programs and Investments

The budget proposes to maintain funding levels for several major existing programs, several of which the Administration views as crucial to getting students back on track after the academic losses and social/emotional hardships caused by COVID-19. These major investments include:

Universal Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Expanding Preschool

The Governor's budget proposal maintains its commitment to funding both expanded TK ADA via the rebenching of Prop 98, and also increased funding to add TK staff to classrooms. As a reminder, the TK rollout will expand TK access to all children turning 5 between February 2, and April 2, commencing with the 2023-24 school year. One thing to note: although current law states LEAs will be required to maintain an average adult-to-child ratio across TK classrooms of 1:10 beginning in 2023-24, the law also states that a specific budget appropriation would be required to shift to that 1:10 ratio from the currently required 1:12. At this time, however, it appears that appropriation will not be made in the 2023-24 budget, and therefore, LEAs may remain at the currently required 1:12 average adult-to-student ratio in TK classrooms.

Specifically, the budget proposal includes the following adjustments and funding for Universal TK:

- Provides \$690 million in 2023-24 for estimated TK ADA expansion to serve children turning 5 from September 2 to April 2 – this reflects 2 additional months of eligibility (Feb 2 to April 2)
- Provides \$165 million in 2023-24 to support adding one additional certificated or classified staff in TK classrooms
- Adjusts estimated \$614 million provided in 2022 Budget Act to cover TK ADA down to \$604 million based on new enrollment and attendance data – this brings total funding for TK expansion to just under \$1.3 billion
- Similarly adjusts \$383 million for TK staffing provided in 2022 Budget Act down to \$337 million
- Delays, until 2024-25, additional \$550 million for Preschool, TK, and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program – this funding was included as "intent language" in the 2022 Budget Act

In addition to the Universal TK rollout, the Governor continues to expand inclusive access to the California State Preschool

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Program (CSPP). The 2022 Budget Act included resources for, and requirements that, CSPP providers incrementally ramp-up to, by July 1, 2024, serve at least 10 percent students with disabilities, and provide additional supports for dual language learners. The Governor's 2023-24 budget proposal includes:

- \$64.5 million Prop 98, and \$51.8 million GF to continue the CSPP inclusivity ramp-up – the 2023-24 year will be the second year of the ramp-up and will increase the inclusivity requirement to serving 7.5% students with disabilities (up from 5%)
- \$152.7 million GF to support reimbursement rate increases that were previously supported by one-time federal stimulus funding

Literacy

Even prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the state began investing billions in a system to improve student literacy outcomes. These investments include, among others, \$7.9 billion for the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant, \$1.5 billion for the Educator Effectiveness Block Grant, and \$50 million for professional development. The budget proposes an additional \$250 million for literacy coaches and reading specialists in high-poverty schools, which, including prior investments, would bring the total to \$500 million. The budget also proposes \$1 million for development of a Literacy Roadmap to help educators access the resources that are available.

Special Education

The past several years have seen significant investments in the special education system, including nearly \$2 billion in ongoing Prop 98 funding. Prior investments will be held even and will be adjusted by the 8.13% COLA. Several programmatic changes are proposed that will be major topics of debate as they make their way through legislative deliberations. These changes are:

- Limiting the amount of additional funding that Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) are allowed to retain for non-direct student services before allocating special education base funding to their member LEAs.
- Stabilizing current SELPA membership by extending the moratorium on the creation of new single-district SELPAs by two years from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2026.
- Increasing fiscal transparency by requiring the California Department of Education (CDE) to post each SELPA's annual local plan, including their governance, budget and services plans, on its website.

Educator Workforce

The state has made considerable investments in teacher work-

force development and retention, several of which are now well established and showing positive results. Understanding that a fully staffed educator workforce is integral to essentially every new and expanded educational program that has been rolled out, the budget proposes to stay the course on these investments, which include the Educator Effectiveness Block grant (also mentioned in the Literacy section above), the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, and the Classified School Employee Teacher Credential Program.

Adjustments to Arts Education Funding

Pursuant to Proposition 28 (the Arts and Music in Schools-Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act), which was approved by voters in November 2022, the budget provides \$941 million to increase arts instruction and programming in schools. Citing this additional investment in the arts, as well as the need for additional one-time funding to cover the costs of LCFF in 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Governor's budget also includes a \$1.2 billion reduction in funding for the Arts, Music, Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant that was funded in the 2022-23 budget. With this decrease, funding for that block grant is now approximately \$2.3 billion. This will mean that the expected Spring 2023 second allocation to LEAs of this Block Grant would be eliminated or reduced in order to free up funds for the LCFF.

The Governor's budget also includes \$100 million one-time Prop 98 to help LEAs provide high school seniors access to "cultural enrichment experiences," like museum visits and theatrical performances.

School Facilities

The Governor makes good on his commitment to provide GF dollars for the School Facilities Program to fund new construction and modernization projects. However, a proposed \$100 million reduction in the planned investment would decrease that planned allocation in 2023-24 from approximately \$2.1 billion to approximately \$2.0 billion. This investment will certainly not meet the current school facilities need in the state, but it will help provide funding at least until the legislature has the opportunity to debate placing another statewide bond before voters. As we mentioned in a previous update, Senator Steve Glazer (D-Orinda) introduced a \$15.5 billion statewide school facilities bond in December. As drafted, SB 28 the Public Preschool, K-12, and College Health and Safety Bond Act of 2024, could go before voters in March 2024. SB 28 also is identical to Proposition 13 which voters rejected in March 2020.

The administration also proposes a one-time investment of \$30 million Proposition 98 General Fund to the Charter School Facility Grant Program widely referred to as the SB 740 Program, which is also consistent with the 2022 Budget Act agreement.



California's New Lawmakers: An Opportunity for New Relationships



Barrett Snider

In December, California's State Legislature convened for the 2023-24 Legislative Session with an incredibly large freshmen class, creating an imperative for school leaders to build new relationships. California's Legislature, along with the Governor, decides how much state fund-

ing schools receive each year (over \$100 billion) and control the rules regarding how that money can be spent. Additionally, they make the laws that govern how schools operate.

Democrats continue to control more than 3/4 supermajorities in both houses. Of the 40 seats in the State Senate, Democrats control 32 seats while Republicans control 8. Of the 80 seats in the State Assembly, Democrats control 62 seats, while Republicans control 18.

As SSDA ramps up engagement in the state budget conversations and other public policy issues in 2023, we are making it a priority to cultivate relationships with all of California's new lawmakers, but several of them are worth noting:

Senator Marie Alverado-Gil (D) worked for Rocketship Public schools prior to being elected to the State Senate. She also served as a Commissioner on the Advisory Commission on Special Education. She represents thirteen counties along the South Eastern part of the state (from Placer to Inyo counties).

Assembly Member Dawn Addis (D) from the Central Cost could be a pivotal lawmaker for SSDA. She represents many rural and small school agencies from the top of Santa Barbara County to the bottom of the Bay Area coastline. Addis is a former Special Education teacher. Politically, she was supported by labor, management, and charter schools.

Assembly Member Juan Carrillo (D) from San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties is a former school board member from Palmdale School District and represents many small and rural schools.

Assembly Member Josh Hoover (R) representing the eastern part of Sacramento County, is the former chief of staff to former Assembly Education Committee Vice Chair Kevin Kiley (R), who was recently elected to Congress. SSDA has worked well with Hoover in the past as a Capitol staffer. He has a child with special needs.

Assembly Member Corey Jackson (D) served on the Riverside Board of Education from 2020-2022 and has experience with small and rural schools.

Get to Know Your Legislators

SSDA is asking member school leaders to make it a priority to build a relationship with their state lawmakers, particularly if they are new. Superintendents and school board members should have little trouble getting a one-on-one meeting, preferably over coffee or a meal. We recommend building these relationships before asking for anything. School leaders should view themselves as information resources to their state elected representatives.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me (barrett@capitoladvisors.org) should you need any help.

New Member Bios

Maps, pictures, and brief bios for California's new lawmakers can be found below.

New State Assembly Members

- [Dawn Addis \(Morro Bay\)](#)
- [Juan Alanis \(Stanislaus\)](#)
- [Jasmeet Bains \(Bakersfield\)](#)
- [Juan Carrillo \(Palmdale\)](#)
- [Damon Connolly \(San Rafael\)](#)
- [Diane Dixon \(Newport Beach\)](#)
- [Bill Essayli \(Lake Elsinore\)](#)
- [Gregg Hart \(Santa Barbara\)](#)
- [Josh Hoover \(Folsom\)](#)
- [Corey A. Jackson \(Moreno Valley\)](#)
- [Josh Lowenthal \(Long Beach\)](#)
- [Stephanie Nguyen \(Elk Grove\)](#)
- [Liz Ortega \(San Leandro\)](#)
- [Blanca Pacheco \(Downey\)](#)
- [Diane Papan \(San Mateo\)](#)
- [Joe Patterson \(Rocklin\)](#)
- [Gail Pellerin \(Santa Cruz\)](#)
- [Kate Sanchez \(Temecula\)](#)
- [Pilar Schiavo \(Santa Clarita\)](#)
- [Esmeralda Soria \(Fresno\)](#)
- [Tri Ta \(Garden Grove\)](#)
- [Avelino Valencia \(Santa Ana\)](#)
- [Rick Chavez Zbur \(Santa Monica\)](#)

New State Senators

- [Marie Alvarado-Gil \(Amador\)](#)
- [Angelique Ashby \(Sacramento\)](#)
- [Catherine Blakespear \(Encinitas\)](#)
- [Caroline Menjivar \(Burbank\)](#)
- [Roger Niello \(Fair Oaks\)](#)
- [Steve Padilla \(Chula Vista\)](#)
- [Lola Smallwood-Cuevas \(Los Angeles\)](#)
- [Aisha Wahab \(Hayward\)](#)