

SSDA July 1, 2019 and Today



Tim Taylor
Executive Director
Small School Districts' Association

It was 10 months ago as we handed the baton from the legendary Debra Pearson, former SSDA Director of 11 years, to myself on July 1st. At that time, I set some goals for SSDA that focused on the following:

1. Continued responsive advocacy for SSDA members.
2. Fill our Executive Committee slots in each region.
3. Focus on highlighting students and student achievement of SSDA schools.
4. Improve SSDA communications through social media, bi-monthly update reports, our Member Newsletter and *SSDA Today!* magazine, and media outlets.
5. Strengthen relationships with other education associations such as ACSA, CSSESA, CASBO, CSBA and CCSA.
6. Expand services and support to include teachers and support staff.
7. Expand SSDA presence at the national level in collaboration with NREA, USDE and West Ed.

8. To develop high priority support services that will assist small school district superintendents to enhance their educational performance and reduce operating cost.

Overall, we have collectively done a great job in meeting our yearly goals. It starts with great leadership and our Executive Committee has some of the brightest and talented leaders in California. Adding board members from Santa Barbara, Big Creek in Fresno region, Hamilton City, San Diego, Marin, and Monterey this year has really strengthened our organization as a statewide association.

When the stay-at-home order was mandated by Governor Newsom on March 18th, SSDA had just finished our 2020 Annual Conference. It was at this moment our organization had to pivot and focus on supporting SSDA members and especially commit to supporting teachers as our top priority with distance learning. That is goal #6 above.

At SSDA we will continue to stay focused on students, teachers and support staff in order to be true to our mission. COVID-19 is a true test of the what our Board committed to at our annual retreat that we will be the voice for small school districts of California.

The fallout of this pandemic will create greater challenges for our members, and we will be at your side every step of the way.

In this issue:

May/June 2020

SSDA July 1, 2019 and Today	1
Message: A Time to Say Goodbye	2
What Drives Our Work During the Current COVID 19 Pandemic?	6
School Districts Given Extra Time to Adopt 2020-21 LCAP Amidst COVID-19 Emergency	9
Use the "F-Word" in Schools	11
USDA Provides Additional Flexibility to Help Ensure Students Can Continue to Receive Meals during COVID-19 School Closures.	13



Message: A Time to Say Goodbye



Dr. Helio Brasil
Superintendent, Keyes Union ESD
SSDA President

In times of change, such as in farewells, it can be hard to find the right words to express the emotions one feels about the

past, with its hundreds of memories, and the future, with all its unknowns and new beginnings. I can tell you; I'm flooded with emotions—yes, with the sadness that comes with saying goodbye, but also with joy for what the future holds.

As I look back at my time as President of SSDA, I am overwhelmed by all that we were able to accomplish together. Together we have advocated for more funding for education and transportation, championed for more equity in education, endorsed solutions to safeguard California's unprecedented quality of life, and empowered the legislature and business community to take forward-thinking steps to strengthen the education for all our students in small districts across the state. As an organization we have consistently focused to ensure a prosperous future for our children and grandchildren.

One of the things I'm most proud of is how we as an organization never let go of the principles that have guided us since our founding. As an educational advocacy association that represents all small school districts across the state, our purpose is and has been to advocate for the interests of all students in our small school districts. We have done so with broad vision, the spirit of inclusion and, most importantly, civility. Even when the discussions got tough, we were always able to remain civil. We saw the value in differences of opinion, and it is in these differences where we find our strength.

None of the successes of the Small School Districts' Association would have been possible without the dedication and participation of the association board, officers and executive director. By working together, we have accomplished many great things, and I have no doubt that with the continued leadership of our board, officers and executive director, along with the engagement of our associates/partners leaders, the successes will continue for many years to come.

While this is the end of the road for me as President of Small School Districts' Association, this is a new beginning not just for me, but also for this great organization. I have full confidence that under the direction of the executive director Tim Taylor, staff, and board of directors, SSDA will thrive as we serve kids.

It has been an absolute pleasure to be at the helm of this great organization for the last two years. Thank you for helping me see the wisdom, the blessing, the joy and the happiness that comes from being engaged with good people in a good cause. Always remember, this is the greatest organization for supporting kids and small school districts. My term as president has been during a period of great change and reorganization. I was able to part of the hiring of our new executive director, oversee staffing changes, and increase the diversity and capacity of our amazing board. We have finally reached a point where we truly have the expertise, desire and passion to serve our students and to assure we continue with the vision of our founders. I am truly blessed to have worked with all of you and I am so very proud of SSDA. My passion, commitment, drive and mission is to support students. In doing so as a small school district superintendent, I have been touched by so many amazing students and fellow leaders.

I could not have had the experience I have had without wonderful and unflinching support of the executive directors and support staff over many years. The longevity of our staff is testimony to their loyalty and dedication to the association and its mission. I have enjoyed working with two extremely able executive directors -- Debra Pearson and Tim Taylor -- who both moved and made the organization as the leading advocacy group for small school districts.

As I step down from the Presidency, I would like to thank my fellow executive board members for their hard work and commitment to serving students and supporting Small School Districts. I would also like to thank all of you for trusting me with the responsibility of serving in the most challenging and rewarding position I have known to date. I hope I have not disappointed you. More importantly, I want to thank you for taking the difficult and courageous steps together to assure our organization continues to remain strong and relevant. This is most especially true during this unprecedented COVID-19 environment filled with uncertainty and endless challenges.

Continued on page 3



Message: A Time to Say Goodbye



Continued from page 2

The role of the President is one with many obstacles thrown your way. It comes with disagreements, conflicts, and challenges, but is through these that we make true progress. This is not a single undertaking, however. All our successes and accomplishments through these challenges are because of the people at SSDA who work night and day to ensure students can succeed. I'm humbled to be surrounded by such an amazing support network and I could not have gone about these past two years without our staff, board members, executive directors, partners/associates, and fellow Small School District Superintendents.

I'm not the type of person who dwells on leaving legacies or making a mark. I have served and represented SSDA to the best of my ability and always kept its' mission at the forefront. In the process of doing that, I made decisions in the best interests of students and to ensure they had a positive experience while in our small districts across the state. I have held on to my values of integrity, compassion, and humility.

Over the past two years, I had the opportunity to further

advance the work of my predecessors while sticking to my principles and I'm fortunate to have contributed in the grander scheme of things.

The Presidency is not about a person, it never has been, and it was never all about me. It is about a commitment to the students we advocate on behalf of, even in the most adverse situations. Over the course of the two-year term I've learned and grown a lot and I will cherish the memories and lessons from this period of service.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for an incredible opportunity and journey, and I wish nothing but success for our association and our students.

With warm appreciation,

Dr. Helio Brasil

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Small School Districts' Association

Resources from Our Associate Members

Alma is always here to [support you in AND OUT of the classroom](#). Many of you are shifting your efforts to distance learning for the near future. It's the perfect time to see how Alma's critical SIS tooling is engineered to significantly improve school and district operations and empowers educators to foster better student outcomes so that we can create the greatest generation of educators – so that you can create the greatest generation of students, wherever you are. Alma was built for this!

BetterLesson has created a downloadable resource for teachers, coaches and principals: [A Guide to Getting Started with Distance Learning](#). And they are also offering a variety of [free Virtual Workshops](#).

BoardDocs has published a [resource page](#) for districts' navigating their governance requirements during this COVID-19 public health crisis. Additionally, BoardDocs has recently announced it will [be providing its Community platform to new districts nationwide at no cost through June 30th](#).

BYU Independent Study COVID-19 Free 7-12 Content -- continue instruction from your teachers to their students online with BYU's Continuity in Education Program. Over 100 free courses to be taught in your own LMS (with LTI compatibility) or an LMS provided by BYU for a minimal fee (\$500).

ClassLink has partnered with SSDA to provide its full ClassLink suite with special SSDA member pricing, or [ClassLink Lite](#), a subset of our full suite, that that will be available through August 2020. Contact Nichole Smith at nsmith@classlink.com or 951-897-8797. Click here for more resources for [Remote Learning](#).

Cyber High by Fresno County Superintendent of Schools is able to help bridge educational gaps during this time of crisis. View their [course catalog](#), [unlimited plan](#) or [course offerings](#).

Document Tracking Services (DTS):

- DTS Translations is available to assist with translation of your COVID-19 related communications.
- Updated the default Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) template in DTS to include a section for response to a pandemic.
- DTS can provide examples of COVID-19-related communications and planning sections.

As you know, the recent reports of COVID-19, or coronavirus, across the U.S has led to the closure of many schools and districts globally which has resulted in schools and districts moving to virtual instruction for the remainder of the school year. The **Edmentum** Capacity Assistance Program (E-CAP) helps ensure that teachers can continue teaching and students can continue learning during school closures. Together, we'll work with you to

tailor an implementation plan that establishes the best learning environment for your school or district and sets your teachers up for success in virtual instruction. Questions: info@edmentum.com. [Click here for more info](#). [Click here for free resources](#) including print resources, templates, webinars, etc.

Get your COVID-19 legal questions answered about your district with [Erickson Law Firm](#).

Global Teletherapy will be making online therapy training available to train onsite therapists and show them how to train through Teletherapy while offering them ongoing support.

GoGuardian is offering any SSDA school that needs to be able to filter and monitor students off-campus can have free access to all of GoGuardian's products, up to June 30th. Contact Miles Rashaad Goodloe, rmgoodloe@goguardian.com, 424-395-2914.

Gold Star Foods has a [series of meal kits available](#) to all schools in California to assist them with their grab-n-go meal service.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is here to help you keep teaching and learning no matter where you are. [Visit us here](#) and find up-to-date information and resources to help you stay connected to your learners. HMH is your partner [helping California schools succeed](#).

Infinity has contacted a few companies regarding their support of schools during this time.

- [Logmein](#) has offered a 90 days free use site license of Go to Connect.
- Cisco has announced that they are offering support in areas such as security and virtual environments. Cisco has communicated an expanded [free Webex](#) offer to support unlimited usage with free dial-in and up to 100 participants.
- [Charter Communications](#) is offering offering free access to Spectrum broadband and wifi.

Lozano Smith Information Hub -- The legal and practical realities of the current crisis are ever-changing. In Lozano Smith's continued effort to equip school districts with useful insights, they have compiled a suite of links to several complimentary resources and guidance documents regarding COVID-19. [You can access them here](#). For more information, contact ClientServices@LozanoSmith.com.

National University is running a couple of credential program webinars in April and May, and are offer a savings of 15% on their entire program because of their existing partnership with SSDA. [Click here to download an informational flyer](#) with a link to register.

Nearpod is offering up-to-date resources on the coronavirus, such as:

- Flocabulary [Viruses](#) lesson
- Nearpod Germs & Staying Healthy Lessons: [K-5](#) & [6-12](#)
- Nearpod [Coronavirus Outbreak](#) lesson
- Nearpod licenses to schools and districts impacted by closures to ensure continuity of instruction. If your district is impacted please reach out to us [through this link](#).
- [Nearpod Coronavirus webpage](#)
- [Guide to Nearpod for remote learning](#)
- [Coronavirus lesson](#): Free resource for all educators to keep students, staff, and parents informed.
- [Live weekly webinars](#)

Next Gen Math is offering schools Free Home Lesson access to support during the school closures. [Click here for more details](#).

For the first time ever, **PresenceLearning** is making its clinical experience and platform available to school-based special education teams to help them deliver great online services. [Click here to download an informational sheet](#).

Public Consulting Group - In this time of transition to an online learning environment, please visit or sign-up for your [SSDA Member's Portal](#) (free for all staff) at to get access to resources for staff, students and parents. The **COVID-19 Toolkit** has tips on how to transition from a classroom teacher to an online teacher, resources for administrators, teachers, parents and students, and has an online professional learning community to share ideas and collaborate. Please call Jack McLaughlin @ (775) 313-3121 or jmclaughlin@pcgus.com for more information.

STS Education is offering the following:

- **Break/fix:** With the district offices closed, for the most part, reduced staff, and lots of devices in the hands of students, many for the first time, we have come up with a set -price break/fix solution, that includes sending your student a box, etc.
- **Help Desk:** You probably have a plan to handle the increased volume of student needs, while they learn from home, but many have not planned for the event.
- **Home filtering and Google Admin:** We have certified people on staff, that can help.
- **Refurbishing your existing devices:** We can convert old laptops into Chromebooks, put new batteries in them, or get you any parts you might need to make whole units.
- And for when you take these devices back in, STS is setting up a cleaning line in Simi Valley that will audit, sterilize, re-image or reset the device and get it ready for you to redeploy.

School Pathways works to support schools during closures by helping to manage [students working from home](#).

Teacher's Pension believes employees deserve accurate information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on their retirement and investment plans, and is offering free, online Financial Wellness Workshop to address:

- How has my CalSTRS/CalPERS been impacted?
- How can I protect my retirement?
- How does the CARES Act impact me?
- How can I financially protect my family?

For more information contact, Bob Lee at blee@tpensions.com or 209.603.3485

Technology in Education has a variety of resources to offer:

- [HoverCam](#) doc cams and teaching stations – all grades plus administrators and teachers - super for lesson recording and use with conference services like Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.
- [Doc cams](#)
- [Teaching Stations](#)
- Alive Studios [My Letters alive](#) and [My Math alive](#) and [Student Journals](#) – PreK, TK and K - paper and pencil journals that expand on typical journals for learners that age by including an augmented reality app that can be used with a tablet or smartphone.
- [Mathspace](#) — This is a cloud-based solution for math that includes a comprehensive interactive e-textbook for grades 4-Precalculus.
- [Mangahigh](#) – developed by the founder of Candy Crush Saga in partnership with an Oxford University professor, Manga-high engages kids in their world by leveraging gamification and game-based learning in which the math is the game.

Partnering Agencies

- **ACSA:** [The Pinterest of Resources for You!](#) So many great District and COE letters, Learning Activities, Infographics, Brochures and Covid updates.
- **CCSA:** [Great resources for schools](#) for specifically Special Education, Distance Learning and during COVID Distance Learning time.
- **CASBO:** [Provides great webinars](#) for you focused on fiscal issues.
- **CSBA:** [Great resources for schools and board members](#) including surveys, FAQ's, and links to a variety of support for you.
- **CSSESA:** [Excellent Resources on the waivers and recommendations to the State](#). Also, up to the minute update on school closures.
- **CDE:** [Make sure you check CDE's website often](#); especially on Friday for their weekly newsletter.
- **Governor's Press Room.** [Stay up to date with the current press releases](#) from the Governor's office.
- **And don't forget** [SSDA continues to keep a constantly updated list of resources on its website!](#)



THERE'S POWER IN THE Partnership

OMNIA Partners, Public Sector is the largest and most experienced cooperative purchasing organization dedicated to public sector procurement. Shaping the future of procurement through power, access and trust.

MeTEOR Education is a leading educational services partner working with education professionals to help them create High-impact Learning Experiences™. As one of the largest providers of learning spaces, including furnishings and interior design services, MeTEOR's focus is the integration of best practices for teaching and learning to drive inquiry-based instruction, effective use of modern classrooms, and increased student achievement.

Region 4 Education Service Center awarded a competitively solicited cooperative contract to MeTEOR Education. Available through OMNIA Partners, contract #R142203 offers a broad portfolio of Furniture and Installation Services resulting in cost effective solutions that will humanize the learning experience for students across the nation.

Contract #R142203 Furniture & Installation Services

- Tier Price ranging from 9%-67% off Current Manufacturer List Price
- Contract Term: March 5, 2015 - October 31, 2020
- No minimums for freight and installation
- No cost for System Design, Space Planning and Layout
- Extended contract pricing to Designer, General Contractor, or Sub-Contractor for products

MeTEOR Education's Mission

To Inspire and support communities and their students in creating transformational learning experiences.

Over the last several decades, we have made enormous advances in technology and gamechanging discoveries about how kids learn.

MeTEOR Education is here to help communities across the country modernize and humanize the learning experience so that their teachers and students are empowered to reach their full potential.



What Drives Our Work During the Current COVID-19 Pandemic?

Continued from page 6

takes to serve our students will continue to include the work of serving ALL students. To do this we must provide equitable learning opportunities for each and every student. This is being done by ensuring that we are doing all we can to reach out to them. Whether it is paper packets, phone calls, car parades, ZOOM calls, Google Classroom, Class DoJo, Remind, cards in the mail or phone calls, our students need to hear from us!

Of equal importance is supporting our staff. For some this situation is what feeds their soul they thrive on change, creativity and constant movement, for others it is absolutely paralyzing. We must consider ALL of the people in our organizations. To do this we must provide professional development that is accessible, time relevant and presented in a way that is both engaging and educational. My staff has been able to participate in numerous online synchronous training sessions that have been provided by our county office. They have learned everything from Zoom, Flipgrid, Google Classroom, Screencastify, Canvas and any number of additional training. Our largest focus in this area has been to help them understand that they are enough! They CAN do this!! They are teachers!! At the same time, they should consider every aspect of the students' life right now, they cannot control what they cannot control. If they continuously use all possible tools to reach our stu-

dents and connect with their families then they are doing all they can in this given situation. It is also very important to model grace...we cannot expect families with numerous varied age students to be available to hope on a Zoom call every day because it works for us...accept their best as well. They all have a story (a life to live), show empathy for that story.

From my perspective, as a small school district Superintendent this experience has really highlighted the numerous advantages to working in a small district. We are nimble, we are able to move rapidly and change direction as needed. We have the ability to be personally responsive to the needs of each and every one of our families and students. We know our families and they know us, we know our community, and they know us, we love our children and they love us, we have built a culture of trust and it is paying off now in times of trouble. They know that our preference would be to be at school with their children but they also trust that we are doing what we feel is right given the current information. We must pull together and work as a team "Create an environment that encourages growth on every level for every student every day" because we are ALL in this together.

Resources:

Goden, Seth (2010). Linchpin. New York, NY: Penguin.

Senge, P. M. (1990). Fifth discipline. New York, NY: Doubleday.



Dear California Superintendents,

I understand this letter is coming to you at a very challenging time. It did not seem right for us at DGI to continue “business as usual” without acknowledging the immense amount of uncertainty and change that you and your staff are likely experiencing. Over the past several weeks I have seen our communities come together to respond to the challenges that we are all facing. Many of our colleagues have done incredible things because they care deeply about our students, their families and our communities. We are stronger when we work together, which is the reason I started this business after working in K-12 for many years.

In my conversations with our customers I’m told that the business of education is fundamentally changing. I’m hopeful that by working together and through the creative use of technology, we can achieve positive long-term effects on education outcomes. With this goal in mind I would like to extend an invitation, and would appreciate the opportunity to engage with each of you directly at our annual Customer Advisory Board. The purpose of this community is none other than to listen to the challenges that you each are facing, to share ideas as peers and to understand how we can make adjustments to DGI to best partner with you in the future. When you may ask? Soon, but *when the time is right*.

If you are interested in learning more, this link will get you there:

<https://dginext.com/contact-us/>. All you need to do is write “Advisory Board” in the message box, or something along those lines. Your information will be kept safe, meaning it will not be disbursed or used for marketing purposes outside of this forum. I look forward to learning more about how we can work together to achieve success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Lockwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Lockwood

President, Development Group Inc.

School Districts Given Extra Time to Adopt 2020-21 LCAP Amidst COVID-19 Emergency



Caitlin Jung
Legislative Counsel
Capitol Advisors Group

Late last month, Governor Newsom released a much-anticipated Executive Order

to address concerns raised by local educational agency (LEAs) around the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their ability to meet the upcoming statutory deadlines for Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs). Below is an overview of the Governor's Executive Order, as well as information on additional guidance that the California Department of Education (CDE) has also released on the changes established by the EO and on the upcoming 2020 and 2021 Dashboards.

LCAP

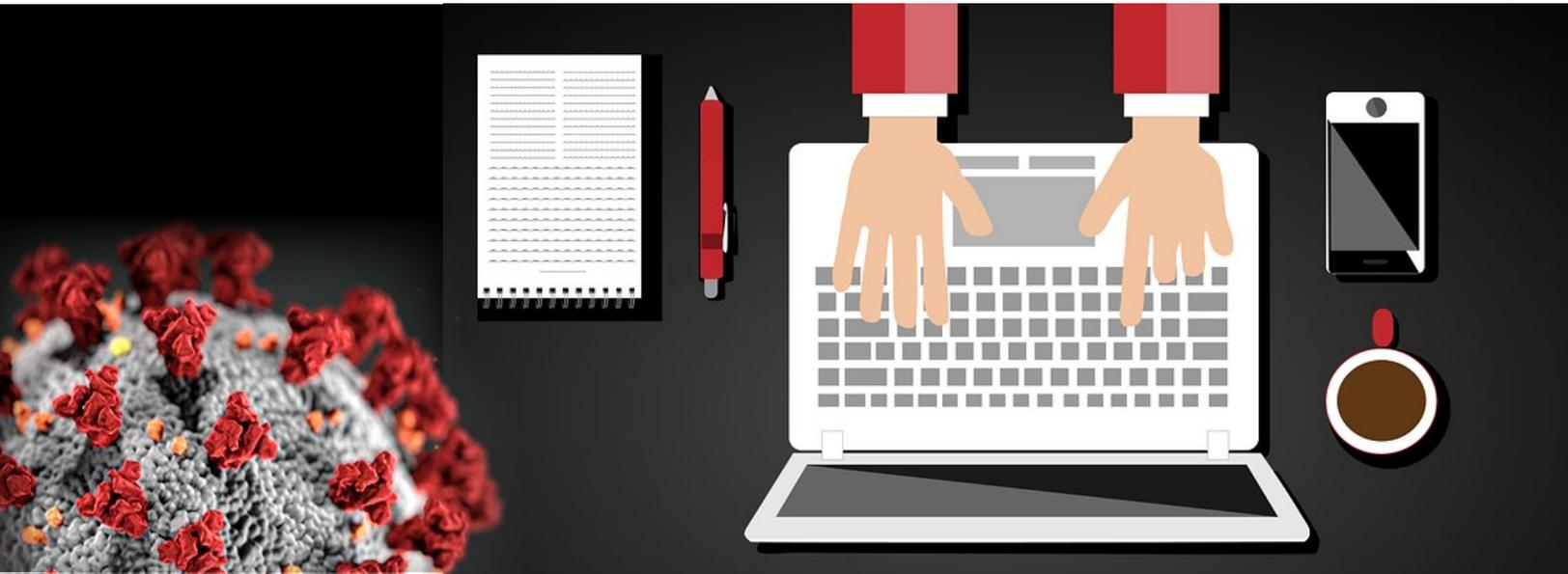
The Governor's Executive Order, which can be read in [full here](#), extends the deadline for an LEA to adopt their 2020-21 LCAP from July 1 to December 15, 2020. County superintendents of schools will then have until January 14, 2021 to approve a district's LCAP. As a result of this extended timeline, the EO also waives the requirements around an LEA adopting an LCAP before it can adopt its budget.

However, while a district will now have until December to adopt their 2020-21 LCAP, the EO also requires, in the meantime, that the governing body of an LEA adopt a report describing the programmatic changes the LEA has made in response to the COVID-19 emergency. The report must include descriptions of how the LEA is meeting the needs of unduplicated students as well how they are supporting the delivery of high-quality distance learning, provision of non-congregate meals, and arrangement for supervision of students during normal school hours. The supplemental report must be adopted at the same meeting at which the governing body adopts its 2020-21 budget, and a copy of the report must be submitted with the LEA's adopted budget as well as posted on the LEA's website.

Additionally, as you may recall, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a new LCAP template at its January 2020 Board meeting, which was to be used for the first time for the 2020-21 LCAP. However, pursuant to the EO, the requirement to use the new template, which is aimed at providing additional transparency around the use of supplemental and concentration dollars, has been waived for the 2020-21 LCAP. The new template will instead be used for the first time in spring 2021, as part of the first year in a new 3-year LCAP cycle.

While additional specifics on the modified process for the 2020-21 LCAP will be coming through legislation in the coming months, including details on the template that will be used for the 2020-21 LCAP, CDE also released

Continued on page 10



School Districts Given Extra Time to Adopt 2020-21 LCAP Amidst COVID-19 Emergency

Continued from page 9

an FAQ on the new EO, [which is available here](#). The FAQ provides additional information about the changes being implemented for the 2020-21 LCAP as well as on the supplemental report mentioned above, that LEAs are required to approve by July 1, 2020.

California School Dashboard

CDE has also released an FAQ on the potential impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on both the 2020 Dashboard and the 2021 Dashboard. While California has received a federal waiver from the assessment and accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for the 2019-20 school year, the FAQ provides that California Education Code still requires CDE to create a Dashboard and identify LEAs for differentiated assis-

tance. The FAQ also notes, however, that CDE is working with the Administration and the Legislature on how to waive this requirement. The Governor's recent Executive Order also touched briefly on this issue, acknowledging that further legislative action to address additional deadlines, like those related to the Dashboard, is still needed.

Finally, the FAQ addresses the impact the suspension of the Spring 2020 administration of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Since Grade 11 CAASPP results are used to determine placement levels for the College/Career Readiness Indicator (CCI), CDE is currently looking into how to address this issue for the 2021 Dashboard. Any changes to the 2021 Dashboard will have to first be approved by the State Board of Education. The full FAQ can be found [here](#).

COVID-19: We're in this together. Restore. Prepare. Rebuild.

Whether you need emergency assistance triaging your immediate challenges, or support to prepare your school facilities for use post-pandemic, our team of disaster recovery experts is here to help you provide a safe, modern, sustainable environment for your students and staff so that you can focus your attention where it's needed most.

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- Master Facility Planning, including Federal Infrastructure Funding Assistance
- Emergency preparedness planning
- Indoor air quality assessments



Use the “F-Word” in Schools

Dr. Christopher Bonn, superintendent of Fort Sage Unified School District in Lassen County, recently completed an article called *My Principal Uses The “F-Word!” Transforming Organizations in Critical Condition*. Below is an excerpt from the article -- the entire article can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).



Dr. Christopher Bonn
Superintendent
Fort Sage Unified School District

There is very little we actually control in our schools and our systems. We can facilitate the climate, culture and environments of our schools. We have little control of legislative decisions except when we exercise our democratic and constitutional right to vote. Unfortunately, even when we elect officials who say they are pro-education or are empathic to our current national teacher crisis and the mass exodus of students from traditional public schools. Many of these passionate and dedicated individuals still suffer from archaic mental models. Research based practices would also demonstrate these mental models are extremely primitive even 20-50 years ago. We shouldn't compare our success personally with our school systems as times have changed and the economy have changed. We have demonstrated we are the outliers in society, and we were able to endure the practices from years ago. Not to mention, many of the schools are operating with budgets from 20-30 years ago while costs and expenses continue to increase. Our economy from 20-30 years ago could support someone who was not successful in school and chose to leave. This is no longer the case. If you don't believe me look at the operating manual as a mining dump truck used in open pit mining. It is a decent paying job but very technical needing a person who can read, write, navigate, problem-solve and communicate.

I hope this serves as a calling to bring the “F-Word” back to our schools. Make schools more FUN, exciting, welcoming and engaging. If your school is struggling from

declining enrollment, high teacher turnover, poor attendance, chronic suspensions and student discipline. Examine, your climate, culture and environment. What are you doing that makes everyone exodus?

I would offer the one area we can change and bring as an innovation it to have FUN in our schools. Model it, teach it, expect it, reward it, and share it. I would argue the best way to rebrand your organization is to make it FUN. When is the last time you read a mission or vision statement that had the word FUN? Do your school improvement committees have a charge to discuss FUN? What are your students doing to have FUN in classrooms?

If you are much like me, being an event planner or decorator isn't my forte, as you can imagine I am trying to make my professional development like a Rock Concert. I know there are people in your organization who would love to wow your audience. I invite parents, employees, students and community members to plan events and develop themes for professional development. We are always seeking ways to celebrate achievements and accomplishments. This is becoming a new paradigm in our organization. We are seeking and embracing FUN. Students are beginning to laugh, smile and joke. Teachers are able to be risk takers and think outside of the box (innovative). More importantly, schools that have FUN will see a shift in declining enrollment, teacher and staff turnover, disgruntled parents and families. The face of the organization will change dramatically.

Lastly, I tell my graduate students in the classes I teach at the University. “Whether you are a pretender or a believer, the results are still the same.” Be brave, Be a risk taker and Be bold. You have nothing to lose but you will have FUN.

Remote Learning Made Possible



Schools have a variety of reasons for school closures, ranging from inclement weather to outbreaks of infectious diseases. These lost school days disrupt curriculum timelines and occasionally need to be made up later in the year. Instead, forward-thinking schools are opting for Digital Learning Days.

How Can ClassLink Help?



Access

ClassLink Single Sign-on gives students and staff instant access to all their online resources from any device. Educators don't have to worry whether or not their students can access everything they need to continue learning from home.



Reporting

ClassLink Analytics gives educators and administrators evidence that students are engaging with resources. Districts can even use this data as supporting documentation in their request for state approval of digital learning days.



Files

Your students keep files in many places. ClassLink My Files eliminates the need for a VPN and brings your school network, Google Drive, OneDrive, and Dropbox to one location for easy access from anywhere.



USDA Provides Additional Flexibility to Help Ensure Students Can Continue to Receive Meals During COVID-19 School Closures



Lee Angela Reid
Partner
Capitol Advisors Group

With most schools closed for the rest of the school year, we wanted to highlight the accommodations the U.S. Department of

Agriculture and the California Department of Education have put in place over the past few months related to child nutrition programs. The COVID-19 crisis has dramatically changed and challenged our business as usual and placed school nutrition programs and workers on the very front line doing what they do best—feeding hungry students and communities.

In late March, as more and more schools began closing and shifting to distance learning due to concerns around COVID-19, the lack of flexibility around school meal programs was front and center. Among the biggest issues raised by stakeholders and statewide education groups was the insistence by regulators that each child be physically present in order to get a meal and the inability of schools to provide multiple meals at one time. Schools pressed the need for the ability to allow parents or guardians to pick up a child’s meal and to limit the amount a times a parent would have to come by to pick up meals, in order to limit the health risks involved with everyone showing up.

As a result of this advocacy, the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has issued a number of waivers, both nationwide as well as state-specific, to address these, as well as many other concerns raised by local educational agencies throughout the state and across the nation. Below is a summary of all the children nutrition program waivers that have been announced by the USDA and approved for California at the time of writing. Where applicable, each of these issues also has a hyperlink to related USDA guidance, which provides additional information on the flexibilities being provided.

Nationwide USDA Waivers Under Use in California

Nationwide Non-Congregate Meal Waivers: FNS has granted a nationwide waiver to allow the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), to serve meals outside of the normal group setting. ([Guidance for State on Non-Congregate Feeding in Child Nutrition Programs](#))

Nationwide Meal Times Waiver: FNS has provided a nationwide waiver to waive the requirement that Child Nutrition Program meals must follow meal service time requirements and also allow state agencies to adjust the time of meal services, including the suspension of meal times as needed. ([Guidance for States on the Meal Times Nationwide Waiver](#))

Nationwide Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup Waiver: FNS is allowing states approved for non-congregate feeding to waive the rule preventing parents and guardians from picking up meals for their children, as long as they protect accountability and integrity. ([Guidance for States on the Meal Pickup Waiver](#))

Nationwide Meal Pattern Waiver: FNS has provided nationwide approval for states to locally waive specific meal pattern requirements as needed to support access to nutritious meals when certain foods are not available due to COVID-19. ([Guidance for States on the Meal Pattern Waiver](#))

Nationwide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Data Waiver: FNS is extending CEP election, notification and reporting and deadlines for School Year 2020-21. ([Guidance for States on the CEP Waiver](#))

Nationwide Waivers of Child Nutrition Monitoring: FNS has provided nationwide waivers to provide flexibilities to certain onsite monitoring requirements for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. ([Waivers](#))

Continued on page 14



USDA Provides Additional Flexibility to Help Ensure Students Can Continue to Receive Meals During COVID-19 School Closures



Continued from page 13

Nationwide Afterschool Activity Waiver: FNS has provided a nationwide waiver to waive the requirement that afterschool meals and snacks must be served in a school or program with an educational or enrichment purposes and that the meals and snacks must be served in a structured and supervised environment with an educational enrichment activity. ([Guidance for States on the Afterschool Activity Nationwide Waiver](#))

California Specific Waivers

Congregate Meal Waivers: FNS approved California’s waiver to allow SFSP and National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors to serve meals in a non-congregate setting and at school sites during school closures related to the coronavirus.

Area Eligibility Waiver: The USDA granted California a waiver to allow SFSP and SSO sponsors in good standing to operate open sites in areas approved by CDE and consistent with the State plan, but that are not located in, “Areas in which poor economic conditions exist.” ([Approval Letter](#))

Other Available Waivers

Pandemic EBT: As a result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, children who would receive free or reduced price meals if not for school closures are eligible to receive assistance under this provision. USDA is providing guidance to state agencies on plan requirements in order to receive approval. *California has not applied for this waiver.*

A list of all the waivers and flexibilities currently issued for California for child nutrition programs can be found [here](#). The USDA has also created an FAQ page on these new waivers and flexibilities, which is available [here](#). Additionally, CDE has created its own page dedicated to guidance on the provision of meals during COVID-19 school closures, which includes supplemental information related to the USDA waivers listed above. That page, which can be found on [CDE’s website](#), will continue to be updated by CDE as more information becomes available.



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