



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

July 20, 2022

Dear Colleague,

“California's new budget includes historic funding for education,” reads a recent article from *EdSource*.

California school districts, enjoy it, make it last and spend it wisely, because you may never see an education budget like the one that Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Thursday.

Total state funding for schools and community colleges will be \$128 billion.

That's a dramatic increase from 2011-12 when, in the depths following the Great Recession, districts and community colleges got \$47.3 billion in funding from Proposition 98, the formula that determines how much of the state's general fund goes to TK-12 and community colleges. In 2022-23, the total increase in Prop. 98 funding alone will be \$37.2 billion.

Higher education funding also increased by 5% for general funding with new spending planned for Cal Grants, the state's financial aid program for college students.

Inflation is running high, and staff shortages are big in many districts and charter schools. So a portion of that new money will cover rising costs, pay raises, new hires and a couple of billion dollars in districts' share of higher pension costs for teachers and other employees.

The bulk of new money will go toward new programs and grants, most spread out over several years.

To learn more, go [here](#).

Also, it was recently announced that masks will not be required in K-12 public schools when schools reopen in Aug-Sept.

The California Department of Public Health has issued new COVID-19 guidelines for the upcoming K-12 school year.

The latest regulations included getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and wearing a mask indoors, but the state Department of Public Health said it is not a requirement to do either.

"It just kind of clarified a few things for us, so many of the mitigation strategies that we are going to continue to implement are the same ones we're going to be implementing during the school year," said

Faris Sabbah, Santa Cruz County Office of Education superintendent.

Those tools schools will use when K-12 classes resume in the fall include testing, vaccinations and masking will be recommended but not required.

The California Department of Public Health published a statement about its guidelines:

"COVID-19 is here to stay, but we have learned methods and gained tools to decrease its impact on our health and well-being," "California's schools can manage this disease in sustainable and adaptive manners."

To read on, go [here](#).

The California Department of Education, in cooperation with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the State Board of Education, recently announced the first-ever release of statewide “Teaching Assignment Monitoring Outcome data.”

According to the statewide data, 83.1 percent of teacher assignments are clear, meaning the class or course is taught by a teacher who has a credential and is fully authorized to teach the course. Another 4.4 percent of assignments are out-of-field, meaning the teacher has a credential but has not demonstrated subject matter competence in the subject area(s) or for the associated student population according to statewide standards; 1.5 percent of classes or courses are taught by teachers with an intern credential, meaning the teacher is still completing their training or other credential requirements while serving as the teacher of record; and 4.1 percent of assignments are considered ineffective, meaning the teacher is authorized by an emergency permit, or holds a teaching credential but is teaching outside of their credentialed area without authorization, or holds no credential, permit, or authorization to teach in California. More information about the assignment monitoring definitions can be found on the CDE website.

To learn more, go [here](#).

Teaching reading has been in the news of late. In California, where many young people struggle in that area, State Superintendent of Public Education Tony Thurmond...

...has proposed bringing more literacy experts to the department who will help districts interpret all the new research and findings about literacy instruction. He identified that as a “high priority” request in the upcoming state budget.

“We’ve got to build a stronger team of folks who have expertise in literacy and can track all those changes and help districts interpret what those new changes and research means,” he said.

The literacy task force is still building its strategy for reaching that goal. Much of the planning hinges on what resources are made available in the 2022-23 state budget. Thurmond has asked schools to join the initiative but doesn’t foresee the state prescribing one curriculum to help them reach that goal.

At the same time, reigning reading guru Lucy Calkins has backtracked. After 40 years as the country's leading education authority, she admits she was wrong.

“All of us are imperfect,” she said in an interview at her office, perched above Columbia's campus. “The last two or three years, what I've learned from the science of reading work has been transformational.”

It may not inspire political campaign ads the way critical race theory does, but the debate over how to teach children to read — perhaps the foundational skill of all schooling — has been just as consuming for some parents, educators and policymakers. Through decades, classroom practice has lurched back and forth, with phonics going in and out of style.

To learn more about how to best teach reading, go [here](#) and [here](#).

The yearly National Education Association convention was held in early July, and Mike Antonucci's coverage lays out some of the details.

The 2021-22 budget was based on an expectation of 1,652,000 active professional, or full-time, members. Most of these are classroom teachers. That would have been an increase of 55,000 members from the previous year's projection.

But reports to the U.S. Department of Labor showed [NEA had lost almost 60,000 members](#) during the 2020-21 school year. [NEA's secretary-treasurer reported to the board of directors](#) earlier this year that losses had continued, with another 15,000-member drop.

The budget for 2022-23 doesn't forecast a rebound. NEA expects 1,637,000 active professionals and 263,000 active support employees, down 15,000 and 5,000, respectively, from the previous year's budget.

But membership numbers, the expenditures of dues dollars, and the effect of the assembly's actions on both, weren't the primary worries of many delegates. [One tweeted](#), “when you bring up the cost of New Business Items (NBIs) as a reason for not supporting — you're defaulting to white supremacy culture.”

To read more of Antonucci's commentary, go [here](#).

On the school choice front, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed the most expansive school choice legislation in the nation into law on July 7. The “Empowerment Scholarship Accounts” [empower all Arizona families](#) with the freedom and flexibility to customize their child's education. ESAs can be used to pay for private school tuition, tutoring, textbooks, homeschool curricula, online courses, educational therapy, and more.

The ESA policy especially benefits students from low-income families. The typical (non-special education) award of about \$6,600 covers the median elementary private school tuition and about two-thirds of the median private high school tuition.

Although Arizona does not collect data about the income levels of participating families, the Goldwater Institute looked at data on the geographic distribution of participants and found that “ESA students come from school districts with above-average and below-average poverty rates at broadly equal rates and in virtually identical proportions as traditional public school students overall.”

Additionally, the report found that “the highest concentrations of ESA usage actually occur in the most severely economically disadvantaged communities in Arizona.” Eight out of the 10 districts with the highest share of ESA students statewide have higher-than-average rates of child poverty, and the top three have child poverty rates that are more than double the state average.

The ESAs are extremely popular. According to a [Morning Consult survey](#), 66% of Arizonans and 75% of Arizona parents of K-12 students support the ESA policy.

To read on, go [here](#).

What does California law require in teaching about LGBTQ people in public schools? According to *The Los Angeles Times* Howard Blume:

California law requires students learn and be provided instructional materials that explain the [“role and contributions”](#) of among others, “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.”

How this is accomplished is left to local school systems and teachers, said Maria Clayton, a spokesperson for the department. The [state-approved social science framework](#) notes that teachers should use “age-appropriate” materials to discuss and teach about the “the diversity of humankind.”

[Recommended resources](#) include materials from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

To learn more, go [here](#).

If you have any valuable resources that you would like to share, or report on what your school district is doing – good, bad or indifferent – to deal with the “new normal,” please do so by emailing cteninfo@ctenhome.org or posting on the CTEN Facebook page, which can be accessed [here](#).

Also, anyone wishing to donate to CTEN can do so very simply through check, money order or PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate/> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others. Thanks, as always.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President