

Glossary of Common School Finance Terms

ADA Average daily attendance. There are several kinds of attendance, and these are counted in different ways. For regular attendance, ADA is equal to the average number of pupils actually attending classes who are enrolled for at least the minimum school day. In classes for adults and ROC/P, one unit of ADA is credited for each 525 classroom hours. Attendance is counted every day of the school year and is reported to the California Department of Education three times a year (see Attendance Reports). See also Concurrently Enrolled for a further definition of ADA.

AB 1200 Reference to AB 1200 (Chapter 1213/1991) that imposed major fiscal accountability controls on school districts and county offices of education, by establishing significant administrative hurdles and obligations for agency budgets and fiscal practices. See especially Education Code Section 1240 et sec. and 42131 et sec.

Accrual Basis Accounting Transactions are recorded when they have been reduced to a legal or contractual right or obligation to receive or pay out cash or other resources.

Ad valorem taxes Taxes based on the value of property -- such as the standard property tax -- are called ad valorem taxes. The only new taxes based on the value of property that are allowed today are those imposed with voter approval for capital facilities bonded indebtedness. Ever since Proposition 13, properties in California are adjusted to the true market value only at the time of property transfer.

Apportionment State aid given to a school district or county office of education. Apportionments are calculated three times for each school year. The First Principal Apportionment (P-1) is calculated in February of the school year corresponding to the P-1 ADA (see Attendance Reports); the Second Principal Apportionment (P-2) is calculated in June corresponding to the P-2 ADA; and, the annual recalculation of the apportionment is made in February following the school year and is based on P-2 ADA, except for programs where the annual count of ADA is used.

Appropriation Bill A bill before the Legislature authorizing the expenditure of public money and stipulating the amount, manner and purpose for the expenditure items.

Appropriation For Contingencies That portion of the current fiscal year's budget that is not appropriated for any specific purpose but is held subject to intrabudget transfer; i.e. transfer to other specific appropriation accounts as needed during the fiscal year.

Assessed Valuation (also, assessed value) The total value of property within a school district as determined by state and county assessors. The "AV" of a school district will influence the total property tax income of a school district. The percentage growth in statewide AV from one year to the next is an important ingredient in determining appropriations levels required from the state for fully funding district and county revenue limits, as well as for Proposition 98 calculations.

Attendance Reports Each school district reports its attendance three times during a school year. The First Principal Apportionment ADA, called the P-1 ADA or the P-1 count, is counted from July 1 through the last school month ending on or before December 31 of a school year. The Second Principal Apportionment ADA, called the P-2 ADA, is counted from July 1 through the last school month ending on or before April 15 of a school year. Fiscal or annual ADA is based on the count from July 1 through June 30. The final recalculation of the apportionment is based

on the P-2 ADA except for adult education programs, regional occupational centers and programs and nonpublic school funding, all of which use the annual count of ADA. Also, under certain circumstances when a district has a very large influx of migrant students in the spring, a district may request the use of annual ADA in lieu of P-2 ADA.

Base Revenue Limit See Revenue Limit.

Bonded Indebtedness An obligation incurred by the sale of bonds for acquisition of school facilities or other capital expenditures. Since 1986, districts have been able to levy a local property tax to amortize bonded indebtedness provided the taxes are approved by a vote of the electorate.

Certificated Personnel School employees who hold positions for which a credential is required by the state -- teachers, librarians, counselors, and most administrators.

Classified Personnel School employees who hold positions that do not require a credential, like aides, custodians, etc.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) A measure of the cost of living compiled by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Separate indices of inflation are calculated regularly for the United States, California, some regions within California, and selected cities. The CPI is one of several measures of economic change.

Credentialed Teacher One holding a credential to teach issued by the State Commission on Teacher Credentialing. A credential is issued to those who have successfully completed all college training and courses required by the State, have graduated from an accredited college or university, have met any other state requirements, and have passed the California Basic Education (CBEST).

Criteria and Standards Local district budgets must meet state-adopted provisions of "criteria and standards." These provisions establish minimum fiscal standards that school districts, county offices of education and the State use to monitor district fiscal solvency and accountability. (See Education Code Sections 33127 et sec.)

Declining Enrollment Adjustment A formula that cushions the drop in income in a district with a shrinking student population. Under current law, districts can count the higher of either last or current year ADA.

Encroachment The expenditure of school districts' general purpose funds in support of a categorical program, i.e. the categorical expense "encroaches" into the district's general fund for support. Encroachment occurs in most districts and county offices that provide special education and transportation. Other encroachment is caused by deficit factors or local decisions to allocate general-purpose funds to special purpose programs.

Encumbrances Obligations in the form of purchase orders, contracts, salaries, and other commitments chargeable to an appropriations for which a part of the appropriation is reserved.

Ending Balance Generally a reference to a school district's net ending balance of their general fund. The ending balance is divided into restricted and unrestricted funds that a school district has remaining at the end of a fiscal year. A school district must have a "Reserve for Economic

Uncertainties” within their ending balance which meet the criteria and standards minimums as established by the State Board of Education.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) The ratio of time expended in a part-time position to that of a fulltime position. The ratio is derived by dividing the amount of employed time required in the part-time position by the amount of employed time required in a corresponding full-time position.

Gann Spending Limit A ceiling, or limit, on each year's appropriations of tax dollars by the state, cities, counties, school districts, and special districts. Proposition 4, an initiative passed in November 1979, added appropriations limits in Article XIII B of the California Constitution. Using 1978-79 as a base year, subsequent years' limits have been adjusted for: (1) an inflation increase equal to the change in the Consumer Price Index or per capita personal income, whichever is smaller; and, (2) the change in population or, for school agencies, change in ADA. Proposition 111, adopted in June 1990, amended the Gann limit inflation factor to be based only on the change in per capita personal income.

General Obligation Bonds Bonds that are a "general obligation" of the government agency issuing them, i.e. their repayment is not tied to a selected revenue stream. Bond elections in a school district must be approved by a vote of the electorate of either 55% or 66.6%, but state bond measures require only a majority vote.

Implicit Price Deflator See Cost-of-Living Adjustment.

Indirect Expense and Overhead Those elements of indirect cost necessary in the operation of the district or in the performance of a service that are of such nature that the amount applicable to each accounting unit cannot be separately identified. Examples of indirect costs include expenses for the Board of Education, superintendent and the business office.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) A written agreement between a school district and parents or guardians of a handicapped child specifying an educational program tailored to the needs of the child, in accordance with PL 94-142 regulations. The program is comprised of a placement team consisting of a certified district employee who is qualified to supervise special education, the child's teacher, one or both parents, the child, if appropriate, and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or school. The program must include a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance, a statement of annual goals and short term instructional objectives, a statement of the specific special education and related services to be provided to the child, the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs, the projected dates for starting services, appropriate objective criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the short term instructional objectives are being achieved.

Least Restrictive Environment Federal law requires handicapped students be placed so that they can, to the extent appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, be educated with nonhandicapped students.

Mandated Costs School district expenses that occur because of federal or state laws, decisions of state or federal courts, federal or state administrative regulations. See California Constitution, Article XIII B, Section 6.

Miscellaneous Funds Local revenues received from royalties, bonuses, and other payments in lieu of taxes. Fifty percent of such revenues are used as an offset to state aid in the revenue limit formulas.

Parcel Tax A special tax that is a flat amount per parcel and not ad valorem based (i.e. not according to the value of the property). Parcel taxes must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the electorate. (See Government Code Section 50079, et al.)

PERS Public Employees' Retirement System. State law requires that classified employees, their employer, and the state contribute to this retirement fund. The fund is the largest public pension fund in the world with over \$150 billion in investments.

Prior Year's Taxes Tax revenues that had been delinquent in a prior year and that are received in the current fiscal year. These revenues offset state aid in the current year in the revenue limit formula.

Proposition 13 An initiative amendment passed in June 1978 adding Article XIII A to the California Constitution. Tax rates on secured property are restricted to no more than 1% of full cash value. Proposition 13 also defined assessed value and required a two-thirds vote to change existing or levy other non property or "special" taxes.

Proposition 98 An initiative adopted in 1988 and then amended by Proposition 111 in 1990; Proposition 98 contains three major provisions: (1) a minimum level of state funding for K-14 school agencies (unless suspended by the Legislature); (2) a formula for allocating any state tax revenues in excess of the state's Gann Limit; and, (3) the requirement that a School Accountability Report Card be prepared for every school. The minimum funding base is set equal to the greater of the amount of state aid determined by two formulas, commonly called "Test 1" and "Test 2" -- unless an alternative formula, known as "Test 3," applies.

- "Test 1" originally provided that K-14 school agencies shall receive at least 40.319% of state general fund tax revenues in each year, the same percentage as was appropriated for K-14 school agencies in 1986-87. Due to the shift in property taxes from local governments to K-14 agencies, the "Test 1" percentage has been reset at 34.0%.
- "Test 2" provides that K-14 school agencies shall receive at least the same amount of combined state aid and local tax dollars as was received in the prior year, adjusted for the statewide growth in K-12 ADA and an inflation factor equal to the annual percentage change in per capita personal income.
- "Test 3" only applies in years in which the annual percentage change in per capita state general fund tax revenues plus 1/2% is lower than the "Test 2" inflation factor (i.e. change in per capita personal income), and in this case the "Test 2" inflation factor is reduced to the annual percentage change in per capita state general fund tax revenues plus 1/2%.

One of the provisions of Proposition 98/111 is that if the minimum funding level is reduced due either to "Test 3" or the suspension of the minimum funding level by the Legislature and Governor, a "maintenance factor" is calculated as the amount of the funding reduction. In subsequent years when state taxes grow quickly, this "maintenance factor" is added to the minimum funding level until the funding base is fully restored.

Purchase Order An encumbrance document that shows the vendor from whom a purchase is being made, what is being purchased by the school district, the amount of the purchase, the fund

from which the purchase is being made (general, building or bond fund), an accounting code to which the purchase shall be applied, the signature or initial approval of the designed central office personnel responsible for approving the ordering of goods.

Reduction-in-Force (RIF) The process whereby employment is terminated because of a need to reduce the staff rather than because of any performance inadequacies of the employee.

Reserves Funds set aside in a school district budget to provide for estimated future expenditures or to offset future losses, for working capital, or for other purposes.

Revolving Cash Fund A stated amount of money used primarily for emergency or small or sundry disbursements and reimbursed periodically through properly documented expenditures, which are summarized and charged to proper accounting classifications.

ROC/P Regional Occupational Center or Program -- a vocational educational program for high school students and adults. A ROC/P may be operated by a single district, by a consortium of districts under a joint powers agreement (JPA), or by a county office of education for districts within the county.

SACS Standardized Account Code Structure is new method for school agencies to account for their revenue and expenditures. Districts will use a 22-digit accounting record that will allow agencies to track costs by resource, program goal and function as well as by object code. Local agencies are moving incrementally to the new system and all districts will account by this method by 2002.

State Allocation Board (SAB) The regulatory agency that controls most state-aided capital outlay and deferred maintenance projects and distributes funds for them.

STRS The State Teachers' Retirement System, funded by certificated employees, their employer and the state.

Title 1 Provides federal financial assistance to districts to meet the special education needs of educationally deprived children, i.e. children whose educational attainment is below the level appropriate for children of their age. Funding is to supplement services in reading, language arts and mathematics to identified students.