



**CALIFORNIA COUNTY  
SUPERINTENDENTS**

# **The Common Message**

**2023-24 May Revision**

**BASC**

Business and Administration  
Services Committee

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# Sources

<b>Association of California School Administrators</b>
<b>Ball/Frost Group, LLC</b>
<b>California Association of School Business Officials</b>
<b>California Collaborative for Educational Excellence</b>
<b>California Department of Education</b>
<b>California Department of Finance</b>
<b>California Public Employees' Retirement System</b>
<b>California State Teachers' Retirement System</b>
<b>California State Board of Education</b>
<b>California School Boards Association</b>
<b>California School Information Services</b>
<b>Capitol Advisors</b>
<b>Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team</b>
<b>K-12 High Speed Network</b>
<b>National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition</b>
<b>School Services of California</b>
<b>Small School Districts' Association</b>
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# Background

Since May 2008, county office chief business officials have crafted common messages to give districts guidance on assumptions for budget and interim reports. The Business and Administration Services Committee's (BASC's) goal is to assist in this endeavor by providing county office chief business officials with a consistent message, based on assumptions used by the California Department of Finance (DOF).

The BASC would like to thank the DOF, the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), as well as our colleagues listed in the sources section, for providing BASC and our local educational agencies (LEAs) the most up-to-date information at the time of writing.

Purpose: The BASC Common Message is intended to provide guidance and recommendations to county offices of education (COEs). COEs will tailor this guidance to the unique circumstances of the LEAs in their counties. Even within a county, guidance may vary considerably based on districts' educational, fiscal, and operational characteristics. Districts and other entities seeking to understand the guidance applicable to a particular LEA should refer to the information released by the COE in the county where the LEA is located.

## Key Guidance Based on the May Revision to the Governor's Budget

On May 12, 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom released the May Revision to the proposed state budget for 2023-24. The proposal increases the funded cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), special education, and several other categorical programs outside the LCFF from 8.13% to 8.22%.

The Administration also makes the following notable changes with the May Revision:

- Approximately \$2.5 billion reduction in 2022-23 to the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant which provides funding for initiatives that support academic learning recovery and staff and pupil social and emotional well-being. This would reduce funding for this program from the \$7.9 billion included in the Budget Act of 2022 to \$5.4 billion.
- Approximately \$607 million reduction in 2022-23 to the Arts, Music and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant which provides funding for specified uses, including standards-aligned professional development, instructional materials, improved school culture, and development of diverse and culturally relevant book collections. This is in addition to the \$1.2 billion reduction in the Governor's January Budget proposal and would reduce funding for this program from the \$3.6 billion included in the Budget Act of 2022 to a total of \$1.8 billion.
- Approximately \$119.6 million (one-time) increase to implement the

Stronger Connections Program which provides grants to high needs schools to support school climate and safety.

- Approximately \$20 million (one-time) increase for the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program which provides competitive grants to LEAs to increase the number of teachers with a bilingual authorization.
- \$7 million (one-time) increase to provide competitive grants for LEAs to implement the restorative justice best practices that will be developed and posted on the CDE’s website by June 1, 2024.

The Governor’s January Budget proposed a \$3.5 million (ongoing) increase to be allocated to LEAs for all middle and high schools to maintain at least two doses of naloxone hydrochloride, or another medication to reverse an opioid overdose, on campus for emergency aid. The May Revision modifies this proposal to allocate these funds to COEs to purchase the medication and distribute it to LEAs.

Voters approved Proposition 28 in November 2022, which requires the state to annually allocate 1% of the TK-12 portion of Proposition 98 funding for arts and music instruction in schools. The May Revision estimates total funding for Proposition 28 to be approximately \$933 million in 2023-24 and proposes trailer bill language to specify that the funding amount for a given fiscal year is final as of the subsequent year’s May Revision. LEAs should exercise caution in planning for the expenditure of these funds as the level of funding is not yet known and some of the Proposition’s key provisions lack clarity, including the restriction on supplanting and the requirement to use 80% of the funding for employees. We note that LEAs have three years to spend each year's allocation of funds.

### **Significant Governor’s January Budget Proposals**

The May Revision maintains the following significant proposals included in the Governor’s January Budget proposal:

- \$300 million (ongoing) increase to create an LCFF Equity Multiplier intended to close opportunity gaps.
- Multiple changes to Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) requirements, including focus goals for Equity Multiplier schools (elementary and middle schools where 90% or more of the students qualify for free meals under the federal requirements for the National School Lunch Program and high schools where 85% or more of the students qualify for free meals) and for any school or student group assigned the lowest performance level on any California School Dashboard indicator, a new requirement to change actions deemed ineffective for three or more years and a new requirement to tie schoolwide and districtwide actions to specific outcome metrics.
- \$250 million (one-time) increase to expand the number of high-poverty schools participating in the Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialist Grant

Program which provides funding to eligible LEAs for the development of school literacy programs, employment and training of literacy coaches and reading and literacy specialists, and development and implementation of interventions for students needing targeted literacy support.

- \$100 million (one-time) increase for LEAs to provide high school seniors with cultural enrichment experiences, such as museum visits, access to theatrical performances, and participation in extracurricular art enrichment activities.
- The delay of the \$550 million in planned support from 2023-24 to 2024-25 for the California Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program which provides funding for the construction of new classrooms or retrofit of existing school facilities for these programs.
- \$100 million decrease in planned support for the School Facility Program which provides funding for new construction and modernization. This would reduce the planned allocation in 2023-24 from approximately \$2.1 billion to approximately \$2.0 billion.

## Local Control Funding Formula

The May Revision increased the funded COLA to 8.22% from the 8.13% COLA in the Governor's January Budget projection. When combined with statewide declining enrollment data, this COLA increase to the LCFF for 2023-24 results in \$3.4 billion additional discretionary LCFF dollars compared to 2022-23 LCFF levels.

Declining enrollment protection for school districts will continue to be based on the greater of the current year's, the prior year's, or the average of the most recent three prior years' Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Charter schools will continue to be funded on current year ADA.

All LEAs should continue to develop multiple scenarios using all available options to ensure they are prepared for both best- and worst-case budgets and are better able to adapt to economic uncertainty.

## Reductions to Block Grants

### Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant

The state's adopted budget for 2022-23 established the Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant totaling \$3.6 billion. The Governor's January Budget proposed to pull back approximately \$1.2 billion from this grant. The May Revision proposes to adjust the \$1.2 billion reduction by \$607 million, for a total reduction of approximately \$1.8 billion.

The first 50% of the grant was distributed to LEAs in November 2022, with the remaining 50% (approximately \$1.8 billion) scheduled to be released in May 2023. Although the

Administration did not propose urgency legislation to implement this proposed reduction, the CDE has delayed the second disbursement of grant funds until after the Legislature enacts the state budget.

As a reminder, this grant requires LEA boards to approve expenditure plans consistent with the allowable uses of the grant. Given the proposed reduction in funding, LEAs should develop alternate budgets and expenditure plans. LEAs should also remove the May 2023 disbursement of funds from their cash flow projections to account for any potential cash needs.

Some LEAs may have already spent or obligated the original amount of funds proposed by the Discretionary Block Grant. In these cases, LEAs will need to consider alternate funds to meet those obligations or to replace those funds.

### **Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant**

In the 2022-23 State Budget, the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant (LREBG) provided LEAs with \$7.9 billion in one-time funds for learning recovery initiatives to be spent through the 2027-28 school year.

The May Revision reduces the Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant by \$2.5 billion. This reduction would decrease the block grant by 32%, for a total program funding of \$5.4 billion.

LEAs have already received 100% of this grant and should consider classifying 32% of the revenue received as a liability. Doing so will allow an accurate representation of other state revenues and liabilities if this reduction becomes part of the 2023-24 State Budget and the state moves to recover the reduced amount. The return of funds will likely come no sooner than July and as a direct reduction to the principal apportionment in the 2023-24 fiscal year, although it is still unclear how and when this reduction would be implemented.

## **Educator Workforce Programs**

### **Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program**

The May Revision proposes \$20 million for Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program grants, to be awarded to applicants over five years (\$4 million per year) from 2023-24 through 2027-28.

### **Teacher and School Counselor Residency Grant Program**

The May Revision proposes several adjustments to the Residency Grant Program, including:

- Specifying that grants shall be expended by grantees within five years of the fiscal year that the grant was awarded.
- Increasing the maximum grant per candidate from \$25,000 to \$40,000, while maintaining the requirement that the LEA match 80% of the first \$25,000 of the grant.
- Requiring a minimum compensation package of \$20,000 per candidate.

- Allowing candidates who are unable to complete their residencies because of hardship to apply for a waiver of repayment obligations.

### **Credentialing Flexibility Proposals**

The May Revision also includes new proposals to help address teacher shortages including the following:

- Requiring the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to develop a process by which an efficient transcript review can be provided to all teacher candidates who require determinations of basic skills or subject matter competence to complete their credentialing requirements.
- Requiring the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to issue a comparable California credential to any United States military servicemember or their spouse who possesses a valid out-of-state teaching credential, if the service member is relocated to California on military orders.

## **Program Continuations**

### **Transitional Kindergarten**

The May Revision continues the second-year TK expansion but reduces funding to \$597 million in alignment with updated enrollment estimates. The expansion grows the program by including access to all children turning five between September 2 and April 2, estimated at an additional 42,000 children. In addition, the \$165 million that was included in the Governor’s January Budget proposal to support a second adult (certificated or classified) in each TK classroom to maintain a 12-to-1 student-to-adult ratio remains unchanged. The previously anticipated reduction of the student-to-adult ratio to 10-to-1 would not occur in 2023-24, though it could occur in a future year in which the state provides funds for this purpose. Full implementation of universal TK for all children whose fourth birthday occurs by September 1 is expected in 2025-26.

### **State Preschool**

The May Revision maintains the approximately \$485 million included in the Governor’s January Budget proposal to increase State Preschool Program enrollment of students eligible for adjustment factors, including students with disabilities, dual language learners, childhood mental health and three-year-olds. With this funding comes the requirement for State Preschool Program providers to offer additional supportive services for dual language learners and to ensure that at least 7.5% of students served are students with disabilities by July 1, 2023, and 10% by July 1, 2024.

The May Revision also reflects recent legislation that allows the CDE to use:

- \$9.7 million from the 2022 Budget Act to continue to waive family fees from July 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023.

- \$112 million in federal funding to provide temporary employee stipends.

### **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program**

The May Revision proposes to give LEAs additional time to spend the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) funds received in 2021-22 and 2022-23 by extending the deadline from June 30, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

### **Special Education**

The May Revision includes an 8.22% COLA, increasing the base rate to approximately \$887.40. In addition, the May Revision retains the following policy adjustments included in the Governor's January Budget proposal:

- Limiting the amount of additional funding Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) are allowed to retain for non-direct student services before allocation to member LEAs. SELPAs will be required to allocate at least the same amount they allocated in 2022-23, increased by the 8.22% COLA, to their member LEAs in 2023-24. This proposal intends to consider declining enrollment as part of the allocation requirement and may be further clarified prior to final approval.
- Extending the moratorium on creation of new single-district SELPAs by an additional two years to June 30, 2026.
- Requiring the posting of each SELPA's annual local plan on the CDE's website.

### **School Nutrition**

The May Revision includes an 8.22% COLA to the Universal School Meal program state reimbursement rate. No other change is proposed to the program.

### **School Facilities**

The May Revision includes the same proposals from the Governor's January Budget to decrease the 2023-24 planned support of the School Facility Program by \$100 million, from approximately \$2.1 billion to approximately \$2.0 billion, and to delay the 2023-24 planned \$550 million investment in the California Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten Facilities Grant Program to 2024-25.

## **Planning Factors for 2023-24 and Multi-Year Projections**

Key planning factors for LEAs to incorporate into their 2023-24 adopted budgets and multi-year projections (MYPs) based on the latest information available are listed below:

Planning Factor	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)</b>			
LCFF COLA	8.22%	3.94%	3.29%
Special Education COLA	8.22%	3.94%	3.29%
<b>Employer Benefit Rates</b>			
CalSTRS	19.10%	19.10%	19.10%
CalPERS-Schools	26.68%	27.70%	28.30%
State Unemployment Insurance	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%
<b>Lottery</b>			
Unrestricted per ADA	\$170	\$170	\$170
Proposition 20 per ADA	\$67	\$67	\$67
Minimum Wage	\$16.00*	\$16.50**	\$16.90***
Universal Transitional Kindergarten/ADA LCFF add-on for the 12-to-1 student-to- adult ratio	\$3,044	\$3,164	\$3,268
<b>Mandated Block Grant</b>			
<b>Districts</b>			
K-8 per ADA	\$37.81	\$39.30	\$40.59
9-12 per ADA	\$72.84	\$75.71	\$78.20
<b>Charters</b>			
K-8 per ADA	\$19.85	\$20.63	\$21.31
9-12 per ADA	\$55.17	\$57.34	\$59.23

\*Effective January 1, 2024.

\*\*Effective January 1, 2025.

\*\*\*Effective January 1, 2026.

## Reserves/Reserve Cap

Under current law, there is a required cap of 10% on school district reserves in fiscal years immediately succeeding those in which the balance in the Public School System Stabilization Account (PSSSA) is equal to or greater than 3% of the total TK-12 share of the Proposition 98 Guarantee. The balance of \$9.9 billion in 2022-23 continues to trigger school district reserve caps in 2023-24.

Basic aid districts and small school districts with fewer than 2,501 ADA are exempt from this requirement.

Districts should estimate whether their budgeted 2023-24 General Fund 01 and Special Reserve Fund for Other Than Capital Outlay Projects Fund 17 combined ending assigned and unassigned reserves are no more than 10% of total general fund expenditures, transfers out and other uses.

As a reminder, a district that is not exempt from the reserve cap has several options available to ensure compliance:

- Commit reserves rather than leaving reserves assigned or unassigned.
- Transfer reserves to funds other than the Special Reserve Fund for Other Than Capital Outlay Projects Fund 17.
- Contribute to restricted resources within the General Fund 01.
- If a formal salary offer has been negotiated but negotiations remain unsettled, consider budgeting the cost of the formal salary offer.

If an affected school district chooses to commit excess reserves, in order to comply with Education Code Section 42127.01(a), the commitment of funds should be brought to the district's board for approval in conjunction with its proposed budget. Note that Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 54 requires that a district's board establish the purposes for committed funds before the end of the fiscal year, but the amounts designated for each purpose may be determined as part of the year-end closing process. The commitment of funds should be a formal action and best practice would be to adopt a resolution.

Districts projecting reserves in excess of 10% are encouraged to work with their COEs to explore the available options to meet the reserve cap as part of the budget adoption process.

This FCMAT [Fiscal Alert](#) provides additional information regarding managing local reserves under the cap.

## Summary

This edition of the Common Message serves to provide data and guidance to LEAs for fiscal planning and the development of their 2023-24 Adopted Budgets and MYPs. The information provided for fiscal year 2023-24 and beyond includes the latest known proposals and projections to assist with multiyear planning.

Although the May Revision fully funds the statutory COLA and avoids cuts to ongoing education programs, LEAs should be aware of the estimated \$31.5 billion state budget deficit for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The May Revision proposes to address this deficit through funding delays, reductions and pullbacks, fund shifts, trigger reductions and borrowing, which, aside from the school facilities funding delays and the Arts, Music and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant, and Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant pullbacks discussed earlier, do not affect TK-12 education programs. The current state revenue forecast only assumes slower economic growth; however, many economists believe that a mild recession will occur in 2023 or 2024. As a result, there is a risk of further state revenue shortfalls that could result in additional cuts to education spending and/or withdrawals from the PSSSA.

Moreover, many LEAs continue to experience student absences and increased costs because of COVID-19, as well as long-term declining enrollment. While the ADA Loss Mitigation adjustment included in last year's budget trailer bill permitted the 2019-20 attendance yield to be used to amend reported ADA in 2021-22, LEAs will not be able to amend reported ADA for 2022-23 or future years. However, the ADA Loss Mitigation adjusted 2021-22 ADA will be used in calculating the greater of the current year, prior year, or average ADA of the three most recent fiscal years to determine LCFF-funded ADA for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. In addition, most COVID-19 fiscal relief funding (e.g., Governor's Emergency Education Relief [GEER], Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund [ESSER], In-Person Instruction, and Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant) will expire on or before September 30, 2024. As a reminder, ESSER II and GEER II funding will expire on September 30, 2023.

LEAs face near and long-term challenges, including risks to the state revenue forecast, reduced ADA because of COVID-19-related student absences, inflationary pressures (e.g., pension rate increases), expiring one-time COVID-19 relief funds and declining enrollment. As each LEA has unique funding and program needs, it remains essential that LEAs continuously assess their individual situations, work closely with their COE and plan accordingly to maintain fiscal solvency and educational program integrity.