California Department of Education to report on required reports.

When the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) replaced categorical funding, an unexpected benefit was the elimination of numerous reporting requirements tied to various funding streams. However, since that time, the data and other reporting requirements for local educational agencies (LEAs) have steadily increased. The COVID pandemic brought additional state and federal programs and initiatives, which also brought a surge in required plans, data collection, and reports, causing many in the education community to call it the "plandemic."

Many of the state's required reports are duplicative, cumbersome, and require educators to divert attention away from services for kids in order to write plans and complete required paperwork, leading many schools leaders to suspect that not all of the information reported is being reviewed or used by the entities requiring it.

In response, Governor Newsom signed SB 1315 by Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera), which requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to produce and present a report and recommendations on which reports could be consolidated, eliminated, or shortened by March 1, 2025. It is a good start, but many in the education community hope that it is only the first step. According to an estimate by Senator Archuleta, school districts throughout the state are required to annually produce 170 reports, nearly equivalent to the statutorily required 180 instructional days in the school year.

ABCs not ELPAC for TK students.

Many lauded the recent expansion of universal pre-K and transitional kindergarten (TK) programs. However, until this school year, because of prior requirements under state and federal law, many of the state's youngest students were assessed and classified as English learners using the English Language Proficiency Assessments of California (ELPAC) which was not designed for them. The ELPAC, while an important instrument, is not developmentally appropriate, and has not been proven valid and reliable for use with all four-year-olds, as required by state and federal law.

Specifically, federal law requires that states assess students for English language proficiency starting in kindergarten, which typically means children who are five years old. The ELPAC is California's statewide test for English language proficiency, designed for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The initial ELPAC is given to students who are enrolling in California schools for the first time and whose primary language is not English, as reported by their parents. Students are classified as English learners based on their initial ELPAC results. The summative ELPAC is administered each year

thereafter to assess English learners' progress in developing their English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The summative assessment is also used to determine whether an English learner is ready for reclassification as proficient in English. Because California law defines TK to mean the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, the current interpretation of the requirement is to assess students for English language proficiency starting in TK. AB 2268 by Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance), an urgency measure (which means the bill takes effect immediately upon signature) that was approved by the Governor in June in order to be in place for the 2024-25 school year, exempts students from having to take the ELPAC in TK earlier than originally intended. Now, the assessment of an eligible student will occur upon their entry into kindergarten.

The Governor signed the following assessment and accountability bills:

Absenteeism

AB 1884 (Ward) - Pupil attendance: excused absences: uniformed services deployments.
Current law authorizes a pupil's excused absence to spend time with a member of their immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. AB 1884 removes the requirement that the deployment be to a combat zone or combat support position.
Chapter 919, Statutes of 2024

AB 2771 (Maienschein) - Pupil attendance: schoolsite absence intervention teams.
This bill requires CDE, by the beginning of the 2026–27 school year, to post information on its website about methods of reducing chronic absenteeism, including through the formation of schoolsite absence intervention teams.
Chapter 154, Statutes of 2024

SB 1138 (Newman) - Pupil attendance: excused absences: military entrance processing.
This bill authorizes a student's absence to be excused for participation in military entrance processing.
Chapter 925, Statutes of 2024

Accountability

AB 2046 (Bryan) - Educational programs: single gender schools and classes.
Current law authorizes, until January 1, 2025, a school district, or a charter school authorized by a school district, with an average daily attendance of 250,000 or more pupils to maintain any single gender schools and classes that were enrolling pupils as of July 1, 2017, if certain requirements are met. This bill extends the authorization through June 30, 2031.
Chapter 373, Statutes of 2024

SB 1315 (Archuleta) - School accountability: local educational agencies: annual reporting requirements.

Requires CDE, on or before March 1, 2025, to provide a report to the SPI, the Governor, and the Legislature on the number and types of reports that school districts, county offices of education (COE), and charter schools are required to annually submit. The report must include the purpose of each report and recommendations for which reports can be consolidated, eliminated, or truncated. The bill also encourages specified committees of the Legislature to hold a hearing, within 30 days of receiving the report from CDE, to allow for the SPI to present the report.

Chapter 468, Statutes of 2024

Assessments

AB 2268 (Muratsuchi) - English learners: initial identification: English language proficiency assessment.

Each school district with pupils who are English learners, and, to the extent required by federal law, each COE and each charter school, must assess the English language development of each pupil in order to determine the pupil's level of proficiency. In California, the assessment given to English learners is the ELPAC. The ELPAC is usually conducted upon the initial enrollment of a pupil however, AB 2268, which took effect upon the Governor's signature in June, exempts students in TK from being assessed for English language development using the ELPAC. The bill also excludes students in TK from being assessed for initial identification as an English learner upon their initial enrollment.

Chapter 15, Statutes of 2024

SB 1195 (Limón) - Assessments: advanced placement examinations: fall testing date.

This bill requires CDE, on or before February 1, 2025, to request the College Board to provide an alternative testing date at the end of the fall semester for all pupils in California whose advanced placement courses conclude in the fall semester, while maintaining the option for those pupils to take the advanced placement examination for those courses during the spring semester, at the discretion of the pupil.

Chapter 885, Statutes of 2024

Data

AB 2723 (Irwin) - The California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act.

Under existing law the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Workgroup is established to assess and recommend data system structural components, processes, and options for expansion and enhancement of data system functionality and to advise ongoing efforts to develop, administer, and enhance the data system. Under existing law, a governing board is established to govern the data system. This bill would dissolve the workgroup.

Chapter 736, Statutes of 2024

Graduation Requirements

AB 2251 (Connolly) - Graduation requirements: local requirements: exemptions.

Current law requires a pupil to complete designated coursework while in grades 9 to 12 in order to receive a diploma of graduation from high school. These graduation requirements include the completion of 3 years of courses in English, 2 years of courses in mathematics, 2 years of courses in science, and 3 years of courses in social studies. The governing board of a school district may also adopt its own additional graduation requirements. AB 2251 simply clarifies that the governing board of a school district is also authorized to adopt a policy to exempt pupils from any additional local graduation requirements.

Chapter 560, Statutes of 2024

Capitol Advisors Group has produced a set of comprehensive client briefs detailing new education laws that were passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Newsom in 2024. Each brief is organized by subject area and includes an executive summary highlighting major changes we think you should know about. Bills signed by the Governor take effect on January 1, 2025, unless the bill specifically states otherwise.