







BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

MARCH 07, 2025

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: Interim Superintendent, Mao Misty Her

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Board Communications Approved by: Interim Superintendent Mao Misty Her



Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Mao Misty Her, Interim Superintendent

Date: March 07, 2025
Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Interim Superintendent Calendar Highlights

The purpose of this communication is to inform the Board of notable calendar items:

- Met with labor partners
- Guest reader for Read Across America and Birney Elementary School
- Visited Bullard High School to congratulate cheerleaders for winning Nationals.
- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Recorded public service announcement regarding immigration
- Visited McLane's afterschool program
- Attended the Reading Difficulties Screener Committee Meeting
- Attended the AASA National Conference on Education
- Roundtable member on a session titled *Building an Equity Minded Leadership Pipeline* at the AASA National Conference on Education
- Panel member on a Thought Leader Session titled *Shifting Roles of Principal Supervisors and Principals* at the AASA National Conference on Education

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Misty Her at 457-3884

Cabinet Approval: 

Name and Title: Mao Misty Her, Interim Superintendent

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Chief Executive

Date: March 7, 2025

Phone Number: 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for February 28, 2025

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board a copy of School Services of California's (SSC) Weekly Updates. Each week SSC provides an update and commentary on different educational fiscal issues. In addition, they include different articles related to education issues. The SSC Weekly Updates for February 28, 2025 are attached and include the following articles:

- First Interim Certifications Released – February 27, 2025
- Advice to California Schools on Trump's DEI Crackdown: Do Nothing - Yet – February 26, 2025
- California Extends State Financial Aid Deadline Until April 2 – February 25, 2025

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Kim Kelstrom at 457-3907.

Cabinet Approval: 

Name and Title: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer



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DATE: February 28, 2025

TO: Misty Her
Interim Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: ***SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update***

Education Policy Committees Set Hearings

Last Friday, February 21, 2025, was the deadline for legislators to introduce bills to be considered for the first year of the 2025-26 Legislative Session. The Capitol community has been sifting through the nearly 2,500 measures that have been introduced for the 2025 legislative year.

Since policy bills must be in print for at least 30 calendar days before they can be heard in a committee, the measures that are currently being assigned to committee hearings are the ones that were introduced early in the legislative session.

Both the Assembly and Senate Education Committees recently scheduled their first policy committee hearings of the year. We provide a preview of those hearings below.

Assembly Education Committee

On Wednesday, March 12, 2025, the Assembly Education Committee, chaired by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance), will consider the following nine bills:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 51 (McKinnor, D-Inglewood) would require, beginning January 1, 2026, the interest rate to be 0% for the outstanding emergency apportionments to Inglewood Unified School District (USD) and Oakland USD.
- AB 65 (Aguiar-Curry, D-Winters) would require a K-14 public employer to provide up to 14 weeks of full pay to certificated and classified employees due to pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from those conditions.
 - A similar measure made it all the way to the Senate floor last year, but never received a vote after “contingent upon an appropriation” language was added to the measure in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

- AB 86 (Boerner, D-Encinitas) would require the State Board of Education to adopt instructional materials for health education for grades K-8 by July 1, 2028.
- AB 228 (Sanchez, R-Rancho Santa Margarita) is an urgency measure that would require local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide at least one type of U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved epinephrine delivery system.
- AB 279 (Patel, D-San Diego) would require, by July 1, 2028, and every eight years thereafter, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) to recommend revisions to the standards for school library services to the Instructional Quality Commission.
- AB 281 (Gallagher, R-East Nicolaus) would require a school district to allow a pupil's parent or guardian to inspect any written or audiovisual educational material used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education and would authorize a parent or guardian to make copies of any written educational material.
- AB 322 (Ward, D-San Diego) would require the California Department of Education (CDE) to encourage LEAs to participate in programs that offer reimbursement for school-based health services and school-based mental health services.
- AB 347 (Kalra, D-San Jose) would strengthen the process for students to opt out of the dissection of animals in schools, require the CDE to develop a template for students to use to opt out, and make compliance with opt-out requirements subject to the Uniform Complaint Procedures.
 - This bill is nearly identical to AB 2640 (Kalra), which was held by the Senate Appropriations Committee last year.
- AB 361 (Schultz, D-Burbank) would remove the sunset on the Los Angeles USD's Best Value Procurement pilot program and expand the option statewide to any school district for public works projects over \$1 million that meet specified labor requirements.

Senate Education Committee

On Wednesday, March 19, 2025, the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Senator Sasha Perez (D-Pasadena), will consider eight bills, including the following that would have implications for LEAs:

- Senate Bill (SB) 48 (Gonzalez, D-Long Beach) is an urgency bill that would prohibit LEAs from granting an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer permission to access a school campus without a judicial warrant and prohibit an LEA from disclosing any information about a pupil or school employee to an ICE officer without a judicial warrant.
- SB 98 (Perez) would require LEAs and postsecondary educational institutions to immediately notify all students, parents, faculty, staff, and other school community members if immigration officers are present on a school site.
- SB 316 (Reyes, D-San Bernardino) would, commencing with the 2026-27 school year, require LEAs and state special schools to ensure that each of their pupils receives, at least once before the pupil completes grade 11, information on how to properly preregister to vote.

- SB 341 (Perez) would revise and recast the Instructional School Gardens Program by reestablishing the program under the Department of Food and Agriculture for the promotion, creation, and support of instructional school gardens through the allocation of grants and the provision of technical assistance to support instructional school garden programming in LEAs.
- SB 399 (Niello, R-Fair Oaks) would require a school district to maintain a record of all requests for interdistrict transfer, records of the disposition of those requests, and would require a school district to, by October 15 of each year, submit the information for the current school year to the SSPI.

Leilani Aguinaldo

First Interim Certifications Released

By John Gray and Wendi McCaskill
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
February 27, 2025

The California Department of Education released the results of the 2024-25 First Interim reporting. Local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to self-certify in one of the following three categories:

- **Positive**—LEA will meet its financial obligations in the current and two subsequent years
- **Qualified**—LEA may not meet its financial obligations in the current or two subsequent years
- **Negative**—LEA will not meet its financial obligations in the current or subsequent year

The First Interim period represents the first of two opportunities annually for LEAs to report on their fiscal outlook as no certification requirements are included with the Adopted Budget reporting.

Certification	2023-24 First Interim	2023-24 Second Interim	2024-25 First Interim
Qualified	31	23	32
Negative	6	6	7

The number of LEAs reporting as qualified increased from March 2024 (First Interim) to December 2024 (Second Interim) by nine LEAs, representing a 39% increase. When comparing year over year, however, there has been only a slight increase, from 31 to 32, in LEAs reporting as qualified from December 2023 to December 2024. The number of LEAs reporting as negative increased by one LEA over the same period. Some of the highlights from the nine months from March 2024 to December 2024 include the following:

- The 2024-25 fiscal year is the final year of 2021-22 hold harmless policies that impact funded average daily attendance and, although improving, attendance rates statewide are still below pre-pandemic rates.
- November 2024 tax receipts were 7.9%—\$1 billion—below budget projections used to prepare the 2024-25 budget forecast.

The full list of LEAs that have a qualified or negative certification as of the 2024-25 First Interim reporting can be found [here](#).

Note: Last week, the U.S. Department of Education announced it may withhold funding for any school that has programs focused on race, which could include clubs, activities, prizes, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life.

Advice to California Schools on Trump’s DEI Crackdown: Do Nothing — Yet

By Carolyn Jones
CalMatters
February 26, 2025

California’s K-12 schools are getting some clarity on how to handle the Trump administration’s sweeping orders to abolish diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

The answer is: Do nothing. Not yet, anyway.

“Time to take a breath. Just because Trump ordered it, doesn’t mean it’s going to happen,” Noelle Ellerson Ng, a legislative advocate for the School Superintendents Association, told California school administrators last week. “Executive orders on their own can’t really accomplish much ... There’s a distinct difference between activity and productivity.”

Last week, the U.S. Department of Education announced it may withhold funding for any school that has programs focused on race. That could include clubs, activities, prizes, graduation ceremonies “and all other aspects of student, academic and campus life,” according to the directive.

“With this guidance, the Trump Administration is directing schools to end the use of racial preferences and race stereotypes in their programs and activities — a victory for justice, civil rights laws, and the Constitution,” Craig Trainor, acting assistant secretary for civil rights for the education department, said in a statement.

Schools have until Feb. 28 to end the programs.

On Friday, a judge temporarily blocked some of Trump’s orders related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The ruling prevents the federal government from cutting funding, but it doesn’t stop it from investigating schools’ race-related programs – at least for now.

Nearly every high school in California has at least some programs focused on students’ race. Black, Latino and Asian student clubs are common, as are celebrations like Chinese New Year or Cinco de Mayo. In recent years, more students — particularly Native American students — have worn ethnic regalia to graduation ceremonies, or even held separate ceremonies.

About 8% of California’s K-12 funding comes from the federal government, mostly as payments for special education and Title I grants for schools where at least 40% of the student population is low-income. If the federal money disappears, those schools and students will be most affected.

Attorney General Rob Bonta said he was reviewing the Department of Education’s directive, but in general, he said that DEI programs are legal and schools have a right to promote them.

In a joint announcement in January with 12 other state attorneys general, Bonta called Trump's anti-DEI efforts "unnecessary and disingenuous."

"The administration is targeting lawful policies and programs that are beneficial to all Americans," they wrote. "These policies and programs are not only consistent with state and federal anti-discrimination laws, they foster environments where everyone has an opportunity to succeed."

Attorney General weighs in

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond didn't immediately respond to requests for comment, but earlier in February he urged schools to "stay focused" and not get distracted by Trump's orders.

"Now is not the time to be distracted by external efforts to demean and divide," Thurmond wrote to school authorities. "Please continue to stay the course with local programs that are producing results. Now is the time when our students need consistency, support, and community more than ever."

Some parents were dismayed at the directive, saying it would limit their children's exposure to other cultures. Katie Walton, a mother of three Native American children, said she worried how it would impact Native American programs and curriculum, particularly a recently passed state law requiring schools to teach about the genocide of Native Californians during the Spanish and Gold Rush eras.

"Me and my husband will teach our kids what they need to know, but I'm worried about all the other kids who might not get this information," said Walton, who lives in Madera County and whose children are part of the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians. "It makes me sad."

Angie Barfield, executive director of Black Students of California United, said she's received calls from school administrators throughout the state who are unsure whether to disband their campus Black student clubs.

She tells them to "stand firm."

"This is not the time to run," Barfield said. "The governor is going to fight, the attorney general is going to fight, and we're going to fight, too."

Black student clubs began decades ago

At least 3,000 high school students in California belong to Black student clubs, although the number is probably much higher, Barfield said. The groups date from the late 1960s, when students at San Francisco State started the first Black student union, and have spread to high schools and colleges nationwide.

Traditionally open to everyone, the clubs give students a chance to socialize, discuss issues and advocate for the needs of Black students. The students in Barfield's organization also go on college tours, run a youth senate and advocate for student health.

"These clubs have a long track record of supporting not just Black students, but all students," Barfield said. "This order is taking us backwards."

Ng and her colleagues are advising school administrators to consult with school boards, lawyers and community members to see what their options are, and how to respond. But, she said, it's important to stay calm until there's more specific information from Washington, D.C., such as a Congressional order.

"Regardless of what the Trump administration does, public school doors are still open and kids still show up," Ng said. "So quitting is not an option, and we have to figure out how to respond."

Since taking office in January, Trump has made a series of other steps to reshape public schools, some of which are already moving forward. He vowed to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, legalize vouchers for parents to use public money to send their children to private school, and overhaul Title IX, which bans discrimination based on gender.

Earlier this month, the so-called Department of Government Efficiency canceled \$900 million in education contracts, which paid for reviews of teaching strategies, literacy programs and special education support, among other services.

Trump also eliminated a law enforcement provision that protected schools, hospitals and other "sensitive locations" from immigration enforcement. That move has thrown immigrant communities into panic, with parents in some areas afraid to send their children to school.

Note: The California Student Aid Commission, whose executive director approved a 30-day extension from March 3 to April 2, 2025, reported a 25% drop in the number of California high school seniors who have completed financial aid applications this year.

California Extends State Financial Aid Deadline Until April 2 *Officials say fewer high school seniors have completed aid applications compared with the same point in 2023*

By Amy DiPierro
EdSource
February 25, 2025

California officials are giving students an extra month to meet the state financial aid priority deadline, saying fewer high school seniors have finished paperwork so far this year due to delays in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and uncertainty about federal education policy and immigration enforcement.

The California Student Aid Commission, whose executive director approved the 30-day extension from March 3 to April 2, reported a 25% drop in the number of California high school seniors who have completed financial aid applications this year compared with the same point in 2023.

The April 2 state priority deadline is the date by which students planning to attend a four-year institution must file applications for most state aid programs, including the Cal Grant. Students seeking Cal Grants to attend a community college can apply through Sept. 2. Students have until June 30, 2026, to complete the application for federal awards like Pell Grants.

The decline in completed applications is due in part to a two-month delay to the start of the federal 2025-26 financial aid application cycle, commission officials said. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, opened on Dec. 1 following the troubled rollout of the 2024-25 FAFSA. The form is typically available to students on Oct. 1.

People who work directly with students also say that concerns about the administration of President Donald Trump are giving some families pause about whether to file for federal student aid this year. The decision is especially fraught for students with undocumented family members in light of Trump administration rhetoric promising an unprecedented crackdown on unauthorized immigration. Federal law bars the use of data submitted through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, for any use other than determining financial aid, but both the National College Attainment Network and the California Student Aid Commission have cautioned mixed-status families that the federal form may not protect their data going forward. The California commission has recommended that families fearful of federal immigration enforcement complete the California Dream Act Application, or CADAA, a state financial aid program that does not share information with the federal government.

“Some of the parents are saying, ‘If they take me, they take me. But my kid is going to apply for financial aid for college,’” said Jasmin Pivaral, senior director of college culture at the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, an organization that works with five high schools in Los Angeles Unified. “It’s been really sad and really challenging to hear that parents are having to make this difficult decision, and we have no sense right now what kind of mental toll this is taking on students.”

The Trump administration has also threatened to shut down the U.S. Department of Education and pursued other efforts to freeze federal funding. Linda Doughty, the director of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Cal-SOAP Consortium, which works to boost college participation, said some families have mistakenly concluded that federal student aid will not be available next school year as a result.

“Our parents thought they canceled financial aid,” said Doughty, whose group is helping to organize several free financial aid workshops at area schools this weekend. “That’s misinformation.”

Doughty and her Cal-SOAP colleagues are among the organizations around the state working with the commission to host Cash for College workshops where students and their families can get advice from financial aid experts to file the FAFSA or CADAA. As of Thursday morning, there were 140 such workshops scheduled virtually as well as in person in cities including Bakersfield, Norwalk and San Bernardino.

EdSource reporter Zaidee Stavely contributed to this article.

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Kimberly Villescaz, Executive Officer
Leadership Development

Date: March 7, 2025

Phone Number: 457-3656

Regarding: Clear Administrative Service Credential Program

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding the recent state approval of the Clear Administrative Services Credential Program (CASC).

In California, CASC is a two-tiered process for obtaining an administrative credential. The first tier consists of the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, often called the Leadership Cohort within our organization. The second tier entails CASC, a two-year program designed to assist leaders in clearing their credential.

The state has approved the CASC Program in Fresno Unified to support administrative personnel in several key areas: meeting the standards set by Commission on Teacher Credential (CTC), enhancing expertise in instructional pedagogy focused on equity and providing constructive feedback, navigating organizational stability by acknowledging school structures and systems essential for fostering high levels of achievement amount all students, expanding and refining the knowledge and skills necessary for promoting effective teaching and learning through cognitive coaching, engaging in authentic leadership experiences through a structured support system that allows participants to encounter the realities faced by administrators, thereby refining their practices and deepening their understanding of professional responsibilities.

The program will comprise the following components:

- Professional learning Aligned to the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL)
- One-on-One coaching sessions
- Networking opportunities with other leaders in Fresno Unified
- Support for addressing equity-centered challenges of practice
- Job-Shadowing opportunities
- A focus on family and community engagement

The implementation of this program will offer professional development opportunities designed to cultivate leaders who are committed to equity, enabling them to serve and support our diverse communities effectively.

The CASC Program, which has received full state approval, is a continuous initiative designed to provide ongoing support and resources to administrative personnel. The program will accommodate up to 90 candidates for credential clearance over a two-year period.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Kimberly Villescaz at 457-3656.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: David Chavez, Chief of Human Resources and Labor Relations