

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

SCHOOL FINANCE TERMS

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Glossary of School Finance Terms

Average Daily Attendance (ADA)—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. Ever since 1998-99, excused absences no longer count toward ADA. Attendance is counted every day of the school year and is reported to the California Department of Education (CDE) three times a year (see *Attendance Reports*).

Ad Valorem Taxes—Taxes that are based on the value of property, such as the standard property tax. The only new taxes based on the value of property that are allowed today are those imposed by voter approval for capital facilities bonded indebtedness, with a vote requirement of either 55% for a Proposition 39 bond or a two-thirds requirement for other bonds.

Apportionment—State aid given to a school district or county office of education (COE). Apportionments for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and special education are calculated four times for each school year: (1) the Advance Apportionment, which is based on an agency's prior year's state aid, is certified in July; (2) the First Principal Apportionment (P-1) is certified February 20 of the school year corresponding to the P-1 ADA (see *Attendance Reports*); (3) the Second Principal Apportionment (P-2) is certified by July 2 corresponding to the P-2 ADA, and (4) the annual recalculation of the apportionment is certified in February following the school year (at the same time as the P-1 Apportionment) 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.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1200—Reference to AB 1200 (Chapter 1213, Statutes of 1991) that imposed major fiscal accountability controls on school districts and COEs, by establishing minimum reserve levels and other requirements for agency budgets and fiscal practices. See especially Education Code Sections (EC §) 1240 et seq. and 42131 et seq.

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. 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 LCFF entitlements, as well as for Proposition 98 calculations. Ever since Proposition 13, assessed value is reset to be the true market value only at the time of property transfer or new construction.

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, 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 nonpublic school, community day school, extended year, 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 Grant—The base grant (along with the supplemental and concentration grants) replaces previously existing K-12 revenue limits and approximately 40 state-funded categorical funding streams. The base grant varies based on grade span (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12).

Basic Aid—The California Constitution guarantees that each school district will receive a minimum amount of state aid, called “basic aid,” equal to \$120 per ADA or \$2,400 per district, whichever is greater. Per a change in state law effective 2003-04, state categorical aid is counted first toward meeting the minimum allocation of basic aid (ref. EC § 41975). Basic aid school districts are districts where property taxes exceed the computed LCFF entitlement; such districts receive no state aid from the LCFF.

Budget Overview for Parents—The LCFF Budget Overview for Parents provides a summary of projected local General Fund revenue that the local educational agency (LEA) is receiving for the coming Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) year. It is developed in conjunction with the LCAP and is included in the review and approval of the LCAP.

Categorical Aid—Funds from the state or federal government granted to qualifying school agencies for specialized programs regulated and controlled by federal or state law or regulation. Examples include programs for children with special needs (such as special education) or special programs (such as child nutrition). Expenditure of most categorical aid is restricted to its particular purpose. The funds are granted to districts in addition to their LCFF entitlement.

California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)—The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence was established in 2013 by California EC § 52074 to provide advice

and assistance to school districts, COEs, and charter schools in achieving the goals set forth in their LCAP.

California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)—Is used to maintain individual-level data including student demographics, course data, discipline, assessments, staff assignments, and other data for state and federal reporting.

California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS)—State law requires that classified employees and their employer contribute to this retirement fund.

California School Dashboard (Dashboard) —An online tool published by the CDE each year that displays the performance of LEAs, schools, and student groups on a set of state and local measures to assist in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas in need of improvement.

California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS)—State law requires that certificated employees, their employer, and the state contribute to this pension fund.

California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CBEDS)—The statewide system of collecting classified staffing, graduation requirements, and technology data from all school districts on an “Information Day” each October.

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—instructional aides, custodians, clerical support, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc.

Class Size Penalties—The penalties imposed on school districts that have classes in excess of certain maximum sizes. (Class size penalties result in a reduction in ADA which, in turn, results in a loss in LCFF income.) See EC § 41376 and 41378.

Concentration Grant—The concentration grant (along with the supplemental and base grants) replaces previously existing K-12 funding streams. For targeted students (English learners, free or reduced-price meal (FRPM) recipients, or foster youth unduplicated counts) exceeding 55% of an LEA’s enrollment, the concentration grant will provide 50% of the adjusted base grant.

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

Contribution—The expenditure of general purpose funds in support of a categorical program, i.e., the categorical expense requires a contribution from the district’s General Fund for support. This occurs in most districts and COEs that provide special education and transportation. Contributions to other programs may be caused by deficit factors or local decisions to allocate general purpose funds to special purpose programs.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)—An increase in funding for government programs, including the LCFF entitlement calculation and categorical programs. Current law ties the COLA percentage for most education programs to the annual percentage change in the “Implicit Price Deflator” for state and local governments—a government price index. See EC § 42238.1.

Criteria and Standards—Local district budgets must meet state-adopted provisions of “criteria and standards.” These provisions establish minimum fiscal standards that school districts, COE and the state use to monitor district fiscal solvency and accountability. See EC § 33127 et seq.

Declining Enrollment Adjustment—A formula that cushions the drop-in income in a district with a declining student population. Under current law, districts are funded for the greater of current-year or prior-year ADA. See EC § 42238.5.

Deficit Factor—When an appropriation to the State School Fund for any specific program is insufficient to pay all claims for state aid, a deficit factor is applied to reduce the allocation of state aid to the amount appropriated.

Differentiated Assistance—County superintendents, the CDE, and the CCEE provide differentiated assistance for eligible LEAs, in the form of individually designed assistance, to address identified performance issues, including significant disparities in performance among student groups. LEAs that meet the eligibility requirements set by the State Board of Education (SBE) are identified by the CDE each year in conjunction with the release of the Dashboard.

Early Enrollment Child—For the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years, EC § 48000.15 creates a new definition of “early enrollment children” as children whose fourth birthdays occur between June 3 and September 1 in the year preceding transitional kindergarten (TK).

Education Protection Account (EPA)—The EPA was created by Proposition 30 of 2012, which increased sales and income taxes on a temporary basis. Proposition 55 of 2016 continued the EPA and the increased income taxes of Proposition 30 through the year 2030. Funds collected from the increased taxes are deposited into the EPA, which is then issued to LEAs as a replacement for the state aid portion of the LCFF.

Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF)—The fund used to collect the property taxes that are shifted from cities, the county, and special districts within each county, prior to their distribution to K-14 school agencies.

Excess Cost—Costs in excess of the average annual per-student expenditure (all resources) in an LEA during the preceding school year for an elementary or secondary school student, which is computed after deducting (Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations 300.16 and 300.202):

- Amounts received under Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- Amounts received under Part A of Title I of the ESEA

- Amounts received under Parts A and B of Title III of the ESEA
- Any state or local funds expended for programs that qualify under this subsection, but excluding any amounts for capital outlay and debt service
 - Each must be calculated separately

Forest Reserve Funds—25% of funds received by a county from the U.S. government from rentals of forest reserve lands are apportioned among the various districts in the county according to scholastic population.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)—The ratio of time expended in a part-time position to that of a full-time position.

Gann Limit—A limit on the appropriation of tax revenues of all levels of California government—the state, cities, counties, school agencies, and special districts imposed by Proposition 4, an initiative passed in November 1979 (reference 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 which is currently equal to the annual change in California per-capita personal income, and (2) the change in population, which for school agencies is the change in ADA. Although officially called "Appropriation Limits," these limits are commonly called "Gann Limits" after Paul Gann, the author of Proposition 4.

Grade Span Adjustments (GSA)—Added to the base grants in the LCFF calculation. There is a 10.4% GSA for reduced class sizes in grades TK-3 and a 2.6% GSA for career technical education (CTE) that applies to grades 9-12.

Hold Harmless—A formula providing a guarantee of no loss in funding for an agency when a change in law or data would otherwise require a loss in funding.

Implicit Price Deflator—See *Cost-of-Living Adjustment*.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (Formerly PL94-142)—States must develop and implement policies that assure a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities. The state plans must be consistent with the federal statute, Title 20 U.S. Code Section 1400 et seq.

LCFF Equity Multiplier— The LCFF Equity Multiplier is intended to provide additional ongoing resources to targeted student populations to help close historic disparities in opportunities and student performance. LEAs, excluding nonclassroom-based charter schools, with school sites that have prior-year non-stability rates of greater than 25% and prior-year socioeconomically disadvantaged pupil rates of greater than 70% are eligible. Funding is allocated on a per-student basis using prior-year adjusted cumulative enrollment.

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)—Under the LCFF, districts, COEs, and charter schools are required to create and update a three-year LCAP, which will describe how annual goals will be met and address state and local priorities identified in EC § 52060(d). The SBE is required to create evaluation standards to assist with analyzing strengths, weaknesses, areas of improvement, technical assistance, and identify intervention needs.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)—The LCFF replaced revenue limits and most categorical programs starting in 2013-14. It is the amount that a district or charter school can collect annually from local property taxes and state aid. It is comprised of a base grant by grade span multiplied per unit of ADA, with GSAs for class-size reduction in grades TK-3 and for CTE at the high school level. Supplemental and concentration grants are added based upon the percentage of the student population that is FRPM eligible, English learners, and foster youth unduplicated counts.

Mandate Block Grant (MBG)—In 2012-13, the MBG program was established for LEAs (COEs, school districts, and charter schools [both direct and locally funded]) that elect to participate to receive reimbursement for 49 mandated activities (specified in Government Code Section [GC §] 17581.6[e]). LEAs make an annual choice to receive funds for mandated activities either through the MBG or through the traditional claim reimbursement process, for which reimbursements have been suspended indefinitely. The MBG funds are unrestricted and allocated on a per-ADA rate.

Mandated Costs—School district expenses that occur because of federal or state laws, decisions of state or federal courts, and federal or state administrative regulations. See Senate Bill (SB) 90, SB1977, and Proposition 4 (1979).

Maintenance Factor—See *Proposition 98*.

Minimum Proportionality Percentage (MPP) —Each fiscal year, LEAs are required to increase or improve services for unduplicated students as compared to the services provided to all students in proportion to the additional funding provided through LCFF supplemental and concentration grant funds. State regulations provide the formula that LEAs use to calculate the percentage by which they must increase or improve services in the coming school year. This percentage is also known as the MPP. To calculate the MPP, an LEA divides their allocation of the supplemental and concentration grants by the amount of the base grant they receive and converts the quotient to a percentage. An LEA must demonstrate in its LCAP how it is meeting the MPP through actions that contribute to the increased or improved services requirement.

Miscellaneous Funds—Local revenues received from mineral royalties or bonuses and other payments in lieu of taxes. Fifty percent of such revenues are used as an offset to state aid in the LCFF.

Necessary Small School (NSS)—An elementary school with 96 or fewer ADA or high school with 286 or fewer ADA that meets the standards of being “necessary.” See EC § 42280 et seq.

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

Permissive Override Tax—Prior to Proposition 13, any of a number of local tax levies that were for specific purposes and that required only the permission of a school board to be levied. School agencies are no longer allowed to levy such taxes.

PL81-874—A federal program of “Impact Aid” that provides funds to school agencies that educate children whose families live and/or work on federal property, such as military bases. Also called “PL874.”

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 LCFF.

Proposition 13—An initiative amendment passed in June 1978 adding Article XIII A to the California Constitution. Under Proposition 13, the maximum total property tax rate for all government operations—including school agencies, cities, counties, and special districts—is 1% of the assessed value and additional property tax levies may only be made for voter-approved debt. Proposition 13 also defined assessed value and required a two-thirds vote to levy any special purpose tax.

Proposition 28: Arts and Music Education Funding—The “Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act” was passed by voters in November 2022. The measure requires the state to establish a new, ongoing program supporting arts instruction in schools beginning in 2023-24. The amount of funding available each fiscal year for the Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) program will be one percent of the K-12 portion of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee provided in the prior fiscal year, excluding funding appropriated for the AMS program above the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee.

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 39.5% of state General Fund tax revenues in each year, the same percentage as was appropriated for K-14 school agencies in 1986-87.
- “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 0.5% is lower than the “Test 2” inflation factor (i.e., the change in per-capita personal income), in which case the inflation factor is reduced to the annual percentage change in per capita state General Fund tax revenues plus 0.5%.

One of the provisions of Proposition 98 (as amended by Proposition 111) applies only 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. In such a situation, a “maintenance factor” is initially set equal to the amount of that year’s funding reduction due to “Test 3” or suspension, and this amount grows each year by statewide ADA growth and the “Test 2” inflation factor. In subsequent years when state taxes per-capita grow faster than personal income per capita, this “maintenance factor” is restored by increasing the Proposition 98 minimum funding level until the funding base is fully restored. This restoration process is applied prospectively only, and there is no requirement that the revenue loss in the year or years prior to the maintenance factor being fully restored be made up.

Reserves—Funds set aside in a school agency budget to provide for economic uncertainties, future expenditures, working capital, or other purposes.

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

Senate Bill (SB) 90—Reference to either:

1. SB 90/1972, which established the revenue limit system for funding school districts. The first revenue limit amount was determined by dividing the district’s 1972-73 state and property tax income by that year’s ADA. This original per-ADA amount became the historical base for all subsequent revenue limit calculations.
2. SB 90/1977, which required that the state reimburse state-imposed mandates on local governments.

SB 813—Reference to SB 813/1983 that provided a series of education “reforms” in funding calculations. Longer day, longer year, mentor teachers, and beginning teacher salary adjustments are a few of the programs implemented by this 1983 legislation.

Secured Roll—That portion of the assessed value that is stationary, i.e., land and buildings. See also *Unsecured Roll*. The secured roll averages about 90% of the taxable property in a district.

Serrano Decision—In 1974, the California Superior Court in Los Angeles County ruled in the *Serrano v. Priest* case that school district revenues in California depended so heavily on local property taxes that students in districts with a low assessed value per pupil were denied an equal educational opportunity in violation of the “Equal Protection” clause of the California Constitution. This ruling established certain standards under which the school finance system would be constitutional and was upheld by the California Supreme Court in 1976. In 1983, the California Superior Court in Los Angeles County ruled that the system of school finance in effect at that time was in compliance with the earlier California Superior Court order. After several appeals, in March 1989, all of the plaintiffs in the case agreed to dismiss their legal challenges, thereby settling *Serrano v. Priest* as a legal issue.

State School Fund—Each year, the state appropriates money to this fund, which is then used to make state aid payments to school agencies. Section A of the State School Fund is for K-12 education and Section B is for community college education.

Subventions—The term used to describe assistance or financial support, usually from higher governmental units to local governments or school agencies. State aid to school agencies is a state subvention.

Sunset—The termination of a categorical program. A schedule is in current law for the Legislature to consider the “sunset” of most state categorical programs. If a program sunsets under this schedule, the funding for the program shall continue for the general purposes of the program, but the specific laws and regulations shall no longer apply.

Supplemental Grant—Created under the LCFF, the supplemental grant (along with the concentration and base grants) replaces previously existing K-12 funding streams. The supplemental grant equals 20% of the adjusted base grant for targeted disadvantaged students (English learners, FRPM recipients, or foster youth unduplicated counts).

Supplemental Roll—An additional property tax assessment for properties that are sold or newly constructed that reflect a higher market value than on their prior lien date. By taxing this increase in assessed value immediately—rather than waiting until the next lien date—additional property taxes are generated.

Test 1/Test 2/Test 3—See *Proposition 98*.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)—A developmentally appropriate program offered to children (at ages 4 or 5) that are too young to start kindergarten in that year. Essentially, California offers a two-year kindergarten program.

Unsecured Roll—That portion of assessed property that is movable, such as boats, planes, etc.

Waivers—Permission from the SBE—or, in some cases, from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction—to set aside the requirements of an Education Code provision upon the request of a school district. See EC § 33050.