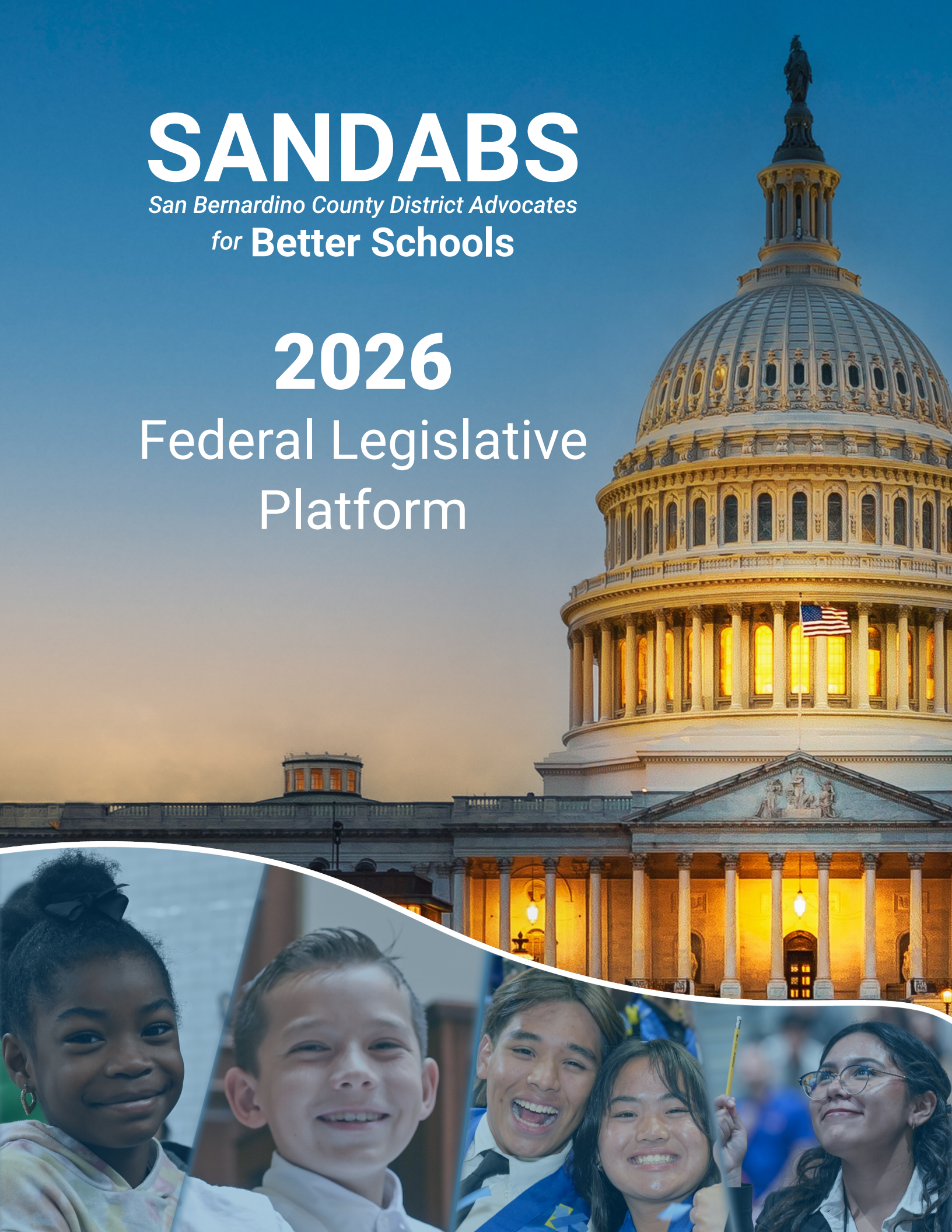


SANDABS

San Bernardino County District Advocates
for **Better Schools**

2026

Federal Legislative Platform



2026 SANDABS Federal Legislative Platform

San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools (SANDABS) looks forward to working with Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to adopt thoughtful legislation that complements the San Bernardino Countywide Vision to support the success of every child from cradle to career.

The highest priorities for 2026 fall into six areas, which include support for:

- Fiscal Year 2027 Education appropriations for preparation of local talent from cradle to career to help the nation reach its 21st century American workforce.
- Local control, parental engagement, and sustained federal resources.
- Full and fair funding to support special education programs.
- Resources to improve student support services, mental and behavioral health, and school safety.
- Funding school nutrition programs to enable universal meals for all public school students.
- Sustained investments in education technology, connectivity, and broadband access.

Countywide Vision for “Cradle to Career” Success

The San Bernardino Countywide Vision calls for collaboration across all sectors to create a vibrant, physically, and economically healthy county. To help achieve this, the Cradle to Career Roadmap, born as a result of the San Bernardino Countywide Vision, depicts a collective impact continuum approach in which families, educators, government, business and labor, and faith- and community-based organizations act as pillars of support for students from the time they are born until they complete advanced education programs, and/or certifications. The Legislature and Governor have embraced policies and significant funding that recognizes the overarching objectives of the Countywide Vision for “Cradle to Career” success, including the importance of access to quality, industry-aligned CTE pathways.

Local Control, Parental Engagement, and Sustained Federal Resources

As the Trump administration and the 119th Congress continue their leadership in Washington D.C., it is crucial to restate the importance of local control, parental engagement and the vital role federal resources play in supporting school programs and services to students, but not if combined with funding cuts or the elimination of vital programs.

Full and Fair Funding for Special Education

Upon the initial implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the federal government committed to provide funding to cover 40 percent of the cost of special education services provided by Local Education Agencies (LEAs); however, the actual resources provided by the federal government have fallen well short of that commitment. SANDABS supports:

- Continuing to pursue full federal funding for special education, as well as the provision of additional state support, to fully provide for special education services across California.
- Seeking waivers from the federally imposed Maintenance of Effort calculations and penalties for LEAs that receive one-time dollars from state agencies that are not sustainable, ongoing funding.
- Providing full special education funding for infants and preschool-aged children with disabilities.
- Funding for student mental health services for students with disabilities, and for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Student Support, Mental and Behavioral Health Services, and School Safety

There is a growing responsibility placed on institutions, such as schools, to support students in coping with stress and encourage a state of well-being through a prevention and early intervention approach. All students regardless of race, immigration status, zip code, and/or family income should have equal access to educational resources that include effective teaching, challenging coursework, facilities that are clean and functional, and a safe school environment. SANDABS supports:

- Funding to focus on expanding mental and behavioral health services for all students, especially for students in crisis which interferes with their learning and behavior.
- Programs to enhance a student's self-resilience and enable a student to cope with stress and pressure in a manner that builds protective factors and skills.
- Resources to expand education efforts aimed toward preventing vaping and substance use.
- Programs that ensure nutritional well-being for our students; this includes maintaining the current eligibility requirements for the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to ensure that our most vulnerable students remain eligible to receive free-or-reduced-priced school meals.
- Funding to advance efforts for safe and supportive social and emotional learning environments for student access to community resources and support to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Bipartisan action to pass legislation that provides a solution for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals participants.
- Bipartisan efforts to address the educational impacts of federal immigration law and provide accurate and relevant resources for administrators on school site safety, sharing of sensitive information and constitutional rights for all K-12 students. These efforts will ensure schools remain a safeguard for students, families, and employees.

- Waiting to implement any requirements to purchase electric school buses until the technology has improved to sufficiently meet the transportation and terrain needs of all schools in the state.

School Nutrition and the Federal School Meals Programs

There has been an increasing realization of the essential need to ensure universal meals are broadly available to the nation's school-aged students. State and federal leaders have proposed moving toward a universal meal program that allows all students to access school nutrition without regard to income or the bureaucratic eligibility process that has become associated with barring children from access to healthy nutrition. SANDABS supports:

- The administration's effort to fully fund and implement a universal school meal program allowing access to quality nutrition for all public school students.
- Elimination of the cumbersome, expensive, and time-consuming bureaucratic process for determining eligibility.

Investment in Broadband Access for All and E-Rate Expansion

The infrastructure necessary to ensure that students have equal access to the internet, appropriate hardware and software didn't exist and remains uneven across the nation and California. The ongoing E-Rate program, which is the largest ongoing fund available to schools for education technology, has been unreasonably tied to technology access only within school buildings rather than across communities to students in their homes and at school. SANDABS supports:

- The administration's continued funding and support for the expansion of broadband access to all communities including small and rural communities as well as urban deserts where connectivity is non-existent.
- The provision of ongoing funding to supplement one-time investments in broadband, devices, and connectivity.
- The expansion of the E-Rate program to allow the uses of these resources for cybersecurity, connectivity, devices, and innovation in classroom instruction beyond the school building and into local communities and homes.



Connect with Us!

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