



# SANDABS

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

## 2026 State Legislative Platform

# 2026 SANDABS State Legislative Platform

San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools (SANDABS) looks forward to working with the California Legislature, Governor, and California Department of Education in the 2026-27 legislative year to adopt thoughtful public policy that complements the San Bernardino Countywide Vision to support the success of every child from cradle to career. SANDABS asks that legislative decisions honor a continued focus on local control, where educators, parents, and community members are fully engaged in setting priorities for educational programs and services, as well as maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff.

The highest priorities for 2026-27 fall into five key areas, which include:

- Full and fair funding for all pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) through twelfth grade students and programs, that includes an emphasis on investment in base, discretionary funding over new categorical programs.
- A continued focus on special education programs and support for students with disabilities.
- Resources for student support, mental and behavioral health services, and school safety.
- Adequately maintained and modernized existing and newly constructed school facilities.
- Appropriately and consistently applied accountability for all schools, including charter schools.

## 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.

## Full and Fair Ongoing Funding

With revenues coming in higher than budget projections, and a significant amount of that expected to come to schools as one-time Proposition 98 funding, ensuring any additional funding allows for local control in how it is used is critical. SANDABS supports:

- Opposing manipulations of the Proposition 98 guarantee that would otherwise reduce the amount of funding provided to local school agencies in accordance with the State Constitution and existing statutes.
- Additional annual funding to provide increases to ongoing base funding for public school agencies to ensure their long-term stability, not to establish new programs.
- Maintaining flexibility and local control when it comes to increased funding to ensure LEAs are able to use funding to address the specific needs of their schools, students, and employees.
- Establishing a new standard to appropriately and fairly identify students who are eligible for supplemental and concentration grant funding, replacing the outdated free and reduced meal program indicator.
- Targeted resources for learning recovery to mitigate the short-term and long-term learning impacts to students as we seek to accelerate learning achievement.
- State leaders’ commitment to smooth the fiscal transition to declining enrollment, which affects more than 60 percent of public schools.
- Funding for schools and districts impacted by disasters and emergencies, including the wildfires and earthquakes that have struck our county.

- Addressing inequities in school transportation funding by ensuring that districts are provided the full, dedicated resources that get kids to and from school safely.
- Mitigating rapidly rising costs (e.g., pensions, healthcare, special education, transportation, alternative education, new mandates, and litigation facing school districts and county offices of education, or COEs) that divert resources away from instruction.
- Funding that will allow districts to address the ongoing costs associated with system maintenance, (e.g., cybersecurity upgrades, technology and facility safety modifications), which have created an additional ongoing financial burden for schools in both direct and indirect costs.

### Continued Focus on Special Education

With continued increased investment by the state and collaborative efforts with local school leaders, we continue to urge Congress to fulfill its 40 percent funding share to make an even greater difference for students with disabilities. SANDABS supports:

- Ongoing funding increases to the state's share of special education costs to help bridge the lack of federal resources and the urgent needs of children with disabilities.
- Ensuring that one-time, state level increases for special education are paid with federally provided State Education Agency discretionary funding.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), which provides additional dollars to Special Education Local Plan Areas to address equitable solutions for accelerated learning.
- Identifying solutions that use ADR strategies to collaboratively provide educational resources for students with disabilities.
- Establishing an alternative formula for calculating federal disproportionality that doesn't unnecessarily penalize a school, disproportionately impact small/rural school districts, or disincentivize identification.

- Creating a 'clearing house' database for districts and COEs to access special education service providers who can address the needs of students with disabilities during the learning recovery stage.

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

All students regardless of race, immigration status, zip code, and/or family income should have equal access to resources that include effective teaching, challenging coursework, college and career opportunities, mental and behavioral health services, facilities that are clean, functional, and provide a safe environment. SANDABS supports:

- Continued efforts to fund the expansion of mental and behavioral health services for all students, especially for crisis and trauma interfering with learning and behavior in school environments – preferably with ongoing resources.
- Funding for student mental health services and Behavior Intervention Plan mandate reimbursements.
- Programs to enhance a student's self-resilience to cope with stress and pressure in a manner to build protective factors and skills.
- Programs to provide counseling and mental health services during and after times of emergencies, such as a public health crisis or a natural disaster.
- Programs to promote safe schools and encourage that student lives are free of violence and bullying.
- Resources to expand education efforts aimed toward preventing vaping and substance use.
- Resources to expand/improve cybersecurity measures to prevent ransomware attacks.
- Bipartisan action to pass legislation that provides a solution for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals participants.
- Programs that provide for the anticipated increase in reports of child abuse resulting from isolation and increased pressures on families.

- Providing schools with the authority to use mental health funding to address the unique needs of their school communities, rather than target funding for specific actions.

## Adequate School Facilities and Infrastructure

High quality school facilities are an essential component of a comprehensive educational program and are an essential part of state and local infrastructure. SANDABS supports:

- Continued state participation in funding for school construction, modernization, deferred maintenance, and improving access under the Americans with Disabilities Act, including the implementation of bond funding provided by any future statewide school bond or additional investment of state general fund dollars.
- Including any provisions to fund the increased need for school facilities, either using developer fees or other means for property developments that impact schools.
- Addressing challenges with the current school facility funding system, which relies on local bonds to prevent systematic inequalities and limiting opportunities for underserved students to access modern facilities and programs.
- Delaying the implementation of the 2035 electric school bus mandate (AB 579, 2023) until the technology has improved to sufficiently meet the transportation and terrain needs of all schools in the state.

## Appropriately and Consistently Applied Accountability

In order to support closure of the excellence gap and increase the graduation rates, SANDABS supports:

- Holding all schools accountable by using appropriate alternate tests for special education students and English language learners, and by basing accountability upon students' progress, (i.e., a growth model) and results, rather than on compliance issues.
- Sound charter school policy that encourages strong collaborative partnerships between authorizers and their charter schools and that makes improved student achievement a standard business practice.
- Holding all public schools (including charter schools), districts, and COEs, as well as the California Department of Education, to high standards of transparency with respect to student outcomes, organizational structure, and fiscal dealings and other actions.
- The collection and assessment of data regarding the impact of quality early education programs on student outcomes and economic opportunities.
- Utilizing the most recent achievement and school accountability data to target school district and county monitoring and assistance to the schools in need, thereby reducing duplicative and ineffective use of these resources.

## Connect with Us!

SANDABS | <https://bit.ly/2SANDABS>  
 SBCSS | Communications and Intergovernmental Relations  
 (909) 386-2947 | [IGR@sbcss.net](mailto:IGR@sbcss.net)  
 601 North E St, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0020

