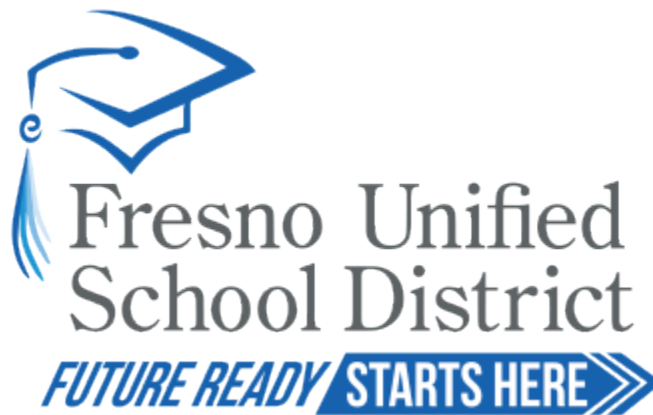




BOARD COMMUNICATIONS - AUGUST 28, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

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Mao Misty Her, Superintendent

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Paoze Lee, Chief Officer

Board Communications Approved by:

Mao Misty Her, Superintendent



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, Superintendent

Date: August 28, 2026

Phone Number: (559) 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Met with Cabinet Teams
- Attended the 13th Annual State of Our Children Breakfast
- Toured “Just Porch It” to discuss potential partnership with Fresno Unified
- Met with labor partners
- Site visits to Eaton, McCardle and Muir
- Met with Rotunda Floyd-Cooper, Wallace Foundation, as part of Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative work
- Met with County Superintendent, Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher
- Attended High School football games

If you have any questions about the information in this communication, or require further information, please contact Misty Her at (559) 457-3884. Thank you.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Mao Misty Her, 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: August 28, 2026

Phone Number: (559) 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for August 20, 2026

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 August 20, 2026, are attached and include the following articles:

- Second House Suspense File Hearing Results – August 14, 2026
- Newsom Celebrates Full Rollout of Transitional Kindergarten, Free School Meals – August 19, 2026
- California Schools Are Putting Students' Phones Out of Reach. Even Teens See an Upside – August 14, 2026

If you have any questions about the information included in this communication, or need further information, please contact Kim Kelstrom at (559) 457-3907. Thank you.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer



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www.sscal.com

DATE: August 20, 2026

TO: Misty Her
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

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

Legislature Races to Meet Key Deadlines Before the End of Session

The Legislature has less than two weeks to wrap up its business on bills for the second and final year of the 2025-26 legislative session.

Last Thursday, August 13, 2026, the Appropriations Committees in both the Senate and the Assembly took up their suspense files and acted on more than 850 bills. Many of the measures that made it out of the fiscal committees were amended to reduce costs or make the bills more palatable to interest holders and lawmakers. We detail the significant education bills that survived this deadline and those that were held by the Appropriations Committees in our *Fiscal Report* article entitled “Second House Suspense File Hearing Results,” which can be found in the articles section of the *Sacramento Update* below.

There are two other critical deadlines that the Legislature needs to consider before the close of session on August 31, 2026. Under legislative rules, Friday, August 21, 2026, is the last day for the Legislature to amend bills on the floor.

Despite this deadline, the Legislature has the power to suspend its own rules, meaning many things can happen in the final days of session notwithstanding deadlines in the legislative calendar. However, the Legislature cannot waive the constitutional requirement that a bill be in print for at least 72 hours in its “final form” before each house can vote on it. Established by Proposition 54 (2016), this requirement makes Friday, August 28, 2026, the practical final day for bills to be amended before the end of session.

Budget Clean-Up TBL Still TBD

As noted above, legislators still have time to craft final bill amendments. Therefore, it is not surprising that clean-up trailer bill language (TBL) has not yet surfaced, although the late sunshining of clean-up will mean there is virtually no time for interest holders to react and shape the legislation. With recent history as our guide, we expect to see language shortly before the end of session.

Governor Newsom Highlights Education Successes

Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom marked the beginning of the new school year by highlighting California's investments in transitional kindergarten (TK), school meals, literacy, mental health, special education, and other student supports.

Universal TK is now in its second year of full implementation, making every four-year-old in California eligible for TK. The Newsom Administration estimates that the program saves families nearly \$14,000 per child in early care and education costs. Since 2019, the state has invested \$12.5 billion to implement universal TK.

The Administration also highlighted several other major education investments, including:

- **Universal School Meals:** California provides two free meals each school day to every public school student, regardless of family income. Nearly 3.5 billion meals have been served since implementation of the Universal Meals Program.
- **Expanded Learning:** The state provides before- and after-school and summer programming for TK-6 students through the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program.
- **Community Schools:** California has invested more than \$4 billion in the community schools initiative, and the 2026 Budget Act provides \$1 billion in ongoing funding to support existing community schools and expand the model to 3,700 additional campuses serving high-need students.
- **Student Mental Health:** The state has invested \$4.7 billion through its Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health and has placed more than 4,000 trained professionals in schools and community organizations to provide wellness education, early intervention, support, and referrals.
- **Literacy:** More than 800 high-need elementary schools are receiving support from literacy coaches and reading specialists, while universal screening for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, is now underway for K-2 students.
- **Special Education:** The state increased K-12 special education funding by \$2.4 billion, a 43% increase, to strengthen instruction and services for students with disabilities.

The Governor's announcement framed these investments as part of the state's broader "whole-child" approach to education and pointed to recent improvements in statewide academic performance. According to the Administration, preliminary trends ahead of this fall's statewide results show gains across tested subjects and grade levels, including improvements among Black and Latino students and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Leilani Aguinaldo

Second House Suspense File Hearing Results

By Kyle Hyland
School Services of California's *Fiscal Report*
August 14, 2026

On Thursday, August 13, 2026, Senator Sabrina Cervantes (D-Riverside) and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland), chairs of the Appropriations committees in their respective houses, dispatched several hundred bills with little commentary other than announcing the vote and providing a short description of any amendments taken.

The committees met to act on the more than 850 bills that were pending consideration on the committees' respective suspense files. The suspense files serve as a legislative "purgatory," where legislation that has a fiscal impact is placed until all measures having an impact on the state's finances can be considered together.

Of the 561 measures on the Senate suspense file, 412 (73%) were approved by the committee and 149 (27%) were held. Of the 293 measures on the Assembly suspense file, 213 (73%) were approved and 80 (27%) were held.

Below is a summary of a number of noteworthy education bills that will be moving forward to the house floors and also those significant education bills that were ultimately held by the committees. You can find the full results of the Assembly Appropriations Committee [here](#) and the results of the Senate Appropriations Committee [here](#).

Bills Approved by the Appropriations Committees

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 917](#) (Ávila Fariás, D-Concord)—County Offices of Education: School Districts: Average Daily Attendance of Less than 250 Pupils: Permanent Status. This bill would change when some certificated employees attain permanent status by eliminating distinctions based on a district's size and allowing service in any regional occupational center or program to count toward permanent status.

[AB 1381](#) (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance)—Education-Related Positions: Previous Employment Disclosures: Commission on Teacher Credentialing: Adverse Actions. This bill would provide that failure by a certificated employee to provide employment history constitutes unprofessional conduct that may be subject to adverse action by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). This bill would also prohibit a local educational agency (LEA) or private school from hiring a certificated or classified employee without completing the applicable employment background check.

[AB 1590](#) (Ransom, D-Stockton)—California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program: Revised Allocation Formula. This bill would require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) to revise the California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) allocation formula no later than the 2027-28 fiscal year to ensure that all funds appropriated for the program are fully allocated in the year in which they are appropriated.

[AB 1763](#) (Lee, D-San Jose)—Excused Absences: Religious Observance. This bill would require that a student be excused from school when the absence is for the observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion by removing the existing requirement that the student's absence be requested in writing by a parent and approved by the principal.

AB 1871 (Fong, D-Alhambra)—Dual Enrollment: College and Career Access Pathways Partnerships. This bill would revise College and Career Access Pathways Partnerships by allowing students to submit one application for continued participation without a principal’s recommendation, removing the four-course term limit while keeping the 15-unit cap, and updating annual reporting requirements for participating LEAs and community college districts.

AB 2017 (Haney, D-San Francisco)—State Holidays: Eid. This bill would add Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state holidays and would authorize related closures for TK-14 schools and permit state employees to exchange their personal holiday credit for time off.

AB 2142 (Garcia, D-Rancho Cucamonga)—School Districts: Community College Districts: Short-Term Employees: Classified Service. This bill would create a rebuttable presumption that a TK-14 district must convert a short-term employee position into a classified service position if the employee works beyond specified time thresholds, is repeatedly rehired to perform substantially the same duties, or the position is used consistently over multiple years.

AB 2225 (Patel, D-San Diego)—Pupil Achievement: Closing the Achievement Gap State Operations and Support Plan. This bill would require the convening of a workgroup to develop the Closing the Achievement Gap State Operations and Support Plan that includes specific goals and benchmarks for the state to support LEAs in closing the achievement gap.

AB 2241 (Boerner, D-Encinitas)—Inclusive School Playgrounds. This bill would establish the Inclusive Playground Advisory Committee within the California Department of Education (CDE) and requires the committee, by January 1, 2028, to develop model guidelines for inclusive school playgrounds designed to allow individuals with disabilities and nondisabled individuals to play together.

AB 2440 (Muratsuchi)—Arts and Music in Schools—Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act: Allowable Uses: Pooled Funding: Funding Certifications. This bill would make various changes to Proposition 28 (2022), including the authorization for LEAs to pool allocated funds across school sites and establishing a statutory methodology for demonstrating compliance with the supplement-not-supplant requirement.

AB 2468 (Patel)—School Accountability: Pupils with Disabilities: Inclusion. This bill would establish the Supporting Inclusive Practices Project in statute and assign responsibility for statewide universal technical assistance to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and responsibility for targeted compliance-related support to the CDE.

AB 2490 (Valencia, D-Anaheim)—Teacher Credentialing: Emergency Career Substitute Teaching Permit: Alternative Qualifications. This bill would expand eligibility for the Emergency Career Substitute Teaching Permit by establishing an alternative pathway based on training, professional development, and mentoring rather than prior substitute teaching experience. This bill would also authorize permit holders who qualify through that pathway to serve up to 70 cumulative days in a single classroom assignment.

AB 2496 (Solache, D-Lakewood)—School Accountability Report Card: California School Dashboard: Local Control Accountability Plan: Local Control Funding Formula Budget Overview. This bill would require the CDE to provide a report to the SSPI, the Governor, and the Legislature that identifies duplication between the data contained in the School Accountability Report Card and other publicly available data sources.

AB 2526 (Muratsuchi)—Special Education Local Plan Areas: Apportionments: Alternate Assessments. This bill would establish a revised allocation formula for the special education low-incidence disabilities funding, contingent upon an increase in the appropriation for this purpose, to support Special Education Local Plan Areas in providing special education and required services to students with low-incidence disabilities and students eligible to take the California Alternate Assessments.

AB 2555 (Patel)—English Learners: Reclassification. This bill would make various changes to the system for reclassifying English learners as English proficient, including the establishment of a standardized reclassification process based on demonstrated English language proficiency and limiting the reclassification criteria to the assessment of English language development.

Senate Bill (SB) 685 (Cortese, D-San Jose)—Special Education: Nonpublic Schools and Agencies. This bill would authorize a sectarian school to apply for certification with the CDE to operate as a nonpublic school (NPS) and provide placement for special education students. The bill prohibits the use of public funds by an NPS for religious education and updates certification requirements to include provision of state-adopted curriculum, including any mandated instruction.

SB 1083 (Pérez, D-Pasadena)—Noncertificated Public School Employees: Private School Employees: Egregious Misconduct: Statewide Data System: Commission on Teacher Credentialing: Adverse Actions: Contracts and Background Checks for Educational Services. This bill would expand employment disclosure, background check, misconduct reporting, and statewide data verification requirements to school contractors and subcontractors. It also would establish due process for misconduct investigations, expand CTC and school responsibilities for the statewide employee data system, and broaden Department of Justice background check and notification requirements.

SB 1067 (Weber Pierson, D-San Diego)—Pupil Instruction: Math Assessments. This bill would establish a statewide framework for early math assessments in grades K-2 by requiring the State Board of Education and CDE to establish criteria and an approved list of evidence-based diagnostic assessments by 2028 and requiring LEAs to adopt and annually administer a qualifying assessment beginning in the 2028-29 school year.

Bills Held by the Appropriations Committees

AB 1204 (Alvarez, D-San Diego)—Local Control Funding Formula: School Districts and Charter Schools: Pupils Experiencing Homelessness: Supplemental and Concentration Grants: Regional Adjustment Factors: Grade-Span Adequacy Adjustments. This bill would have made various changes to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), including increasing supplemental grant funding and expanding concentration grant eligibility, establishing a minimum annual LCFF cost-of-living adjustment and future regional cost adjustments, and creating a phased transition towards a revised LCFF funding structure.

AB 1644 (Muratsuchi)—Pupils: Use of Smartphones: Prohibition. This bill would have required LEAs serving pupils in grades TK-8 to adopt a policy prohibiting student smartphone use and would have barred instruction from requiring TK-8 pupils to use smartphones.

AB 1694 (Carrillo, D-Victorville)—California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program: Renewal Grants. This bill would have required that CTEIG recipients receive renewal grants for three additional years as long as certain criteria are met.

AB 2149 (Garcia)—Pupil Achievement: Closing the Achievement Gap: Accountability Report. This bill would have required the Legislative Analyst’s Office to annually report to the Legislature and the Governor beginning in 2028 on the state’s progress in closing pupil academic achievement gaps, as a component of the assessment of the State Budget.

AB 2191 (Quirk-Silva, D-Fullerton)—High School Graduation Requirements: Alternate Pathways for Individuals with Exceptional Needs: Statewide Resources. This bill would have required the CDE and the CCEE to establish a statewide resource within California’s system of support focused on helping LEAs develop alternate pathways to a high school diploma for students with exceptional needs.

AB 2202 (Muratsuchi)—Pupil Achievement: Closing the Achievement Gap Commission. This bill would have established the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission to serve as an advisory body to the State Board of Education.

AB 2325 (Alvarez)—Teachers: Bilingual Teachers: Pathways to Bilingual Teaching Program. This bill would have established the Pathways to Bilingual Teaching Program and would have required the CTC to award competitive grants to LEA-led consortia to develop or expand articulated bilingual teacher preparation pathways.

AB 2514 (Ransom)—Pupil Achievement: State of the Achievement Gap Dashboard. This bill would have required the working group proposed to be established by AB 2225 (Patel, Statutes of 2026) to include recommendations for the development of a State of the Achievement Gap Dashboard.

AB 2651 (Bonta, D-Oakland)—Informed Parents, Healthy Schools Act. This bill would have required the California Department of Public Health to annually inform a private or public elementary or secondary school, childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day care home, or development center, and the county public health department and the local health officer, when, at that school or institution, an immunization rate for one or more vaccines against one or more diseases is determined to fall below a relevant immunization rate.

Next Steps

Many of the approved bills summarized above will be amended (and some quite significantly), but since specific language of those amendments is not yet available, we will use next week’s “Top Legislative Issues” article to provide updated summaries for many of the key measures.

With yesterday’s actions, the bills approved by the committees will move forward to the Senate and Assembly floors for consideration before the session adjourns on August 31, 2026. Since we are in the second year of the 2025-26 legislative session, any bill that was held by the committee is considered dead, absent rule waivers.

Note: Governor Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom celebrated the beginning of the school year Wednesday morning at Schafer Park Elementary School in Hayward, California.

Newsom Celebrates Full Rollout of Transitional Kindergarten, Free School Meals

By Sofia Williams
The Sacramento Bee
August 19, 2026

Gov. Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom celebrated the full implementation of universal transitional kindergarten and free school meals, among other statewide education reforms, Wednesday morning at Schafer Park Elementary School in Hayward, Calif.

This academic year will mark the first in which TK is available to every child in California. This year, California public schools will also provide two free meals — breakfast and lunch — to every student.

“With these permanent funding supports, we’re building a California where every child has the opportunity to fulfill their human potential, no matter their ZIP code or how they learn,” Siebel Newsom said. “Together, we’re raising healthy, whole generations of future leaders here in California.”

Newsom and Siebel Newsom highlighted the California Community Schools Partnership Program, an initiative launched in 2022 that aims to “align community resources to improve student outcomes.” Community schools operate on a “whole-child” framework, working with families and community organizations to provide health and social services alongside traditional schooling.

Newsom has invested \$4.1 billion in multi-year funding to bolster the program, which provides services like free meals before and after school, mental health support and clothing, among others.

“This is not about stacking services,” Newsom said. “This is a cultural change...We’ve been all over the state of California visiting community schools, and (seeing) how unique and distinctive each one is.”

Providing transition for 4-year-olds

Since its inception in 2012, TK has served children in public schools whose fifth birthday fell between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2. The program’s recent expansion will make TK programs available for all children who turn 4 by Sept. 1, eliminating an additional year of preschool costs for hundreds of thousands of families, according to Newsom.

According to Newsom, expansion of the community school model to younger students and more districts has led to long-term benefits, such as reductions in chronic absenteeism, declining suspension rates, higher graduation rates and more diverse student populations.

“All the key indicators and categories are moving in the right direction, despite those headwinds and the macro challenges that we face (from the Trump administration),” Newsom said.

Linda Darling-Hammond, president of the State Board of Education, said education in California is undergoing a “renaissance” following an increase of over 70% in public school funding during Newsom’s

time in office. The budget for fiscal year 2027-28 allocated a record-breaking \$128 billion in funding to education.

\$1 billion to fund community schools expansion

Assembly Bill 126, an education budget bill passed in July, includes an additional \$1 billion in funding to codify and expand the community school model. The funding will allow the percentage of public schools classified as community schools to increase from approximately 20% to 60% in the coming years, Darling-Hammond said.

“We are providing not only universal meals for all kids...but healthcare, mental health providers, social services,” Darling-Hammond said. “We see the largest expansion of before- and after-school programs in summer school. We have a more robust program than any other state in the nation at this point.”

According to Newsom, Darling-Hammond’s research shows that one-time funding generates short-term success but fails to build lasting educational infrastructure. These findings, Newsom said, informed his decision to secure yearly funding for community schools.

“We started, yes, with one-time money for community schools. It was \$150 million or so. It was nice, and it was wildly oversubscribed,” Newsom said. “This was the biggest focus of this year, an additional...commitment to institutionalize this.”

By adding universal TK to the community school program, Newsom said his administration aims to foster continued investment in early education. Newsom said early reading screening through the Golden State Literacy Plan, which expands literacy and mathematics instruction, was a centerpiece of this effort.

“People aren’t left behind, they start behind,” Newsom said. “If you’re going to solve the issues in the vernacular — ignorance, poverty, disease — you’ve got to begin at the beginning.”

Note: Assembly Bill 3216 (Hoover, Statutes of 2024) requires local educational agencies to develop and adopt a policy limiting or prohibiting student smartphone use by July 1, 2026, so the policies must be in place for the beginning of the 2026-27 school year.

California Schools Are Putting Students’ Phones Out of Reach. Even Teens See an Upside

By Jill Tucker, Delilah Brumer, Staff Writers
San Francisco Chronicle
August 14, 2026

No texts. No calls. No TikTok, YouTube, Instagram or Snapchat. Definitely no reassuring buzz in the backpack alerting the latest must-know, must-see something in the digital world.

As California students head back to school this month, new policies will strip many of them of their cellphones, with the devices off and out of reach for most or all of their time on campus.

New smartphone policies officially will kick in at most of the state’s 1,000 school districts this fall — and local and state officials hope that students from early elementary age to high school seniors will have little to no other option than to pay attention and interact in person with their peers.

Over the past several years, a growing backlash against technology has spurred calls to restrict screen time for young people as parents, politicians and educators have raised red flags regarding digital addictions, online bullying, isolation and mental health declines that many believe are connected to the daily hours kids spend staring at a screen.

While at least two dozen states ban all personal device use during the entire school day, California has offered more flexibility, requiring school districts to adopt a phone policy by July 1, limiting or banning access to smartphones during the school day.

Many of the state’s nearly 6 million students will start each day by dropping their phones into locking pouches, their personal digital devices held hostage until the last bell of the day. Only then can they use an industrial demagnetizer to pop it open.

In other districts, students will be required to keep them in backpacks or classroom cubbies at least during class time and passing periods. Some, typically teens, will be able to pull them out at lunch.

Cellphone policies across selected California school districts		
Click on a school district to see more details		
School district	Restriction times	Implementation year
> Los Angeles Unified	Bell-to-bell	2024-25
> Mt. Diablo Unified	Bell-to-bell	2026-27
> Oakland Unified	Bell-to-bell	2026-27
> San Diego Unified	Bell-to-bell (K-8); Instructional time (9-12)	2025-26
> San Francisco Unified	Generally instructional time and passing periods	2024-25
> San Jose Unified	Bell-to-bell	2025-26
> San Mateo-Foster City (K-8)	Bell-to-bell	2022-23
> San Ramon Valley Unified	Bell-to-bell (K-8); Instructional time (9-12)	2025-26
> Sequoia Union High (9-12)	Instructional time and passing periods	2026-27
> West Contra Costa Unified	Bell-to-bell	2025-26
Some school districts did not specify discipline procedures in student handbooks or online. Delilah Brumer and Jack Lee/S.F. Chronicle • Source: School districts’ websites, board documents and student handbooks • Powered by the Hearst DevHub		

High school senior Elizabeth Leonhardt was one of the first to see a bell-to-bell ban when Los Angeles Unified adopted the policy, which she generally supports, in 2024.

Her San Fernando Valley school, like many in the state's largest district, uses the magnetic pouches made by Yondr to lock phones away. But with more than 2,000 students on campus, it's not feasible to give them to everyone, so only repeat offenders have to use them, she said.

The 17-year-old then ticked off the common issues related to implementing such policies: Students who bring burner phones. Teachers who don't enforce them. Widespread use of personal laptops to watch YouTube or access other content online.

"People usually have respect for, if a teacher is talking, they will put away their phones, and I hope people are paying more attention in class," said Elizabeth, an honors student and bassoonist in the school band. "But people are sneaky."

At Oakland High School, where the district's bell-to-bell policy took effect on the first day of school Monday, the students were issued Yondr pouches as well, but administrators were waiting on more unlocking devices before handing them out, said freshman Cameron Wall.

But even without the pouches, he said most students kept their phones in backpacks — reflecting a growing number of young people who support rules requiring students to put their phones away at school.

"To me, it's an obvious positive policy," he said, noting that his middle school had already adopted a full ban as well. "It's tangible. You can feel when people are not paying attention when they're on their phones."

The rules among districts vary, with the school boards determining when students can access their devices, how that's enforced and what happens when someone breaks the rules.

While research is mixed on the impact of smartphones on youth, associated with both positive and negative outcomes, the amount of time kids spend on the devices has heightened concerns.

Youth from 11 to 17 spend an average of about 4.5 hours on their phones and get 240 notifications per day, with 25% of them during the school day, according to a 2023 study by the University of Michigan and Common Sense Media, a San Francisco-based research and advocacy nonprofit.

Nearly all of the 203 teens and teens involved in the research used their phones at school, with a 40-minute median time spent on the devices, according to the research.

"Smartphones burst into teens' lives around 15 years ago and have become a constant companion for several reasons," said lead author Dr. Jenny Radesky, a developmental behavioral pediatrician.

"Phones are an immediate portal to friends, entertainment, and stress relievers during a busy day," she said in a statement at the study's release. "But they also have revenue-driven, engagement-prolonging designs that keep kids on longer than they intended."

It's unclear how the range of phone policies will play out at local schools.

In San Francisco, the board at least temporarily maintained a policy limiting phones to lunch only, with many individual schools adopting a more stringent bell-to-bell ban, but the district will revisit that over the first part of the upcoming school year.

The law requires districts to allow for exceptions, specifically for students with medical or special needs, in emergencies, and when teachers or administrators want them used for instructional purposes.

The idea of “digital citizenship” is really new, resulting in a wide range of school policies, with new devices and apps serving an increasingly digital world, said Kathy Do, assistant project scientist at the UCLA California Institute on Law, Neuroscience and Education.

“There’s not really a one-size-fits-all example,” she said.

The policies, she said, shouldn’t just be about restricting access, but also help students understand what healthy technology use looks like.

“Young people are learning how to balance their lives online and offline from the adults around them,” she said. “It’s really important ... to pair these restrictions with these healthy habits education.”

Consistency is also important, said Lauryn Mencher, a senior in the Sequoia Union High School District on the Peninsula, which allows students to use their phones during lunch but have their phones silenced and stored in classroom holders during instructional time. The policy has been in effect for years, but formalized this year to meet the state’s new law.

But enforcement by teachers has been inconsistent, sending mixed signals to students, said the 17-year-old, who is on her school’s governance council and has worked with teachers, administrators and parents to evaluate the policy.

Administrators “have been trying at my school to universalize the policy by making sure the teachers who are a little bit more relaxed or laid back about it are enforcing that you put your phones away,” she said.

While some parents continue to oppose phone bans — largely because of logistical issues or fear of not being able to reach their children in the event of a school shooting or other emergency — support for them has reached near-universal levels, according to a 2025 survey by the research-focused Brookings Institution.

“Several years ago, parent pushback to school cellphone restrictions was a legitimate barrier to phone-free schools,” according to the report’s authors. That’s not the case now.

“We find 93 percent of our adult sample preferring either a bell-to-bell ban or no phone use during classes for their teens,” they said at the report’s release. “Perhaps surprisingly, 76 percent of teens expressed a preference for some form of restrictions on phone use during the school day.”

Despite their strong showing of support, a majority of students surveyed also said they didn’t think the phone restrictions had an impact — other than negatively affecting their happiness.

For now, it appears the restrictions, like the phones, are here to stay.

“Regardless of policy specifics, the majority of students and adults do not perceive downsides,” the researchers said. “It seems few education policy issues exhibit the level of cross-stakeholder consensus we see related to reducing phone use in schools.”

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Vicente Cantu, Manager III

Date: August 28, 2026

Phone Number: (559) 457-3825

Regarding: Final Approval of the 2026/27 Local Control and Accountability Plan

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with an update on the review process and approval of the Fresno Unified School District 2026/27 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) has completed their review, resulting in approval of the Fresno Unified School District 2026/27 LCAP. The process includes reviews by FCSS staff in both Educational Services and Financial Services; the FCSS team confirmed their approval of the Fresno Unified LCAP, which resulted in no substantive changes to the document. Throughout the review process, district staff worked to provide additional clarification and made technical adjustments to address the feedback received. The review was completed within the timeline required for FCSS approval.

The district continues to exceed legal requirements by including 100% of General Fund resources in the LCAP. Additionally, the review approval affirms the district's demonstration of increasing or improving services for unduplicated students. Meeting this requirement demonstrates the Board's continued commitment to improving educational outcomes for low-income, English learner, and foster youth students.

In addition, and as required by the California Department of Education, the final approved LCAP will be uploaded to the California School Dashboard. This additional requirement ensures transparency in how school districts plan and allocate resources, while reinforcing accountability for improving student outcomes, and promotes educational partner engagement by making the plan easily accessible to parents, educators, and the broader community.

If you have any questions about the information in this communication, or need further information, please contact Vicente Cantu at (559) 457-3825. Thank you.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Ann Loorz, Executive Director, Purchasing

Date: August 28, 2026

Phone Number: (559)-457-3582

Regarding: Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding the district's receipt of the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for the 2026 school year.

We are proud to share that Fresno Unified Purchasing Department has been honored with the prestigious Achievement of Excellence in Procurement (AEP) Award from the National Procurement Institute, Inc. (NPI) for the third consecutive year. This nationally recognized award highlights our district's continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, innovation, and operational excellence. The AEP Award is given to organizations that meet rigorous criteria in areas such as professionalism, productivity, e-procurement, and leadership in public purchasing. Earning this distinction again reflects the high standards upheld by our procurement team and reinforces our dedication to serving students, staff, and the community with integrity and efficiency.

The application aims to inspire procurement professionals to exceed the annual minimum standards established by the AEP program. It highlights and honors innovative programs and solutions that demonstrate exceptional performance. In addition to recognizing practical, well-documented initiatives, the award also celebrates leadership and efforts that contribute to the ongoing advancement of the public procurement field.

If you have any questions about the information included in this communication, or need further information, please contact Paul Idsvoog at (559) 457-3134. Thank you.

Cabinet Approval:



Name and Title: Paul Idsvoog, Chief Operations Officer