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Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

**BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – NOVEMBER 04, 2022**

TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Superintendent, Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

**SUPERINTENDENT – Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.**

S-1 Robert G. Nelson Superintendent Calendar Highlights

**BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES – Santino Danisi, Chief Officer**

BFS-1 Kim Kelstrom School Services Weekly Update Reports for  
October 27, 2022

**INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION – Dr. Natasha Baker, Chief Officer**

ID-1 Carlos Castillo Scholastic Grab-n-Go Book Event on November 14  
ID-2 Carlos Castillo 2022/23 Professional Learning for Certificated  
Substitute Teachers

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES – Paul Idsvoog, Chief Officer**

OS-1 Alex Belanger Design-Build Multi-Site HVAC Design  
& Replacement Project

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number S-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Robert G. Nelson, Superintendent  
Cabinet Approval:

Date: November 04, 2022

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Participated in visit with Trustees from Tokyo Japan to learn about our Personalized Learning Initiative
- Attended Black Student Union event at Wonder Valley
- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Held interviews for Instructional Superintendent
- Met with Dr. Goldsmith, State Center Community College District, Dr. Pimentel, Fresno City College and representatives from HBCUs to discuss the potential of future collaboration
- Attended funeral for Hoover High School student, Rashad Al-Hakim Jr.
- Held Winter Camp Press Conference

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 11/04/2022

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number BFS-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education

Date: November 04, 2022

Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Executive Officer

Phone Number: 457-3907

Cabinet Approval:



Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for October 27, 2022

The purpose of this board 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 Update for October 27, 2022 is attached and includes the following articles:

- 2021-22 CAASPP Results Released – October 26, 2022
- Why Some Schools Saw Their Scores Soar Despite Covid – and Others Didn't – October 26, 2022
- Test Scores Across U.S. Reveal 'Heartbreaking' Pandemic Declines, With Math Hit Hard – October 23, 2022

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

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 11/04/2022



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DATE: October 27, 2022

TO: Robert G. Nelson  
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

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### **CDE Releases 2021-22 Assessment Data**

The biggest education news coming out of Sacramento this week was the California Department of Education (CDE) [announcing](#) the release of the 2021-22 assessment data, which showed the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on student test scores.

The data show that the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 2022 Smarter Balanced summative assessments declined by four percentage points (from 51% to 47%) for English language arts (ELA) and seven percentage points (from 40% to 33%) for mathematics when compared to the 2018-19 pre-pandemic scores. We provide more details of those results in the *Fiscal Report* article below entitled, “2021-22 CAASPP Results Released.”

These scores will have real implications for local educational agencies (LEAs) because, after a two-year hiatus from identifying LEAs for differentiated assistance (DA), the data from the 2022 California School Dashboard (Dashboard), which will include this ELA and mathematics assessment data, will trigger a new batch of school districts and county offices of education (COEs) for DA for the first time since December 2019.

Since the “change” metric on the Dashboard requires prior-year data to compare with current-year data, that metric has been waived for 2022. This means that only “status,” or current-year data, will be used to make DA eligibility determinations based on the 2022 Dashboard. School districts and COEs become eligible for DA when there is at least one low-performing student group across two of the state priorities. It is important to note that charter schools are not eligible for DA identification in 2022 but will become eligible again next year based on the 2023 Dashboard results.

There is a strong chance that these tests scores will lead to more school districts and COEs being identified for DA than the 333 that were identified in 2019, which is the last time the Dashboard data triggered DA. The State Board of Education

will be discussing these scores and the 2022 Dashboard at their November 2-3, 2022 meeting next week (you can find the agenda and materials for that meeting [here](#)).

*Leilani Aguinaldo*

## 2021-22 CAASPP Results Released

By Dave Heckler  
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*  
October 26, 2022

California students have fallen behind in English language arts and mathematics from previous years. That's according to the latest California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) testing data released on Monday, October 25, 2022, by the California Department of Education (CDE).

In English language arts, 47% of students tested met or exceeded the proficiency benchmark. This is a modest decline from 2020-21 (although only 25% of students were tested) and a 4% decline from the 2018-19 school year.

Data in mathematics outcomes yielded similar results, with 33% meeting or exceeding proficiency in 2021-22. While flat compared to the prior year, 40% of students met or exceeded the proficiency standards in 2018-19. This represents a decline of more than 6% over the three-year period.

Student performance data for the 2019-20 is not available as the state suspended the summative assessments as a result of the pandemic in March 2020. Recent results show that student performance is at its lowest point since the beginning of the CAASPP testing in the 2015-16 school year.

Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Proficiency		
	English Language Arts	Math
2015-16	48.00%	37.00%
2016-17	48.56%	37.56%
2017-18	49.88%	38.65%
2018-19	51.10%	39.73%
2019-20	Data Not Available	Data Not Available
2020-21*	49.01%	33.76%
2021-22	47.06%	33.38%

\*Limited data set

The latest data highlights the impact of two years of disrupted instruction and learning for California's nearly six million students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As efforts to slow transmission rates have improved, the state has placed a strong focus on helping students recover their lost learning opportunities with funding and resources for programs to provide expanded learning opportunities, including additional instructional time and high-dose tutoring initiatives that support impacted students.

The CDE noted in their announcement that the infusion of these resources appears to already be paying off. When the CDE compared the 2021-22 results of the students who had also completed the CAASPP assessments in 2020-21, they found greater than expected achievement gains across most grade levels.

Nationally, California’s students showed greater resilience to the learning disruptions compared to their peers in other states via results for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which was also released on Monday. California’s fourth and eighth grade students showed a decline in math scores less than the national average, while reading scores showed little change unlike the rest of the nation.

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*Note: Several small districts that reopened for in-person instruction in fall 2020, while most other districts remained closed, saw an improvement in their assessment marks that were above the statewide average.*

## **Why Some Schools Saw Their Scores Soar Despite Covid — and Others Didn’t**

By Carolyn Jones  
*EdSource*  
October 26, 2022

Monday’s [Smarter Balanced results](#) showed widespread declines in reading and math scores, but a closer look at individual districts shows a more nuanced – and even hopeful – picture of student progress during the pandemic.

Mountain Valley Unified, a diverse, predominantly low-income K-12 district in the remote mountains of Trinity County, had some of the state’s largest increases: 13 points in reading and 17 points in math, with overall results far above the state average.

Lost Hills Union Elementary District, amid the pistachio and almond orchards northwest of Bakersfield, saw reading and math scores jump 12 and 17 points, respectively. Eastern Sierra Unified, a K-12 district in Mono County, also saw significant improvements. Math scores rose more than 6 points, with 32% of eighth graders scoring at the highest level.

All three of these districts reopened for in-person instruction in fall 2020, while most other districts around the state remained closed due to the local spread of Covid.

Because these districts are small and relatively remote, reopening was easier than it was for larger districts. Covid rates were low, and staff had an easier time connecting with families. And because enrollments are low, small improvements — or declines — can lead to big changes in overall percentages and outcomes.

Hope Elementary in Porterville is another success story. The diverse, predominantly low-income K-8 district in rural Tulare County had one of the state’s highest jumps in reading scores: nearly 16 points.

The school, with about 230 students, was open for in-person instruction for most of 2020-21, but that was only one reason for students’ progress with literacy, Superintendent Melanie Matta said.

“Our scores used to be dismal. But a few years ago, we really started looking hard at what we needed to do to improve,” she said. “We asked ourselves, what does good reading instruction look like? Math instruction? When our kids leave here, what do we want them to be able to do?”

The school switched to a more phonics-based reading curriculum and started testing students regularly to gauge their progress, sharing scores with parents and students themselves. Teachers focused intently on

students' writing skills, so "kids knew that everything they write starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark, or otherwise you're going to rewrite it," Matta said.

But not all small districts thrived during the pandemic. Some actually showed steep drops in test scores, suggesting that staying open for in-person instruction is only part of the equation. Anderson Valley Unified in Mendocino County, for example, which reopened in fall 2020, saw reading scores fall almost 20 points.

Math scores dropped 13 points; only 16% of the district's 440 students met or exceeded the state math standards. Because the district has low enrollment, the actual number of students whose scores declined is relatively low, even though the percentage is significant.

Wildfires, smoke, staffing shortages and poor internet access took a steep toll on smaller and more rural districts, contributing to low test scores for some, said Tim Taylor, director of the Small School District Association of California.

But overall, small districts that stayed open — roughly three-fourths of them — performed well on the state assessments.

"For hundreds of schools, the pandemic was nothing compared to the disruptions from wildfires. And some were dealing with both at the same time," Taylor said. "But in spite of that, these school leaders said, 'OK, we're going to focus on reading and math. We're not going to slow down; we're going to kick some ass.'" "

On the whole, larger districts fared worse on the exams. Fresno Unified, one of the state's largest, saw scores drop 6 points in reading and 9 points in math. Only 7% of the district's more than 72,000 students exceeded the state standard in math.

District leaders were not surprised by the scores. They had known for months that students were struggling after returning to school last year, and had taken steps to help students catch up. The district hired 77 academic coaches for elementary schools, brought in more counselors and psychologists at every school site and hired more administrators, said Ed Gomes, the district's instructional superintendent for elementary schools.

"These drops in ELA and math are not only statewide but nationwide. We knew this was going to be a concern last year, so we put together supports for every site this year," he said.

San Diego Unified also saw scores drop: nearly 4 points in reading and more than 7 in math. The steepest drop in English language arts was among sixth graders, and in math, it was among fifth graders. Like Fresno, the district had already taken steps to help students improve, including hiring 31 teachers to work in small groups with students who are struggling, and expanding summer school from 2,000 students to 20,000.

"I don't think we've done anything differently in response to seeing the scores," district trustee Richard Barrera said. "I think what we've focused on, certainly last year and this year, (is) a set of strategies that we've felt have been consistently successful in accelerating student learning."

Gridley Unified, south of Chico in Butte County, is a midsize district that stayed open for most of the pandemic. Math scores dipped 2 points, falling below the state average, but reading scores soared: up 6 points, with more than 50% of students meeting or exceeding the state standards and far outpacing their peers statewide. Among 11th graders, 67% met or exceeded the literacy standards.



Superintendent Justin Kern said he wants to see the scores improve even more, and he's confident that students in the rural K-12 district, where 75% are low-income, can do it. He credits his staff with pushing students to work hard during the pandemic and ensuring they could focus on school.

"Staff have done an excellent job of putting students first and focusing on standards versus subjectivities," Kern said. "(It helped that) our doors were open when most were shuttered. Aside from the obvious educational benefit to our students, this also maintained social connections during a time when that was not afforded to most. This had an observable positive impact for our students and community."

*EdSource reporter Ashleigh Panoo contributed to this report.*

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*Note: The National Assessment of Educational Progress found that eighth graders in nearly every state across the nation and fourth graders in a large majority of states, including California, saw significant drops in average math scores.*

## **Test Scores Across U.S. Reveal 'Heartbreaking' Pandemic Declines, With Math Hit Hard**

By Paloma Esquivel  
*Los Angeles Times*  
October 23, 2022

Eighth-graders in nearly every state across the nation and fourth-graders in a large majority of states, including California, saw significant drops in average math scores since the pandemic, reflecting "heartbreaking" academic setbacks for students across wide swaths of the country, according to the results of the "nation's report card" released Sunday.

Average reading scores also declined in a majority of states, though California did not see a significant drop.

The falling scores spanned the political and demographic makeup of states, making it difficult to draw simple conclusions about the role the length of pandemic-related campus closures played in student performance, officials said. Overall, scores in Los Angeles, while alarmingly low, showed signs of resilience compared with other large urban districts, and sagging or stalled California scores fared slightly better than national averages.

The standardized test scores are especially concerning given that before the pandemic experts were already sounding the alarm about high rates of students across the nation not meeting basic proficiency in reading and math.

"The data prior to the pandemic did not reflect an education system that was on the right track," said U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. "The pandemic simply made it worse. It took poor performance and dropped it down even further."

That result, he said, is "heartbreaking and it's horrible."

A survey administered along with the tests found many teachers expressed insecurity about their ability to help students catch up — with about half saying they felt quite or extremely confident they would be able to help their students close pandemic-related gaps.

The rigorous standardized assessment known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, was given to a sample of fourth- and eighth-graders in early 2022.

The test is administered to students in all 50 states, allowing for comparisons across the country to pre-pandemic 2019. It also includes results for many of the nation’s largest school districts, including Los Angeles Unified, which officials said was among the large districts whose scores, although low, reflected a “bright spot” of resilience.

Across the country, only about one in four eighth-graders met standards for proficiency on the national math assessment, down from about one in three in 2019.

In reading, about 31% of eighth-graders met standards for proficiency, down from about 34% in 2019.

The drop in math scores was especially steep and widespread, particularly for eighth-graders, a year that is a crucial stepping stone for higher level math. In California, where the vast majority of schools were closed until spring 2021, scores fell by 6 points. In Texas and Florida — where schools were able to reopen starting in fall 2020 — scores fell by 7 points, and in Oklahoma, where schools could also reopen in fall 2020, they fell by 13 points.

Peggy Carr, commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, said the National Assessment of Educational Progress results do not reveal clear-cut answers about how time spent in virtual classes affected students, given the student performance.

“There’s nothing in this data that says we can draw a straight line between the time spent in remote learning in and of itself, and student achievement,” she said.

A study earlier this year by researchers at Harvard University found that remote instruction was a primary driver of widening achievement gaps.

Carr said there is more research to be done to understand what role remote learning did play, including other factors that affected students and teachers during the pandemic, like mental health, access to internet and the quality of remote learning.

The quality of remote instruction was not uniform across the country. Some students spent the entire school day with a teacher for live virtual instruction, while others had minimal live lessons. Those who spent more live time online with a teacher showed better results.

In a survey administered along with the national assessment, about 39% of eighth-graders who performed in the lowest quartile on the reading test said they participated in real-time video lessons with their teacher every day or nearly every day.

Among those who performed in the highest quartile, about 74% said they had real-time lessons every day or nearly every day.

In California, the results were less dire than some experts had feared given that the school districts were among the last in the nation to bring students back to campus.

For California fourth-graders, math scores fell by 4 points. Texas and Florida saw 5-point drops, Colorado saw a 6-point drop and New York had a 10-point drop.

In reading, in fourth and eighth grades, California students showed no significant change in scores, even as a majority of states showed drops.

The results don't mean California students are thriving. Before the pandemic, California was underperforming compared with national averages in reading and math.

The latest results mean that only about 30% of California eighth-graders are achieving proficiency in reading. About 23% are achieving proficiency in math.

Los Angeles Unified, meanwhile, was among the large districts with scores that Carr said demonstrated "pockets of resilience amidst all the chaos of the pandemic."

L.A. fourth-graders saw a 4-point drop in math. That's significant, but smaller than the vast majority of large urban districts that participated in the test. San Diego, for example, saw an 8-point drop. New York saw a 9-point drop and Baltimore City schools saw a 15-point drop.

The district was one of only four large school systems that saw no significant change in score for eighth-grade math.

In eighth-grade reading, meanwhile, L.A. Unified student scores increased by 9 points. It was the only large district to post a gain.

L.A. students, however, were also underperforming before the pandemic compared to with students in cities across the country.

With the 2022 score increase, about 28% of L.A. eighth-graders achieved proficiency in reading. About 17% achieved proficiency in math.

Supt. Alberto Carvalho said L.A. Unified took actions that benefited students, including swiftly pivoting to online learning. While he praised the gains, "there's a lot of work to be done."

"The reality is that overall performance is still very low," he said.

California education officials are expected on Monday to release the results of the state's Smarter Balanced assessments, which gauge how well students are doing meeting state standards in English language arts and math.

Last month, Los Angeles Unified released the results of its state assessment scores, which showed about 72% of students not meeting state standards in math and about 58% not meeting standards in English.

The dismal results in eighth-grade math on the national test were especially concerning because it comes at a pivotal moment for students, officials said. Declines were observed across most racial and ethnic groups and among higher and lower performing students.

“Eighth grade is that gateway, to more advanced mathematical course taking,” Carr said.

She said students probably struggled more with math because it was more difficult for families to support students with math at home. While many families encourage reading at home, it’s challenging for families to support math lessons.

The data should help inform how schools approach student recovery, officials said. School systems are required to spend 20% of American Rescue Plan school relief funds to address learning loss.


Roberto Rodríguez, assistant secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development at the U.S. Department of Education, noted that about 56% of schools are using high-dosage tutoring to help students recover from academic setbacks and about 75% are offering summer learning and enrichment programs.

But it’s not enough, he said.

“We have to do more, and we have to spend more, and we have to approach that in a more urgent way,” he said.

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number ID-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Carlos Castillo, Instructional Superintendent  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: November 04, 2022

Phone Number: 457-6136

Regarding: Scholastic Grab-n-Go Book Event on November 14

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding distribution of the Scholastic Grab-n-Go packets as part of our work to create Home Libraries for our students. This distribution will be for all students in grades Pre-School – Grade 8.

In the past 17 months we have distributed over 430,000 books to our students through three previous book distributions. The November event will be a distribution of 298,980 books. This brings the total number of books to over 730,000. An additional distribution is scheduled for June 2023.

In a May 2018 Fresno Bee article, Fresno Unified was described as “book desert” due to the lack of books in homes and the number of places where students have access to books. It continues to be our literacy vision to create a “book flood” that gets books into students’ hands and supports them in all academic areas.

The data is clear on three research points regarding reading and books:

- Students who have books in the home do better in school than students who do not.
- The benefit of having books in the home occurs whether students read the books or not.
- Reading a relatively small number of books during times when school is not in session may keep struggling readers from regressing.

Book packs will continue to be distributed in both English and Spanish. Each pack will include five books with diverse themes, a reading journal, and additional resources.

This next event will be held at Greenberg Elementary School on November 14, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Carlos Castillo at 457-3673.


Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 11/04/2022

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number ID-2**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Carlos Castillo, Instructional Superintendent &  
Teresa Morales-Young, Administrator  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: November 04, 2022

Phone Number: 457-6072

Regarding: 2022/23 Professional Learning for Certificated Substitute Teachers

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board information about ongoing professional learning for Certificated Substitute Teachers.

Substitute teachers will be offered a total of six, paid professional learning days. Three of the six opportunities are funded as a result of the additional stimulus funding approved by the Board of Education. The first professional learning was the New Teacher Conference held on August 6 with 285 substitute teachers in attendance. The professional learning was six hours, with 21 course offerings. The courses focused on classroom management, curriculum, technology, and teaching strategies. All substitute teachers had the opportunity to select three different courses to attend.

In partnership with Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning, the Substitute Symposium professional learning was held on October 10. The Substitute Symposium offered over 30 courses from various departments and had 344 certificated substitute teachers in attendance. All substitute teachers had the opportunity to attend three different courses. The course offerings comprised of classroom management teaching strategies, K-12 curriculum, digital tools to support instruction, social emotional support strategies, and supports for English learners.

Substitutes teachers will also receive future paid professional learning on the following dates: November 21, February 4, March 6, and April 10. In addition, there will be six optional and voluntary professional learning opportunities available to all substitutes. These optional professional learnings occur monthly on the first Saturday of each month.

As of August 10, 2022, Fresno Unified and the Fresno Area Substitute Teachers Association (FASTA) entered a Side Letter of Agreement with a new daily rate for the Fall 2022 semester. The District will compensate FASTA unit members, that substitute teach, at a rate of \$200.00 a day.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Teresa Morales-Young at 457-6072.

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 11/04/2022

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number OS-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Alex Belanger, Chief Executive  
Cabinet Approval:

Date: November 04, 2022

Phone Number: 457-3134

Regarding: Design-Build Multi-Site HVAC Design & Replacement Project

District staff is currently planning the Multi-Site HVAC Design & Replacement Project ("Project"). The Project consists of the design, engineering, and installation of 1) high efficiency unit ventilators and chillers to be installed at 16 different school sites, and 2) the design and installation of new make-up air units at 13 middle school and high school gymnasiums. The overall budget is estimated to be between \$47 million and \$56 million.

Design-Build will allow the district to expedite these projects in order to have an opportunity to apply and utilize ESSER funds for the project. ESSER funding currently has a deadline of September 2024. The critical distinction between design-bid-build ("low bid") and design-build is that unlike low bid projects where the project architect is under contract with the district, with design-build, the architect is part of the contractor's team. Typically, the district prepares "bridging documents" which consist of performance criteria, the desired design character, the end user's requirements and preferences, schematic drawings and any other information which conveys the district's requirements for the end product. Those are provided to the design-build entity to prepare the design.

Features of the design-build delivery method include:

- The design-builder is selected through a competitive selection process where in addition to price, the qualifications of the prospective design-builders can also be considered in awarding the project. This is a two-step process. First, a Request for Qualifications ("RFQ"), including a prequalification questionnaire is issued. After the responses have been scored, the District intends to then request detailed proposals from the short-listed design-build entities that meet certain criteria for experience and competency in design-build construction.
- The design-builder can be asked to provide a guaranteed maximum price ("GMP") for the Project. A GMP is a price that can only be exceeded in very limited circumstances. Besides aiding in cost containment, having a GMP also reduces the potential for project delays.
- Design liability is shifted to the contractor. This removes the potential for disputes and change orders arising from the interpretation of the design documents by the contractor.

Due to the above-described time constraints, the RFQ was published before the Board considers approving the use of design-build at their December 07, 2022, meeting. The RFQ is a preliminary step in this process, with contractors only providing information regarding their qualifications. In the event the Board elects not to approve the use of design-build the RFQ may be terminated.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Alex Belanger at 283-2622.

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 11/04/2022