



## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## SUPERINTENDENT

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

## BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – JANUARY 27, 2023

TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Deputy Superintendent, Misty Her

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

S-1 Robert G. Nelson Superintendent Calendar Highlights

### **DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT – Misty, Her**

DS-1 Amy Idsvoog Health Services Staffing Levels and Need  
for Added Supplemental Services  
DS-2 Misty Her Superintendent's Public Dashboard  
DS-3 Andrew Scherrer i-Ready Diagnostic 2 (K-6)

### **BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES – Patrick Jensen, Interim Chief Officer**

BFS-1 Kim Kelstrom School Services Weekly Update Reports for  
January 20, 2023

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

ID-1 Carlos Castillo World Language Textbook Adoption

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: January 27, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Met with Chancellor Goldsmith, State Center Community College District and President Pimentel, Fresno City College, to discuss early reading, college going rates and dual enrollment
- Attended the ACSA Superintendent's Symposium

Approved by Deputy Superintendent


Misty Her



Date: 01/27/2023

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number DS-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Amy Idsvoog, Executive Officer  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: January 27, 2023  
Phone Number: 457-3498

Regarding: Health Services Staffing Levels and Need for Added Supplemental Services

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding current staffing levels impacting Health Services and student health supports and the department's strategy for addressing staffing shortfalls.

While Health Services was fully staffed to support school sites at the start of the school year, shortly after school started, the department received several resignations from licensed vocational nurses (LVNs). They shared they were leaving to take higher paying positions at other school districts, in hospitals and even at area prisons. In addition, many received signing bonuses to secure their employment. LVNs support school site health offices and school nurses in managing daily traffic and conducting student health procedures like diabetic care, trachs, feeding tubs, and catheters. Currently, the department is down 12 LVNs causing the team to pull health staff from other school sites to cover medical procedures. When pulling staff, the priority is to pull from sites who do not have students with specific health orders, but this often leaves those sites without a health professional to manage general office visits or unforeseen health emergencies.

Human Resources is conducting an LVN competitive salary study which we hope to have results back from soon. The health service department has also been collaborating with our Fiscal team to better assess baseline staffing perimeters based on student population, special education services and case management including the number of individual education plans (IEPs) and the number of students with physician health orders.

Health Services has had an annual contract with Supplemental Health Agency for \$896,412 which provides roughly eight health professionals. The current contract did not take into effect this year's expansion of extended learning programs – Saturday Academy, Summer/Winter Session and camps and we have nearly exhausted funds to provide supplemental support. We are bringing a contract addendum forward on February 8 to increase funds with this provider to add supplemental personnel. Additionally, we are bringing a second vendor forward, Recruitment Alley, who can help us cast a wider net in securing additional supplemental health service support for school sites and extended learning programs while we work with HR to fill current vacancies. Health Services does not have a substitute pool of school nurses and LVNs so these supplemental contracts will also help support when current staff is out due to illnesses or medical leave.

Should you have questions, please contact Amy Idsvoog at 457-3498 or Xai "Liz" Torres at 457-3301.

Approved by Deputy Superintendent


Misty Her



Date: 01/27/2023

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number DS-2**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Misty Her, Deputy Superintendent  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: January 27, 2023  
Phone Number: 457-3632

Regarding: Superintendent's Public Dashboard

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information and an update regarding the phased rollout of the Superintendent's dashboard.

During the October 26, 2022, board meeting, a phased-in plan of implementation was presented to the Board for publicly available data on a Superintendent's dashboard. Phases 1 and 2, which included developing the dashboard aligned to state accountability measures, reviewing feedback, translating the information into Spanish and Hmong, and ensuring the availability and accessibility of comparison data were completed by December. After incorporating trustee feedback, holding additional parent meetings, and completing revisions, the dashboard is ready for public release on January 31, 2023. The dashboard will be located on our district website and accessible to everyone. We are still in making minor edits this weekend, but you can peruse the dashboard before the release [here](#). This is a [link](#) that will take you to the quick video that was share at the October 26, 2022 board meeting.

We will communicate the dashboard using various social media platforms, Parent Square, Friday messages, weekly updates, site websites, along with various videos.

In partnership with Parsec Education, the next development stages include gathering feedback from educational partners, staff, parents, and students regarding additional publicly available indicators and mapping the addition of leading indicators aligned to state accountability measures. Additionally, student and family-friendly reports are in development and are anticipated to be available for Board review by April. The goal is to build a vibrant real time dashboard that is easily accessible for internal staff and external community.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Misty Her at 559-3632.

Approved by Deputy Superintendent


Misty Her



Date: 01/27/2023

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number DS-3**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Andrew Scherrer, Executive Officer of REA  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: January 27, 2023  
Phone Number: 457-3896

Regarding: i-Ready Diagnostic 2 (K-6)

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with a summary of i-Ready Diagnostic 2 (D2) performance for kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. 35,718 K-6 students completed i-Ready D2 in Reading and 36,077 K-6 students completed i-Ready D2 in Math.

All students in grades K-6 take i-Ready Reading and Math three times throughout the year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Students in other grade levels also participated in the Winter i-Ready Reading or Math Diagnostic if they are English Learners (for reclassification qualification) or if indicated in an IEP for students with disabilities. i-Ready D2 also includes reports on Typical and Stretch growth.

Included in this communication is an infographic with i-Ready Diagnostic 2 results in more detail. Additionally, district-level summaries that show results for regions and schools, grade level, and student group are included.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or required additional information, please contact, Misty Her at 457-3633.

Approved by Deputy Superintendent

Misty Her



Date: 01/27/2023

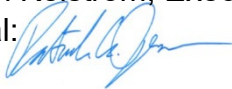
Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number BFS-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Executive Officer  
Cabinet Approval:

Date: January 27, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3907



Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for January 20, 2023

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 January 20, 2023 is attached and includes the following articles:

- Themes for the 2023-24 Governor's Budget Workshop – January 17, 2023
- Biden Vows to Help California 'Build Back Better' After Storms During His Visit to the Coast – January 20, 2023
- Anxiety Over 'Tripledemic' Has These LAUSD Parents Pleading for Mask Mandate – January 16, 2023

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 Deputy Superintendent

Misty Her



Date: 01/27/2023



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[www.sscal.com](http://www.sscal.com)

DATE: January 20, 2023

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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### **Senate Budget Committee Holds First Hearing on 2023-24 State Budget**

On Wednesday, the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee met to hear a high-level overview of Governor Gavin Newsom's 2023-24 State Budget proposal from the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO).

DOF's presentation was more of a regurgitation of the Governor's Budget summary that was released to the public on January 10, 2023. However, this hearing was the first chance for the LAO to publicly address the Governor's Budget proposal.

During his opening remarks, Legislative Analyst Gabriel Petek said that even with Proposition 98 decreasing by \$3.4 billion in 2022-23 and \$1.5 billion in 2023-24 relative to the 2022 State Budget Act, there is still approximately \$6 billion available for new commitments due to the end of various one-time initiatives and lower-than-anticipated programs costs. He also noted that since the Governor is proposing to use \$1.4 billion in one-time funds to cover ongoing costs in 2023-24, it could create a small deficit for the following year if the funding does not increase by that amount.

Petek said that the LAO thinks that the Governor's approach to use spending solutions rather than tapping into reserves is prudent. However, the LAO is concerned that some of the Governor's new proposals require reductions to planned spending and that some of his budget solutions are in areas where the Legislature has signaled clear priorities.

Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), who chairs the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Education, said that the proposed education budget will be confusing to explain to constituents because the revenue drops yet the Governor is proposing to increase the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) by over 8%. He said it will be confusing because while the LCFF is increasing, overall funding for school districts will decrease since the Governor is reducing one-time investments.

Senator Laird also asked the DOF to reconcile why the Governor is using the Proposition 28 (2022) requirement, which requires the state to provide arts and music funding equal to 1% of the prior-year K-12 share of the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee, to reduce the Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant by \$1.2 billion. Erika Li from the DOF said that that the decision was made to decrease the Arts, Music, and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant in order to fund some of the other proposals on the table. Senator Laird said this is an issue he wants to discuss in more detail with the DOF in upcoming budget subcommittee hearings.

Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles) asked the DOF to explain some of the specifics of how the LCFF equity multiplier would work. Amber Alexander from the DOF said that the funding would flow to local educational agencies (LEAs) with school sites serving high percentages of students eligible for free meals (90% free meal eligibility at elementary and middle school sites and 85% free meal eligibility at high school sites). The LEAs that receive funds would be required to use the funding at the school sites that are generating the dollars, and the funds can be used for a variety of purposes including addressing student groups that are in the red or orange performance levels on the California School Dashboard.

We expect the LCFF equity multiplier add-on to be a highly discussed issue as the Legislature transitions to budget subcommittee hearings over the next several weeks.

## **Next Steps**

Now that the Senate has held their budget overview hearing, the Senate budget subcommittees can begin to hold their individual hearings, which will dive much deeper into the specific proposals and mechanics of the Governor's Budget. As a reminder, the budget subcommittee tasked with vetting education issues in the State Budget is the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Education.

The Assembly Budget Committee has yet to schedule its budget overview hearing with the DOF and LAO, but we expect that hearing to take place sometime next week. Once the Assembly has its overview hearing, its budget subcommittees can begin holding their individual hearings.

## **Senator Portantino Reintroduces Enrollment-Based Funding Bill**

This week, Senator Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge) [reintroduced](#) his bill that would provide LEAs with the opportunity to receive additional funds using enrollment data applied to the LCFF. Senate Bill (SB) 98 is co-sponsored by the California School Employees Association and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

SB 98 would, beginning with the 2023-24 fiscal year, provide LEAs with supplemental education funding, in addition to their LCFF entitlement. The funding would be based on the difference between what the LEA would have received if LCFF funds were apportioned using enrollment numbers, and what the LEA did receive under the LCFF using average daily attendance (ADA) information. At least 30% of the supplemental funds would have to be used to address chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy. In addition, there is a maintenance-of-effort requirement such that LEAs would need to maintain at least the same per-pupil spending level on staff who address chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy as in the 2019-20 school year.

It is important to note that the introduced version of SB 98 would not make any changes to the existing LCFF formula or statute, but rather would create a categorical program to provide supplemental funding to LEAs based on the difference between their ADA and enrollment.



Last year's version of this bill, SB 830, cleared the Senate but never received a policy hearing in the Assembly. With revenues coming in lower than expected, this bill is likely facing an uphill battle as it would commit millions of dollars to LEAs that is not currently accounted for in the State Budget.

*Leilani Aguinaldo*

## **Themes for the 2023-24 Governor's Budget Workshop**

By SSC Team  
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*  
January 17, 2023

It's hard to believe that this budget marks the beginning of Governor Gavin Newsom's second term as California's chief executive officer. While most of his first term was plagued by twin disasters of a historic global pandemic and fires that ravaged much of the state, his ability to address them head on was aided significantly by buoyed resources buttressed with unprecedented federal stimulus dollars. As the Governor noted in his second inaugural address, moments like these "bend the clock in strange ways."

Indeed they do, Governor Newsom. And we in public education—who serve our children, their families, and our communities every day often with no regard to the limits of time—experienced the dualities of time's "flash and eternity" like none other. We nourished our children. To some who lost homes to fires, we provided shelter. We worked earnestly to keep them safe from a novel virus, guided by oft-shifting counsel, all the while holding firm to our collective mission to teach and nurture them. And we innovated amidst (or perhaps because of) the challenges we confronted.

Like all inventions, some succeed while others don't. As educators often tell their students, failure can be an effective teacher when we draw from the lessons it affords us. We tested new strategies with new resources that commanded us to address the challenges of remote teaching and learning, with frequent and sudden disruptions. They were both imprecise and imperfect. The 2022 California School Dashboard illuminates the imprecisions and imperfections of our innovations.

We are undeterred.

As Governor Newsom unveils the first budget of his second term in office, the state faces new challenges. Fires have been doused by atmospheric rivers and overflowing coffers are now perniciously empty as the costs of addressing California's crises mount.

The 2023-24 Governor's Budget ambitiously attempts to tackle them all—climate change, housing affordability, homelessness—while protecting valued programs that serve the state's residents. These priorities are not cheap. They require tens of billions of dollars in investments, and yet Governor Newsom's latest budget proposes to fund them all without dipping into California's reserves. Some are sure to laud this feat. Others will scratch their heads.

For those of us in education, the ledger should be clearer. Proposition 98's guaranteed funding should give us a greater sense of security. Alas, public education funding is reliant not only on the state's fiscal health, but in the case of the Governor's Budget, it also relies on the Governor's underlying assumptions. A closer look at these assumptions causes us pause.

The 2023-24 Governor's Budget is balanced delicately on the belief (or maybe hope) that the winds of a recession don't blow toward our state, as even a mild breeze could tilt the budget precariously toward a disaster that has nothing to do with fire, a virus, or even floods. The Governor's advisors estimate that a mild to moderate recession could result in additional revenue losses upwards of \$20 billion to \$60 billion. If these losses materialize, public education will not be immune.

Thus, now is not the time for profligacy nor risk taking. We are educators, who are accustomed to and skilled at managing the risks that come with innovation when the times call for us to be so. We are not so sure that now is such a time.

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*Note: President Biden toured California storm damage this week where he committed federal resources to ensure that the state is able to repair the damage from the catastrophic storms that have hit the Golden State the past several weeks.*

## **Biden Vows to Help California ‘Build Back Better’ After Storms During His Visit to the Coast**

By Maggie Angst and Lindsey Holden  
*The Sacramento Bee*  
January 20, 2023

After a three-week barrage of winter storms devastated communities across California, President Joe Biden on Thursday stood in front of a calm Pacific Ocean under blue skies and vowed to help residents of the Golden State rebuild.

“The country is here for you and with you,” he said. “We are not leaving till things are built back — and built back better than they ever were.”

President Biden’s remarks came during a brief visit Thursday to assess the extensive damage caused by widespread flooding, powerful winds, landslides and toppled trees after a series of powerful atmospheric rivers swept through the state.

The storms, which began on Dec. 26, have caused 21 deaths and more than \$1 billion in estimated damage statewide. Gov. Gavin Newsom and Biden both noted that the death toll does not include 5-year-old Kyle Doan of San Luis Obispo County, who is still missing after flood waters swept him away from his mother.

Biden touched down just before noon at the Bay Area’s Moffet Federal Airfield. Shortly after his arrival, he boarded a helicopter with Newsom, Sen. Alex Padilla and Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell for an aerial tour of the storm damage. He then visited heavy-hit areas of Santa Cruz County, including the scenic seaside village of Capitola and a famous state beach in Aptos.

Newsom commended the Biden administration for its support both during and after the storms. Biden has granted major disaster declarations for Santa Cruz, Sacramento, Merced, Sacramento, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. Under the declaration, the federal government will cover up to 100% of costs incurred by public agencies for debris removal and other measures. It also allows residents to seek federal disaster assistance funds.

“The scale and scope of these floods are hard to understand unless you get out,” Newsom said from Sealiffs State Beach in Aptos. “That’s why I couldn’t be more grateful to the president for taking the time to come out, again, to the state of California to take a look firsthand at some of the damage.”

## **CALIFORNIANS COME OUT TO SEE PRESIDENT BIDEN**

Hundreds of people assembled along Biden's motorcade route, waving the vehicles on with smiles and signs. The streets near Seacliff State Beach in Aptos, Biden's last stop, were lined with people hoping to catch a glimpse of the president. A single "Trump won" flag seemed to be one of the only voices of dissent in the crowd.

Aptos resident Kate St. Clair, 74, said she was excited to see a sitting president visit her hometown. St. Clair said she typically starts each day with a walk along the ocean, but damage from the storms led officials to block off access to the public beach.

"It was awful," St. Clair said of the storms. "I'd wake up in a state of anxiety because it just felt like something disastrous was going to happen. Maybe not to me but it was just in the air."

Anthony Carrillo and Rod Smalley, representatives of Operating Engineers Local 3, held up a banner for their union while donning construction vests and helmets. The pair said they came out to show their support for Biden and the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill he signed in November 2021.

"We couldn't let the president come through and not say thank you," Carrillo said, adding that the union represents thousands of workers across 90 California cities, many of whom will be helping with recovery efforts.

## **BIDEN AND NEWSOM TALK ABOUT CALIFORNIA STORMS**

During his time on the coast, Biden met with business owners and local residents in Capitola and thanked first responders and state and local officials for their recovery efforts in Aptos. Both coastal areas suffered significant damage from powerful ocean swells and fierce onshore winds that destroyed a historic wharf, took out a section of a famous pier and flooded dozens of beachfront homes and businesses.

Before the president spoke at his last stop, Newsom took the microphone and praised Biden for his "empathy," "care" and "compassion."

"Trust me, that matters," Newsom said, noting that Biden administration reached out to offer assistance before Newsom officially requested it.

The cordial remarks appeared to signal an end — or at least a pause — to the apparent tensions between the president and California governor, a rising national Democratic star who is thought to have presidential ambitions.

Newsom made national headlines last year for loudly denouncing Republican governors and their values, while also chastising leaders of the Democratic party for failing to put up a bigger fight. Then, Biden in September intervened in a contentious state matter when he offered his support for a bill that made it easier for farm workers to organize. Newsom's office initially said the governor would not approve the bill, though he later signed it into law.

Standing in front of the severely damaged pier at Seacliffs State Beach, Biden on Thursday said he expected it would take "years" for California to fully recover and rebuild from the catastrophic storms. He promised, however, that the federal government would not abandon its responsibility to assist the state "till it's all fixed, it's done."

Biden and other top-ranking federal officials on the tour attributed the extreme weather to climate change but whether global warming played a role in these storms is being debated by some experts.

FEMA Administrator Criswell on Thursday told a press gaggle that the unprecedented storms were part of a pattern of a “steady increase in the number of disasters” that are more intense and severe, leading to longer and more challenging recoveries.

“We’ve never seen nine atmospheric rivers in a period of just a few weeks like this,” Criswell said. “And so, we have to be prepared for this increase in the number of weather events and severe weather events that we’re seeing.”

Biden joked that Newsom and him “had to stop taking helicopter rides like this,” noting similar aerial tours in recent years of wildfire damage. “If anyone doubts that the climate is changing,” he said, “then they must have been asleep for the last couple of years.”

Concerns that storms like this could become more frequent have led to calls for California to update its flood infrastructure and capture more rainfall. Republican leaders have condemned Democrats for failing to expedite pending water storage projects.

State Sen. Brian Dahle, R-Bieber, responded to the governor’s latest claims by pointing out the five ways California is “FAILING” to store water from these recent storms.

“What we are seeing with these storms is a state that has failed to build new water storage for 40 years, and water is pouring out to sea as a result,” Dahle said in a statement Thursday.

“California has missed yet another opportunity and the governor can make claims all he wants, but the fact is when presented with real opportunities to capture and store this rain, the majority party blocked the proposals time and time again.”

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*Note: With ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks and rampant flu and RSV cases, there are a number of parents that are asking LAUSD to consider returning to masking.*

## **Anxiety Over ‘Tripledemic’ Has These LAUSD Parents Pleading for Mask Mandate**

By Alejandra Reyes-Velarde and Howard Blume  
*The Los Angeles Times*  
January 16, 2023

At the first sign of a snuffle or stormy weather ahead Lourdes Lopez keeps her 10-year-old daughter, Alison, home from school.

Alison has Down syndrome and is more vulnerable to illness. A cold can be a major hardship, Lopez said, not only for her daughter but her entire family living in an overcrowded apartment in South Los Angeles.

Once again this winter, Lopez is feeling a dreadful sense of déjà vu. She doesn't feel that her daughter is safe at school, especially with masking optional and no universal COVID-19 testing in Los Angeles schools. Alison has missed enough days that school officials have met with Lopez to discuss the absences.

"I know that if she misses class, she falls behind," she said. But Lopez can't justify risking her daughter's health. "I told them that day that they have to help, too."

Lopez's concerns typify the voices of many Los Angeles parents who are navigating another troubling winter of health worries. Not only do they remain deeply concerned about ongoing COVID school outbreaks, but rampant flu cases and respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, have compounded their fears. Among many low-income or multifamily households, anxiety has been heightened during the return from winter break, as a contagious virus that enters their home threatens not only the health of their child but their financial stability and well-being.

Lopez and a group of Latino parents recently met on Zoom to air concerns and discuss a plan of action. The parents prepared demands to send to the superintendent and school board members, including a plea for mandatory masking for at least January. The group also asked the district to reestablish on-campus weekly coronavirus testing.

"As parents who advocate for an equitable quality public education and safe school campuses, we're concerned about a return to school without any clear preventative health protocols in place by L.A. Unified to protect our children from acquiring a respiratory virus infection," wrote the group, comprising largely Spanish-speaking parents from East and South Los Angeles.

A week into the new semester, the group, Our Voice: Communities for Quality Education, has not yet received a direct response from the district. But in a Jan. 9 news conference, Supt. Alberto Carvalho took on what he referred to as "misinformation, disinformation, confusion and unwarranted fear."

He said influenza and RSV are currently bigger threats to children than COVID, adding, "with that said, prevention is the best medicine. So mask up. We're recommending the masking of students and employees." He also blamed misinformation for depressing vaccination levels for COVID and other diseases: "This is the time to get yourself and your children vaccinated. It is the best measure of prevention."

Carvalho's approach has won praise from a different contingent of parents who oppose mandatory masks in schools.

But members of the Our Voice group say his insistence on voluntary measures marginalizes their concerns.

The district's current approach to COVID is reflected in county health department guidance. Schools no longer report individual COVID-19 cases but still are supposed to report clusters of three or more potentially related cases, said Barbara Ferrer, L.A. County's public health director. The reliability can be compromised because of inconsistent testing and reporting, and the reality that many children have no symptoms or mild symptoms.

Even so, there was a gradual rise in reported clusters over the fall and a sharp spike in December — consistent with past surges that followed family gatherings over Thanksgiving. In the first week of October, for example, there were 27 clusters in schools and youth programs countywide. The figure was 64 the week before Thanksgiving and 226 in the last full week before winter break.

While the precise number of cases and clusters is likely to be underreported, the spike itself is telling, Ferrer said.

L.A. Unified is still gathering data on COVID infections — and has a policy asking parents and employees to upload positive test results to a tracking system, but compliance is optional. County officials have the same tracking problem — testing is not widespread and COVID cases are not necessarily reported.

Carvalho's reliance on optional masking puts Los Angeles Unified in line with most school systems. Earlier in the pandemic, the district enforced strict testing rules longer than most school systems, imposed an employee vaccine mandate and tried unsuccessfully to require students to get vaccines, attracting some vocal critics.

"The mask mandates and the testing were a complete waste of our tax dollars," said parent Jenny Zepp, a Westside parent. "So much learning, mental/physical/emotional health was lost."

"COVID should now be treated as you would any other virus," district parent Carrie Kangro said. "I don't think we should even be testing for it anymore. If you're sick, stay home. If not, carry on. And get vaccinated."

Her view was not far off from that of L.A. Unified medical director Dr. Smita Malhotra.

"Thanks to science, thanks to vaccinations, thanks to therapeutics," Malhotra said at the news conference, "we are now in a place where COVID-19 ... is similar to ... RSV and flu. And so, as we have entered this new season of high respiratory illnesses, we're treating this like we have treated all of the respiratory viruses."

Malhotra, who also defended the district's earlier approach as correct for that time, strongly urged masking, though without a mandate.

One local charter school group is going against the current grain. KIPP SoCal returned to mandatory masking early in December at its 24 local campuses. KIPP schools are in low-income minority communities hit especially hard by COVID.

LAUSD parents who live in vulnerable communities say the district needs to do as KIPP did.

"The pandemic hasn't passed," Lopez said. "There are more viruses coming very strong."

Lopez said she feels mandatory masking would be a simple way to protect the most vulnerable.

In her community, MLK Community Hospital is struggling against the tripledemic of flu, RSV and COVID-19.

Lopez, 39, lives in a two-bedroom apartment her family shares with her brother-in-law. She, her husband and her three children live in one of the bedrooms. If her husband, who has diabetes, gets sick and can't go to work, he doesn't get paid, and bills don't get paid, she said.

Lopez's experience is common within low-income communities, reflecting the outsized effect of serious illness.

Since campuses reopened universally in the fall of 2021, voluntary mask wearing has generally been more widespread at schools where there is a higher enrollment of Latino and Black students from low-income families, according to parents and teachers — and also based on visits to campuses. When COVID transmission is higher, these groups continue to suffer worse health consequences, Ferrer said.

Maria Baños, 43, lives in a small one-bedroom apartment in South L.A. with her husband and four children.

“I live in a vulnerable community,” Baños said. “I’ve seen, around me, many cases and personally I’ve had COVID-19 three times. And my wish is that my children don’t go through that. Unfortunately, even if we take precautions ... cases happen daily. If COVID-19 is in the community, it’s in the schools.”

Baños said she’s concerned about how much class time her children are missing due to getting sick.

She sends her kids to school healthy, and they seem to come back with fevers, Baños said. The teachers send them home sick sometimes, and tell her not to worry; they will help them get back on track. But, she said, even as school officials press for good attendance, she doesn’t feel her children get much help.

“To me it’s another pandemic, because we have [the] Omicron [variant], the flu and RSV. I’m worried my children will have one of those illnesses and that they’ll have to stay home. Even if the school says they’ll help, the reality is if they fall behind, they fall behind.”

Absences remain a problem. Since November the L.A. Unified attendance rate has been about 89%, below the pre-pandemic rate of 95% or better. Chronic absenteeism remains high, with about 2 in 5 students missing 10% or more of classes.

“I don’t like to hide ugly truths,” Carvalho said at the news conference. “We have improved chronic absenteeism.... That’s still not enough.”

Baños said she especially fears getting sick because, as an immigrant, she doesn’t know what would become of her children if she can’t take care of them.

“If I report to the hospital that I’m sick, where would they take me? Who would take care of my children? That’s my fear,” she said.

Recently elected L.A. school board member Rocio Rivas, who represents East L.A. and parts of central L.A., echoed Carvalho in urging parents to use free at-home coronavirus tests provided by L.A. Unified.

Rivas, a district parent, added that she plans to assess whether stricter measures may be necessary for the next time students come back from a vacation period.


“We need to be more proactive in taking preventative measures. As a parent, I share the legitimate concerns of other parents.”

“We have to be as diplomatic and democratic as possible,” Rivas said. “Everyone’s concerns are legitimate whether you want to wear a mask or not. The concern is our social responsibility; we have to take care of each other.”



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, Chief of Equity and Access and  
Edith Navarro, Administrator  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: January 27, 2023  
Phone Number: 457-3694

Regarding: World Language Textbook Adoption

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding the process and timeline of the World Language (WL) Textbook Adoption. French and Spanish are the languages adopted within the World Language Adoption. Students becoming proficient in more than one language is a necessary skill in our global economy. Fresno Unified's World Language teachers are diligently working to provide students with high-quality, real-world learning.

As a district, we commit, to provide students with rigorous, inclusive, and comprehensive curriculum in all contents. Current Spanish textbooks are not aligned with the new World Language Framework and Standards released by the State in 2019/20. Below is an update regarding the process and timeline of the WL Textbook Adoption.

- The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted eight Spanish instructional programs and two French instructional programs on November 3, 2021.
- The World Language Adoption Team (WLAT) consists of both Spanish and French teachers from eight different middle and high schools and Teachers on Special Assignment (TSAs) from English Learner Services.
- In May 2022, the WLAT became familiar with and provided input on the adoption process and curricula review rubric.
- In September 2022, the WLAT finalized the review tool.
- During October and November 2022, WLAT reviewed similar chapters from the SBE approved curriculum.
- In December, the WLAT will determine which two curricula based on review rubric results will be part of the January-February 2023 classroom review.
- During January and February of 2023, all WL teachers will engage in a classroom materials review of the top two instructional programs recommended by the WLAT. Feedback from students, teachers, and parents will be gathered via Forms during this time.
- Sample materials will be in each high and middle school library for parent review and feedback during this time.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Carlos Castillo at 457-3554.

Approved by Deputy Superintendent

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Date: 01/27/2023