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SUPERINTENDENT

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – OCTOBER 27, 2023

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 – Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer

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

BFS-2 Kim Kelstrom High School Class Sizes for Core Classes

ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS – Wendy McCulley, Chief Officer

E&EP-1 Wendy McCulley State of Education Summary

OPERATIONAL SERVICES – Paul Idsvoog, Chief Officer

OS-1 Alex Belanger Update on Confidential Office Space and
Student Support Spaces

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: October 27, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Site visits at Greenberg and Farber
- Gave interview with Darius Assemi and Mike Karbassi, "Unfiltered" on GV Wire, regarding potential teacher strike
- Bargaining throughout the week with Fresno Teachers Association

Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D. _____



Date: 10/27/23

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, Chief Executive

Cabinet Approval:



Date: October 27, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for October 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 Updates for October 20, 2023 are attached and include the following articles:

- Governor Newsom Takes Final Action on 2023 Bills – October 18, 2023
- California Student Test Scores Change Little from Last Year's Low – October 18, 2023
- Education Department Watchdog to Audit Pandemic Aid Dollars Through 2025 – October 19, 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 Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 10/27/23



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DATE: October 20, 2023

TO: Robert G. Nelson
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

Governor Newsom Takes Final Bill Actions

Governor Gavin Newsom concluded his work on 2023 bills last Friday, October 13, 2023, one day before his October 14 deadline to sign or veto legislation sent to him at the end of session. Below we provide the *Fiscal Report* article “Governor Newsom Takes Final Action on 2023 Bills,” which summarizes the Governor’s final actions on noteworthy education measures.

Overall, the Legislature sent Governor Newsom 1,046 bills in 2023. Of the measures sent to him, the Governor signed 890 into law and vetoed the other 156 for a veto rate of 14.9%, the second highest rate of his five-year tenure (the highest was 16.5% in his first year as Governor).

In his veto messages, the Governor continued to reference the \$30 billion shortfall that lawmakers had to close via various budget solutions in the 2023-24 Enacted Budget. He underscores that the Legislature sent him measures that would have added \$19 billion in unaccounted costs to the State Budget as the reason why he couldn’t sign costly bills into law.

The Governor’s final actions effectively end the legislative year. The Legislature will return to Sacramento for the second year of the 2023-24 Legislative Session on January 3, 2024. Since the Legislature operates on a two-year session, any bill that missed a deadline in 2023 can be revived in 2024 but needs to clear its house of origin by January 31, 2024.

Still No House Speaker

Last week, we reported that the Republican Conference had chosen to nominate Steve Scalise (R-LA) to be the next Speaker of the House. However, after it was clear that Scalise did not have enough votes to ascend to the position, he withdrew his nomination.

Since Scalise’s withdrawal, Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) has stepped into the fold, but after two failed votes, Jordan is 18 votes short of the majority he needs as 22 Republican holdouts continue to oppose his speakership.

With Republicans making little progress toward electing a new speaker, a proposal to expand the powers of acting Speaker Patrick McHenry (R-NC) started making the rounds Wednesday evening. The proposal would temporarily make McHenry the interim Speaker of the House, which would effectively allow the House to conduct its business, such as considering bills, conducting hearings, and working with the Senate and White House on a fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget deal. The rumor that McHenry would hold the gavel through Thanksgiving.

However, that proposal blew up after House Majority Leader Scalise, Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN), and Conference Chair Elise Stefanik (R-NY) firmly expressed their opposition to the deal. Instead the conference decided to go to a third round of voting for Jordan on Friday morning, a vote in which he saw 25 Republican defectors, three more than the previous vote.

If the search for a new speaker continues to drag on, it could have significant implications for approving the FY 2024 budget or passing another continuing resolution before the federal government shuts down on November 18. Without a House Speaker to negotiate with, the Senate and White House are effectively paralyzed in approving the FY 2024 budget or passing another stopgap measure to keep the government funded.

Leilani Aguinaldo

Governor Newsom Takes Final Action on 2023 Bills

By Kyle Hyland
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
October 18, 2023

Governor Gavin Newsom concluded his work on 2023 bills last Friday, October 13, 2023, one day before his October 14 deadline to sign or veto legislation.

Below, we provide summaries of the noteworthy bills that Governor Newsom signed and vetoed over those final days that have (or would have had) an effect on local educational agencies (LEAs).

Education Bills Signed by the Governor

Assembly Bill (AB) 10 (Lowenthal, Statutes of 2023)—Pupils: Body Shaming Model Policy and Resources. This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to, by June 30, 2025, develop and post on its website a model policy and resources about body shaming that LEAs may use to educate staff and pupils about body shaming.

AB 248 (Mathis, Statutes of 2023)—Individuals With disabilities: The Dignity for All Act. This bill strikes the terms “handicapped,” “mentally retarded persons,” “mentally retarded children,” and “retardation” throughout health and safety code and welfare and institutions code and instead uses the terms “individuals with intellectual, developmental disabilities,” “impaired,” or “disability.” This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

AB 446 (Quirk-Silva, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Instruction: Handwriting. This bill defines handwriting, in the adopted course of study for grades 1-6, to include cursive and joined italics. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

AB 452 (Addis, Statutes of 2023)—Childhood Sexual Assault: Statute of Limitations. This bill eliminates the statute of limitations applicable to civil actions for damages as a result of childhood sexual assaults that occur on or after January 1, 2024.

AB 721 (Valencia, Statutes of 2023)—School Districts: Budgets: Public Hearings: Notice. On January 1, 2027, this bill repeals a district’s requirement to publish in a newspaper information on how the public may inspect the district’s budget and information regarding the public hearing of the budget adoption. Instead, the bill requires the information to be posted prominently on the homepage of district’s website at least three days before the availability of the proposed budget for public inspection. County superintendents will be required to verify that the posting or publishing requirement is met for all school districts in their jurisdiction.

AB 723 (Quirk-Silva, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Placement: Special Education: Foster Children: Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools or Agencies: School of Origin. This bill defines “school of origin” for purposes of foster youth educational rights to remain enrolled in a school when a residential placement changes, to include placements in nonpublic, nonsectarian schools (NPSs). The bill requires, beginning with the 2024-25 school year, an NPS to provide assurances in its application for state certification that it agrees to serve as the school of origin of a foster youth and allow these students to continue their education in the school.

AB 873 (Berman, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Instruction: Media Literacy: Curriculum Frameworks. This bill requires the Instructional Quality Commission to consider incorporating the model library standards and media literacy content at each grade level when the English language arts/English language development curriculum framework is next revised and media literacy content into the mathematics, science, and history-social science curriculum frameworks when those frameworks are next revised after January 1, 2024.

AB 908 (Committee on Education, Statutes of 2023)—Education Finance: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Incentive Program: Local Control Funding Formula. This bill deletes an inoperative Education Code section related to average daily attendance of migratory students and authorizes teachers participating in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Incentive Program to receive grant funding for the renewal of their certification when serving at a high priority school. As an urgency bill, this measure went into effect immediately upon signature.

AB 1503 (Lee, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Attendance: Excused Absences: Religious Retreats. This bill extends the excused absence provision for a student to attend a religious retreat from four hours or a half-day to one full day. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

AB 1722 (Dahle, Statutes of 2023)—Credentialed School Nurses, Registered Nurses, and Licensed Vocational Nurses. This bill allows, until January 1, 2029, an LEA to hire a licensed vocational nurse who is supervised by a credentialed school nurse if a diligent search has been conducted for a suitable credentialed school nurse. If an LEA hires a licensed vocational nurse as prescribed, the LEA must report this to the CDE, and the CDE must report to the Legislature a list of LEAs that use this authority. The LEA also must seek approval from its local governing board before hiring a licensed vocational nurse. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

Senate Bill (SB) 10 (Cortese, Statutes of 2023)—Opioid Overdose Prevention and Treatment: Melanie’s Law. This bill requires school safety plans serving students in grades 7-12 to include a protocol for responding to an opioid overdose. The bill also requires the CDE to post informational materials on its website on opioid overdose prevention and would encourage county offices of education to establish working groups on fentanyl education in schools. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

SB 291 (Newman, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Rights: Recess. This bill requires, beginning with the 2024-25 school year, that recess offered by a public school be a minimum of 30 minutes on regular instructional days and a minimum of 15 minutes on early release days, offered through one or more periods. This bill excepts days on which there is a field trip or other educational program from this requirement. This bill specifies that recess periods are separate and distinct from physical education or mealtimes but can precede or follow physical education or mealtimes.

SB 348 (Skinner, Statutes of 2023)—Pupil Meals. This bill requires schools to provide students with adequate time to eat following guidelines established by the CDE. The bill also requires the CDE to develop guidelines to reduce the sugar and sodium content in school meals and ensure that breakfast or lunch does not consist of more added sugar than allowed by the federal School Breakfast Program and the federal National School Lunch Program. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

SB 432 (Cortese, Statutes of 2023)—Teachers Retirement. This bill clarifies certain provisions of last year’s AB 1667 (Cooper, Statutes of 2022) related to the recovery of pension overpayments from the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS) to retired teachers due to errors in reported compensation. As an urgency measure, the bill went into effect immediately upon signature.

SB 494 (Newman, Statutes of 2023)—School District Governing Boards: Meetings: School District Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents: Termination. This bill prohibits the governing board of a school district from taking action to terminate a superintendent or assistant superintendent without cause at a special or emergency meeting of the governing board. This bill also prohibits the governing board of a school district from terminating a superintendent or assistant superintendent without cause within 30 days after the first convening of the governing board after an election at which one or more members of the governing board are elected or recalled. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

SB 515 (Stern, Statutes of 2023)—School Shade Structures: Exemption. This bill requires projects solely for the instillation of freestanding, open-sided shade structures on the Division of the State Architect pre-checked designs list, where the adjusted construction cost exceeds the valuation threshold for alterations or additions on a public school district, county office of education, charter school, or community college campus to have path of travel improvements required by Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations be limited to 20% of the adjusted construction cost of the shade structure project. This bill goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

SB 765 (Portantino, Statutes of 2023)—Retired Teachers: Compensation Limitation. This bill temporarily increases the CalSTRS postretirement compensation earning limit for retirees from the current 50% to 70% of the median final compensation of all members who retired for service during the fiscal year ending in the previous calendar year. The bill takes effect on July 1, 2024, with a sunset of July 1, 2026 (see [“Retired Teachers Bill Revived”](#) in the August 2023 *Fiscal Report*).

Education Bills Vetoed by the Governor

AB 384 (Calderon, D-Whittier)—School Facilities: Recommended Interior Temperatures: Inventory of Heating and Cooling Systems. This bill would have required the CDE to conduct a research study on recommended indoor air temperature ranges and temperature control standards for public schools and an inventory of heating and cooling systems, and to submit a report to the Legislature. The results of the research study would have been used to develop policy recommendations for safe indoor air temperature standards for K-12 school facilities.

The Governor’s [veto message](#) states, in part:

“While I appreciate the author’s goal of supporting access to indoor temperatures most conducive to student learning, this bill creates significant long-term cost pressures that are not accounted for in the budget.”

AB 1248 (Bryan, D-Los Angeles)—Local Redistricting: Independent Redistricting Commissions. This bill would have required a county or city with more than 300,000 residents, or a school district or community college district with more than 500,000 residents, to establish an independent redistricting commission to adopt district boundaries after each federal decennial census.

The Governor’s [veto message](#) states, in part:

“While I share the author’s goal of ensuring community control over the redistricting process, this bill creates a state-reimbursable mandate in the tens of millions and should therefore be considered in the annual budget process.”

AB 1479 (Garcia, D-Coachella)—Pupil Health: Social-Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Supports. This bill would have established the Pupil Social-Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Program to make grants available to LEAs to provide Tier 1 mental health supports to pupils and families.

The Governor's veto message states, in part:

“Unfortunately, this specific proposal creates additional significant ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures up to tens of millions of dollars that are not accounted for in the state budget plan and may be duplicative of other investments made in prior budgets.”

AB 1604 (Bonta, D-Oakland)—Charter Schools: School Facilities: Charter School Facility Grant Program: Conduit Financing. This bill would have made changes to the Charter School Facility Grant Program (CSFGP) with regard to required admissions preferences, requirements for related parties, declaring nonprofit status, and how charter school properties are sold and leased.

The Governor's veto message states, in part:

“The California State Auditor's report from earlier this year showed that the CSFGP program was being administered in a manner consistent with the law. It also showed that charter schools that receive the CSFGP grant funds closed less often and were located in areas that needed additional classroom space. Unfortunately, provisions of this bill could have unintended consequences, including increasing facility costs or limiting financing options for charter schools. Furthermore, the potential benefits of the bill are limited and do not outweigh the potential risks to charter school facilities.”

SB 509 (Portantino, D-Burbank)—School Employee and Pupil Training: Youth Mental and Behavioral Health: Mental Health Education. This bill would have required LEAs serving students in grades 7-12 to certify to the CDE that 40% of their classified employees and 100% of their certificated employees received youth behavioral health training identified by the CDE. The bill would have also added instruction in mental health to the course of study for grades 1-6.

The Governor's veto message states, in part:

“However, I have concerns with some aspects of the bill as written, including the appropriate scope of the required, one-time training and the lack of an appropriate mechanism to fund the bill via the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Fund. To address these issues, and to ensure alignment with other state investments in this area, I am directing the Department of Finance to propose language for the Legislature's consideration as part of next January's state budget proposal.”

Next Steps

Governor Newsom's final actions effectively puts an end to the 2023 legislative year. The Legislature will return to Sacramento for the second year of the 2023-24 Legislative Session on January 3, 2024. Any bill that missed a deadline in 2023 (two-year bills) may be revived in 2024, but must clear the house of origin by January 31, 2024.

Note: The annual Smarter Balanced scores showed that English language arts scores dropped slightly and math scores inched upwards a bit from 2022, although both scores lagged behind pre-pandemic numbers.

California Student Test Scores Change Little from Last Year's Low

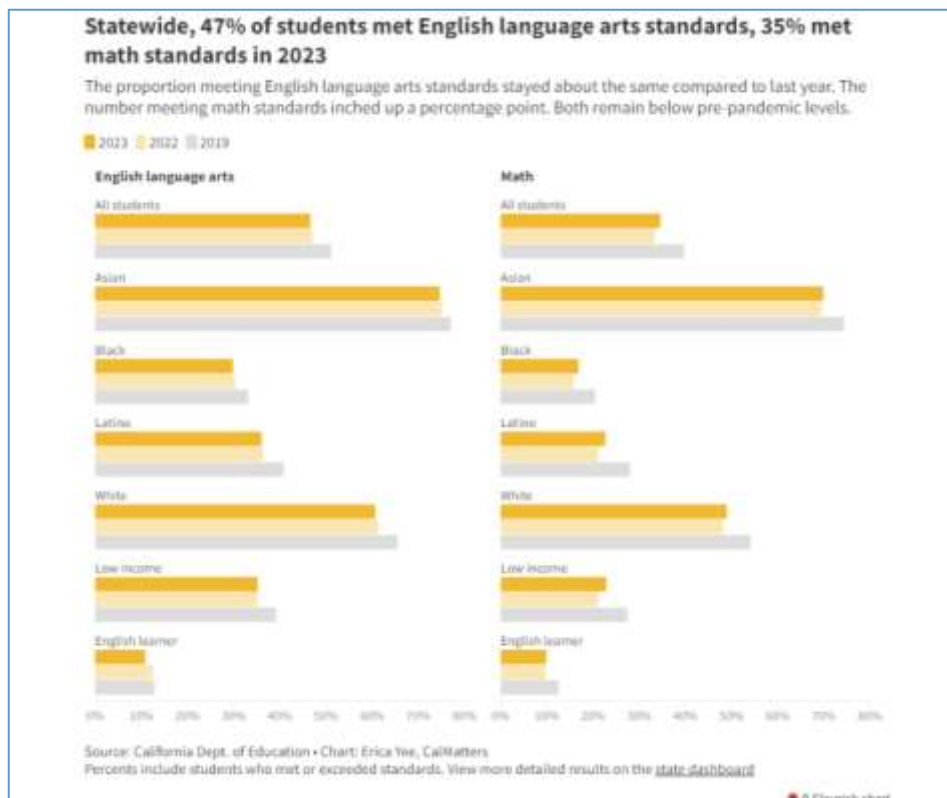
By Carolyn Jones and Erica Yee
CalMatters
October 18, 2023

After California invested billions to help students rebound from the pandemic, K-12 math and English language arts scores remained mostly stagnant last year and still well below pre-COVID levels.

The annual Smarter Balanced scores, released today, showed that English language arts scores dropped slightly and math scores inched upwards a bit from 2022, although both scores lagged behind pre-pandemic numbers. Science scores were also up slightly.

Overall, 46.7% of students were at or above grade level for English language arts, and 34.6% met or exceeded the standard in math. In 2019, before the pandemic disrupted education, 51.1% met the reading standard and 39.7% did in math.

“We’re not where we want to be. We have a long road to go, but we are making headway,” said Linda Darling-Hammond, president of the State Board of Education and president of the Learning Policy Institute, an education research organization. “It looks like we’re turning the corner from the pandemic, and some of our investments are beginning to pay off.”



Meanwhile, chronic absenteeism — defined as missing 10% or more of school days — fell significantly, according to data also released today. In 2021-22, 30% of students were chronically absent from school, more than three times the rate pre-pandemic, an alarming trend that advocates feared would have dire consequences for California. But in 2022-23 the number dropped to 25%, an encouraging sign for social workers, counselors and others who've been working to bring students back to the classroom.

“This is wonderful news,” said Cristina Dobon-Claveau, president of the California Association of School Social Workers. “After the pandemic, school social workers played, and are still playing, an integral part in ensuring students are attending school and have their basic social-emotional and academic needs met.”

The decline in chronic absenteeism suggests students are more engaged in school, and the numbers might have been even better without the disruptions caused by lingering COVID outbreaks and climate disasters such as floods, storms and fires, Darling-Hammond said.

One explanation for the flat test scores is a rise in students with high needs, said Mao Vang, director of assessments for the California Department of Education. Last year California saw an uptick — from 60% to 63% — of students from low-income families, as well as higher numbers of students experiencing homelessness. There were also more students in foster care, migrant students and those with disabilities. The numbers are even more pronounced because overall enrollment has declined.

‘A sense of complacency’

But overall, the Smarter Balanced scores were disappointing, said Christopher Nellum, executive director of the Education Trust–West, a research and advocacy group focused on students of color and low-income students' success.

“One- or two-point gains are not to be celebrated when we have hundreds of thousands of students who are below grade level,” Nellum said. “I’m concerned that there’s a sense of complacency about student achievement.”

While he applauds the state’s investments in transitional kindergarten, community schools and other initiatives, he also believes schools need to be held accountable for students’ academic performance. The state’s school funding system, for example, should include more concrete goals with rewards for schools that show improvement and penalties for schools that don’t meet certain benchmarks.

“Money is important, but we need to put more teeth into our accountability measures,” he said. “California is an amazing state, and getting it right matters — not just here, but across the country.”

Billions in school investments

The Smarter Balanced tests, given each spring to students in grades three to eight and 11, are one of the primary measurements of student achievement in California. Prior to the pandemic, scores had been rising steadily for most groups of students, although some groups, such as students with disabilities, English learners, Black, Latino and low-income students, lagged significantly behind their peers.

But when most schools shifted to remote learning in March 2020, thousands of students fell behind. They either lacked access to technology, had no quiet place to study during quarantine, were busy caring for younger siblings, or they felt overwhelmed by mental health challenges.

When campuses re-opened, some students were so far behind that the state and federal governments poured billions of dollars into helping them catch up. Schools received money to hire tutors, expand after-school and summer programs, expand transitional kindergarten, and serve free breakfasts, lunch and snacks to all students.

The state also invested \$3 billion to create hundreds of new community schools, which are campuses that include social services and health care programs available to students and their families. The idea is that students whose basic needs are met will be more engaged in school and perform better academically.

Meanwhile, the state also unveiled a new math framework, intended to boost math scores, and invested millions in a statewide literacy plan. Proposition 28, which passed last year, will bring up to \$1 billion annually for schools to expand their arts programs.

Heather Hough, executive director of Policy Analysis for California Education, a nonpartisan research center, noted that some of those investments — such as the federal COVID relief grants — will be expiring soon. And the lackluster test scores suggest that money alone might not cure California’s education challenges.

“The concern is that we’re settling in, that the pandemic was not a blip,” she said. “I think we need to look closely at how these investments are actually going to affect teaching and learning, and whether teachers are getting the resources they need to really help students in the classroom.”

Big improvements for some districts

There were some bright spots in the Smarter Balanced results. Compton Unified, in Los Angeles County, showed big improvements for many students, especially among 11th-graders. Black students, in particular, saw jumps in both English language arts and math. Latino students also gained ground in math and English language arts scores. At a Monday press conference, Ayanna Davis, the district’s board vice president, noted that the graduation rate among Black students has jumped from 50% in 2010 to nearly 90% in 2023. More than 40% of Black students completed the required coursework for California’s public universities last year, up from just 3% in 2011, she said.

“We have really focused on African American achievement, I think successfully,” Davis said.

Fresno Unified also bucked the trend, posting increases for most student groups in both English language arts and math. Eleventh-graders saw some of the most significant improvements, with English language arts scores jumping almost 10 percentage points and math scores increasing by nearly 3 percentage points from the year before.

Statewide, scores among Black, Latino, English learner and low-income students reflected the overall trend: slight dips in English language arts scores and slight increases in math scores, but still well below the 2019 scores.

Manuel Buenrostro, director of policy for Californians Together, which advocates for English learners, cautioned that test scores are important, but only one way to gauge student achievement. Schools and families should also pay close attention to attendance and discipline data, as well as school climate surveys, which measure topics like mental health, bullying, drug use, violence and whether students feel safe and connected at school.

The most recent California School Climate survey results were released in December, showing improvements in some categories but still high rates of mental health struggles, lack of motivation and other challenges.

“We have to look at what’s not captured in scores, and that’s students’ social and emotional needs — are our students being well taken care of,” he said.

Note: The U.S. Department of Education announced that it will continue to audit states’ districts’ use and oversight of federal pandemic aid through 2025 and could even extend its reviews beyond that year, according to a spokesperson for the Office of Inspector General.

Education Department Watchdog to Audit Pandemic Aid Dollars Through 2025

The agency warned of the potential for fraud or misuse, but said no major instances have been found in ESSER spending to date.

By Naaz Modan
K-12 Dive
October 19, 2023

The U.S. Department of Education will continue to audit states’ and districts’ use and oversight of federal pandemic aid through 2025 — and could even extend its reviews beyond that year, according to a spokesperson for the Office of Inspector General, or OIG, which is conducting the reviews.

The office is tasked with ensuring that pandemic-related federal education dollars are properly allocated, spent and monitored. For the most part, it has so far found only administrative issues related to documentation, reviewing and tracking of spending — rather than major issues of fraudulent spending like misuse, theft or other criminal activity.

However, the OIG spokesperson warned that a lack of documentation at the state level makes it difficult to confirm whether costs are allowable, and could result in misspending at the district level.

What “may be ‘administrative’ issues could be a sign of weak internal controls, and weak internal controls open the door to fraud,” said OIG spokesperson Ryan Traher in an email.

Last week, the Education Department watchdog released its second state audit of the American Rescue Plan’s Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, known as ESSER.

That audit found Kentucky had put in place a sound process to oversee district federal aid plans and spending for ESSER. However, the agency said the state could improve its process for reviewing district reimbursement requests, such as by requesting district expenditure lists and supporting documentation. Not doing so increases the likelihood that it could overlook compliance concerns, the agency said.

The review was the second OIG audit of state ESSER spending, following one released in September reviewing Washington state’s oversight of district ARP spending. The Washington audit also found administrative concerns, including an inadequate review and approval process of district spending plans.

At that time, Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction said in an emailed statement it was “pleased that the auditors did not find any instances of waste, fraud, or abuse of federal emergency relief dollars.”

A third audit is underway for Illinois, and those findings are planned for release in 2024.

While Traher did not share why OIG selects specific entities or programs for audits, he said many factors play into those decisions, including whether programs may be “high risk due to their complexity.” He said the office might also look at schools of different sizes to identify whether they have “similar issues and challenges” in carrying out a specific program.

Misspent funds, fraud found elsewhere

While the two ESSER reviews released so far did not find major spending issues, a separate review of the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund, or GEER, did. States were meant to spend that money to support ongoing essential education services.

In a 65-page audit released last year, OIG found Oklahoma’s lack of oversight led to misspending on items such as Xbox gaming systems, smartwatches and Christmas trees that did not appear to be education-related.

In all, \$652,720 was misspent on 3,184 different expenditures, the report said.

Aside from that exception, OIG has not found glaring misuse of the pandemic-related education relief.


These findings stand in contrast to allegations of COVID-19 pandemic federal aid misspending, laundering and fraud related to the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses. As early as December 2020, some of those loans — which were intended to help small businesses keep their employees on payroll during pandemic shutdowns or contractions — were found to have been spent on personal items like luxury vehicles.

Separately, Chicago Public Schools’ inspector general found in an investigation released last month that 14 school employees fraudulently applied for PPP loans and received up to \$21,000 each.

These employees “earned six-figure salaries and held positions of authority and trust throughout the district,” according to the district’s watchdog. By the time the Chicago agency released its report on Sept. 6, a dozen of those employees had already resigned or been fired, and termination proceedings had begun against the remaining two.

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number BFS-2

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

Date: October 27, 2023
Phone Number: 457-3907

Regarding: High School Class Sizes for Core Classes

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board information on high school core class sizes. The collective bargaining agreement with the Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) includes staffing ratios for grades K-12. For grades 9-12, the ratio is 1:29. Staff monitors classes to ensure class sizes stay at a reasonable and equitable level.

In the past, teachers in core classes with enrollment greater than 37 received additional mitigations. Beginning in the 2019/20 school year, the class size that included these mitigations was reduced to 36 and Career Technical Education and Visual Arts were included along with core classes.

The chart below shows the number of classes over 36. To ensure consistency, the data was pulled for each year based on the California enrollment census date, which is always in early October. The Board's additional investments and staff diligence to balance core classes have resulted in no classes over 36 for 2023/24.

	2019/20 Over 36	2020/21 Over 36	2021/22 Over 36	2022/23 Over 36	2023/24 Over 36
# of High School Core Classes Over 36 or 37	3	11	3	5	0
Total High School Core Classes	2,681	2,937	3,404	3,479	3,497
% of High School Core Classes Over 36 or 37	0.11%	0.37%	0.09%	0.14%	0.00%
% Change from Prior Year	50%	240%	(76%)	60%	(100%)

In addition, staff monitors core classes with less than 20 students. The chart below indicates the number of core classes each year with less than 20:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
# of High School Core Classes 20 and Under	286	270	634	680	789
Total High School Core Classes	2,681	2,937	3,404	3,479	3,497
% of High School Core Classes 20 and Under	10.6%	9.2%	18.63%	19.55%	22.56%
% Change from Prior Year	61%	(13%)	102%	5%	15%

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: 10/27/23

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number E&EP-1

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Wendy McCulley, Chief of
Engagement & External Partnerships
Cabinet Approval: *Wendy McCulley*

Date: October 27, 2023
Phone Number: 457-3749

Regarding: State of Education Summary

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information about the State of Education Gala hosted by the Foundation for Fresno Unified Schools on October 12, 2023, at The Manor Estate.

The event garnered \$269,620 in sponsorship pledges, \$7,063 in ticket sales, and \$7,688 from activities at the Gala for a total anticipated cash income of \$284,371. In addition, \$9,402 received from in-kind donations brought the grand total for the event to \$293,773. The grand total for the 2022 State of Education Gala was \$262,869

The fundraising process benefited from a considerable number of on-going donor relationships which should have a lasting impact on Foundation funding for many years to come. There were 42 sponsors for the event, with 11 (26%) of them being new donors and 31 (74%) being returning donors.

Regarding attendance and supporting participation: 434 tickets were sold and volunteers from Duncan, Bullard, Roosevelt and Sunnyside included approximately:

- 60 student performers (Computech String Quintet, Sunnyside Danzantes, Sunnyside Chamber Orchestra, Roosevelt Mariachi Band and Roosevelt Latin Jazz Ensemble)
- 10 CTE student volunteers for registration
- 6 adult chaperone volunteers

The top ten donors were presented with student artwork created by McLane High School and coordinated by Marc Patterson of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning's Art Department: Amazon, Scholastic, US Bank, CSU Fresno, EECU, Parsec Education, Swun Math, Fresno Housing Authority, Aetna and the Student Engagement Department.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Wendy McCulley at 457-3749.

Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.

Robert G. Nelson

Date: 10/27/23

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
Cabinet Approval:

Date: October 25, 2023
Phone Number: 457-3134



Regarding: Update on Confidential Office Space and Student Support Spaces

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding New Confidential Office Space and Student Support Spaces. The attached spread sheet Confidential Office Space and Student Support Spaces represents up to date information regarding each project by school. Projects continue to be worked on and much of this work is ESSER funded and scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2024.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact Paul Idsvoog at 457-3134 or Alex Belanger at 457-6126.

Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 10/27/23

Date: 10/24/2023
Re: New Confidential and Student Support spaces

New Confidential/Student Support Space	270
Existing Admin. Offices To Remain For Support Space	31

Count	Funding	PM	Site	Spaces Created In € Space	New Modular Office Confidential space	Anticipated Completion
1	Esser	KC	Ahwahnee	5		Done
2	Esser	RB	Ahwahnee	3		Jun-24
3	Esser	GI	Baird	4	6	Aug-24
4	Esser	KC	Birney	7		Done
5	Esser	GI	Birney	5	6	Aug-24
6	Esser	KC	Bullard	4		Done
7	Esser	AR	Bullard	4		Aug-24
8	Esser	AR	Bullard Talent	9		Nov-23
9	Esser	KC	Burroughs	4		Done
10	Esser	CC	Burroughs	2		Jun-24
11	Esser	KC	Cambridge	1		Done
12	Esser	CC	Computech		8	Aug-24
13	Esser	KC	Cooper Academy	3		Done
14	Esser	GI	Cooper Academy	9	6	Aug-24
15	Esser	KC	Edison	5		Done
16	Esser	Add CM	Edison	5		Aug-24
17	Esser	KC	Fig Garden	4		Done
18	Esser	AR	Fig Garden	1		Aug-24
19	Esser	KC	Fort Miller	4		Done
20	Esser	RB	Fort Miller	4		Jun-24
21	Esser	KC	Gaston	4		Done
22	Esser	CC	Gaston		5	Aug-24
23	Esser	KC	Gibson	4		Done
24	Esser	KC	Heaton	4		Done
25	Esser	RB	Heaton	1		Jun-24
26	M	KC	Holland	4		Done
27	Esser	KC	Hoover	7		Done
28	Esser	CC	Hoover	1		Done
29	Esser	KC	Kings Canyon	1		Done
30	Esser	CC	Kings Canyon	1		Jun-24
31	Esser	KC	Kirk	6		Done
32	Esser	RB	Kirk		0	Aug-24
33	Esser	KC	Kratt	4		Done
34	Esser	AR	Kratt	6	5	Aug-24
35	Esser	KC	Manchester Gate	4		Done
36	Esser	RB	Manchester Gate	4		Aug-24
37	Esser	KC	McCardle	3		Done
38	Esser	AR	McCardle	6	5	Aug-24
39	Esser	AR	Robinson	6	5	Dec-23
40	Esser	KC	RHS	4		Done
41	M	GC	RHS	7		Dec-24
42	Esser	KC	Scandinavian	3		Done
43	Esser	CC	Scandinavian	5	5	Aug-24
44	Esser	KC	Sequoia	2		Done
45	Esser	CC	Sequoia	1		Jun-24
46	Esser	KC	Sunnyside	10		Done
47	Esser	CC	Sunnyside	1		Aug-24
48	Esser	KC	Sunset	4		Done
49	Esser	AR	Tehipity	2		Aug-24
50	Esser	KC	Tenaya	3		Done
51	Esser	AR	Tenaya	1		Aug-24

Count	Funding	PM	Site	Spaces Created In € Space	New Modular Office Confidential space	Anticipated Completion
52	Esser	KC	Terronez	4		Done
53	Esser	CC	Terronez	4		Aug-24
54	Esser	KC	Tioga	9		Done
55	Esser	CC	Tioga	2		Aug-24
56	Esser	KC	Viking	1		Done
57	Esser	GI	Viking	6	6	Aug-24
58	Esser	KC	Wawona	10		Done
59	Esser	GI	Wawona	7	6	Aug-24
60	Esser	KC	Yosemite	2		Done
61	Esser	CC	Yosemite	1		Jun-23

Column Total

238

63

Legend

Existing Admin. Offices To Remain For Support Space