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Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – DECEMBER 15, 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, Ed.D. Superintendent Calendar Highlights
S-2 Teresa Plascencia Government Relations Office - Annual Report
2022/23

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT – Misty Her

DS-1 Amy Idsvoog Resiliency Center of Fresno

BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES – Patrick Jensen, Chief Officer

BFS-1 Kim Kelstrom School Services Weekly Updates

COMMUNICATIONS – Nikki Henry, Chief Officer

C-1 Maiyer Vang Teachers Professional Learning Courses -
Winter Summit 2023
C-2 Maiyer Vang Black Voices in Literacy Event
C-3 Maiyer Vang Parent University Family Leadership
Academies' Fall Field Trips

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION – Carlos Castillo, Ed.D., Chief Officer

DEI-1 Carlos Castillo, Ed.D. Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISION – Natasha Baker, Ed.D., Chief Officer

ID-1 Marie Williams, Ed.D. Meeting on the Expulsion Process with
Sunnyside Region Trustee
ID-2 Marie Williams, Ed.D. Interpreting Services for Newcomers

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: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Held press conference regarding winter meals
- Attended the Dailey Charter and CART Board Meetings
- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Held the Labor Management Meeting with Fresno Teacher's Association
- Recorded video in support of Measure E
- Site visit at Golden Charter Academy
- Attended the K-16 Fresno-Madera Collaborative Meeting


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



Date: 12/15/23

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number S-2

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Teresa Plascencia, Executive Director
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3736

Regarding: Government Relations Office - Annual Report 2022/23

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board a copy of the Government Relations Office (GR) annual report for the 2022/23 school year.

On August 24, 2022, the Board of Education adopted Board Policy (BP) 1400 Relations Between Other Government Officials/Agencies and the Schools; "The Governing Board believes that district efforts to provide a high-quality education for students in the community can be enhanced by collaboration with other government officials/ and public agencies...The Superintendent or designee may designate a Government Relations administrator to ensure effective implementation of the district's responsibilities in any such collaborative project."

The GR's initial report demonstrates the efforts taken to achieve the goal in accordance with the BP 1400.

Highlights from the 2022/23 GR report include an overview of the outreach efforts with the district's 23 elected officials at the city, county, state, and federal levels of government, participating with the Board's Legislative Committee meetings, and assisting the Board with legislative conferences and meetings.

Part of the GR's future goals consist of continuing to work to increase outreach efforts on behalf of the Board and district, assist with implementation of new laws, and continue to provide professional development for staff.

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Teresa Plascencia at 457-3736.

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



Date: 12/15/23



Fresno Unified
School District

DRAFT



Government Relations Office (GR)

Government Relations Office (GR) Mission

Board Policy 1400 – Relations Between Other Government Officials/Agencies And The Schools (August 24, 2022)

- *“The Governing Board believes that district efforts to provide a high-quality education for students in the community can be enhanced by collaboration with other government officials/ and public agencies...”*
- *“The Superintendent or designee may designate a Government Relations administrator to ensure effective implementation of the district's responsibilities in any such collaborative project.”*

GR's Role

Serve as the primary liaison for the district with local government and agencies, and as needed state and federal officials and agencies

Analyze and monitor legislation and regulatory agencies

Cultivate and maintain relationships with elected officials

Support the Board of Education's legislative advocacy agenda

Assist with implementation of new laws

GR (Year 1) 2022-2023 [part 1]

Type	Board Legislative Committee Meetings	Government Relations	Legislative Events/Outreach	Community Events/Outreach
Why/Goal	Review & Provide Positions for Proposed Legislation/Propositions for the Betterment of FUSD students	Serve as a District Liaison for Local Officials & Agencies	Represent the District, Advocate District Positions & Provide Information/Examples of Potential Impacts	Represent the District
Who/Audience	Districts Leaders & Agencies	City, County, State, Federal Officials & Agencies	State, Federal Officials, School Boards & Agencies	Local Community Organizations & Agencies
What/Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended and Participated in (5) Board Leg Committee Meetings 	<p>Attended and Participated in over 31 meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSBA Leg Update Briefing (1) ACSA Leg Policy Weekly Updates (25) Fresno Chamber Government Affairs Committee Monthly Meetings (5) <p>Meet with 22 Elected Officials/Staff Representing Fresno Unified (see next slide for breakdown)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CSBA Annual Education Conference (December 2022) CGCS Legislative Policy Conference (March 2023) White House Briefing: US Department of Education (May 2023) ACSA Legislative Policy Committee Meetings (4) (2022-23) 	<p>Met with over 6 Organizations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fresno County Farm Bureau Back2School Community Planning Event Interfaith Alliance Central Council (IACC) Fresno Chamber Chief Operating Officer Arte Americas Museum Fresno Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE)
How/Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided Staff with several direct updates on proposed state and federal legislation and gather their feedback Monitored Legislative Updates (CSBA/ACSA/Elected Updates/Sate Agency Updates/etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided Feedback Regarding Proposed Legislation (Support, Concern, or Opposition) Participated In Public/Government Events For Legislative Updates Conducted Meet & Greets with Elected Officials Participated in Member’s Advisory Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted Meet & Greets with Elected Officials Provided Feedback Regarding Proposed Legislation (Support, Concern, or Opposition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted Meet & Greets with Local Organizations Provided Feedback Regarding Proposed Legislation (Support, Concern, or Opposition)

GR Work (Year 1) 2022-2023 [part 2]

City

7 Fresno City Council Members

(Met with 4 Council Members & Staff)

1 Fresno City of Mayor

(Met with 3 of the Mayors Staff)

County

5 Fresno County Board of Supervisors

(Reached out to all 5 of the Board of Supervisors Staff)

**In 2023 Connected with 23
of the 23 Elected Officials
Representing Fresno Unified**

State

2 State Senators (12th & 14th)

(Met with 2 State Senators Staff)

3 Assembly Members (8th, 27th, & 31st)

(Met with 3 of the Assembly Members staff)

Federal

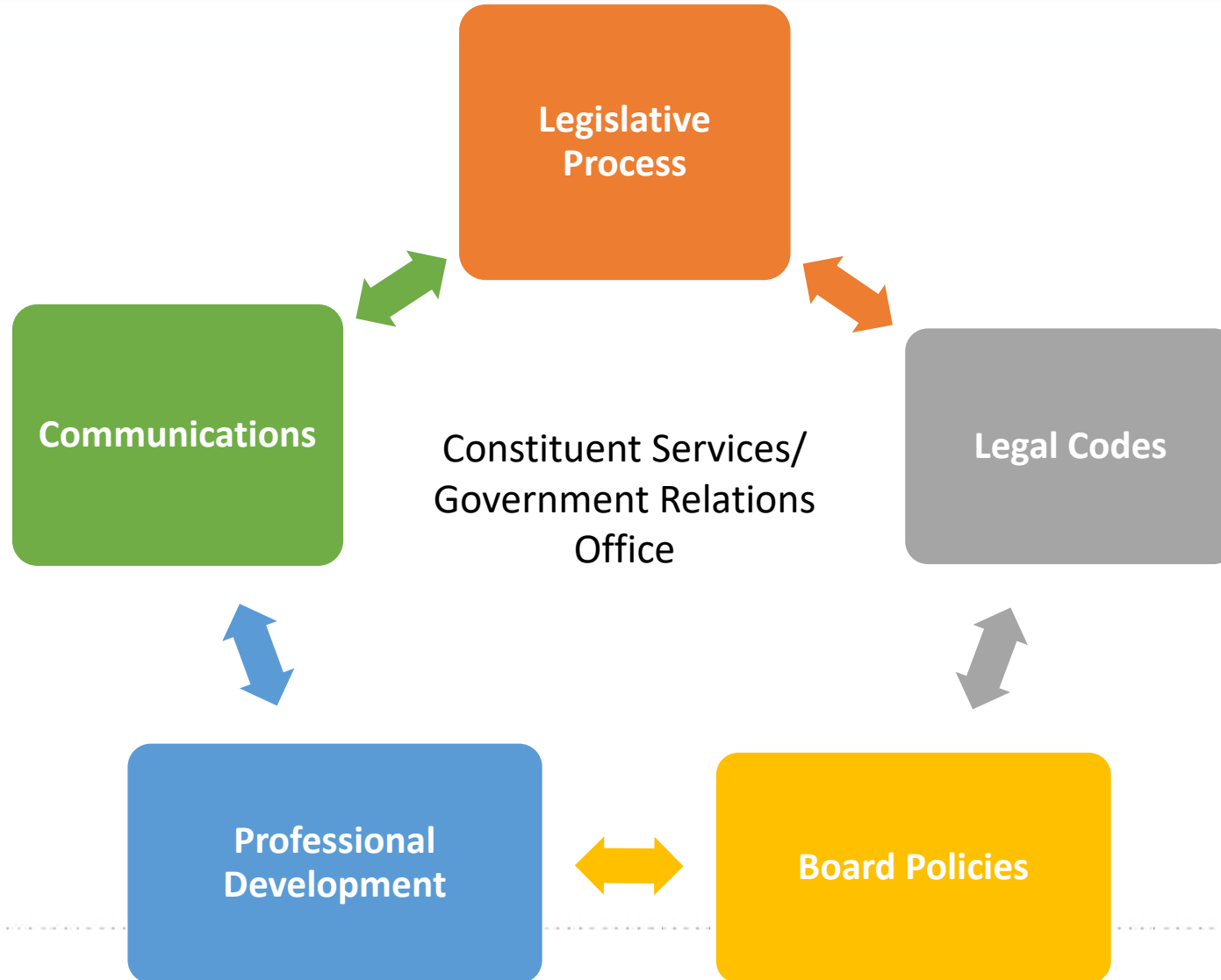
2 US Senators

(Meet with 2 of the US Senator's Staff)

3 Congressional Members (5th, 20th, & 21st)

(Meet with 3 of the Congressional Members)

GR District Support/Service




Identify Future Goals

Objectives

- Increase Outreach Efforts on Behalf of the District
- Represent Board Members at Legislative and Administrative Levels
- Assist with Implementation of New Laws
- Provide Professional Development for Staff
- Communicate regularly with the Superintendent
- Serve as a Governmental Relations Resource for District Departments/Leaders
- Provide an Annual Legislative Summary Report for the Board

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
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: December 13, 2023

Phone: 457-3498

Regarding: Resiliency Center of Fresno

The purpose of this board communication is to provide information to the Board regarding the work of the Resiliency Center of Fresno Resilience in Student Education (RISE) program in some of our elementary schools.

The RISE program first began in 2011 and was part of the Fresno Police Department and its Chaplaincy program. Now the outreach program falls under the Resiliency Center of Fresno. The program was originally contracted through the district's Safety and Security Department due to the relationship with the Fresno Police Department. The program compliments classroom lessons for social emotional learning through children's literature. Sites coordinate RISE coach volunteers directly through the Resiliency Center where we currently have just over 30 sites engaged. The 2023/24 agreement takes into consideration potential expansion to all elementary sites based on school site interest.

The program's focus is first grade and reinforces "bouncing back" skills such as emotional regulation, impulse control, optimism, empathy, self-efficacy and analyzing the cause of problems. Lessons are approximately 30 minutes and generally occur once a week.

The RISE team currently supporting sites is made up of many retired educators including nine retired Fresno Unified teachers, one retired librarian, a retired district counselor and four other retired educators from neighboring districts. The RISE team consist of 36 members, with the following demographic: 26 female, 7 male, 2 African American, 30 Caucasian, and 1 Latina. We will continue to work with the Resiliency Center to recruit more diversity.

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Amy Idsvoog at 457-3498.

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



Date: 12/15/23

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

Date: December 15, 2023

Cabinet Approval:

Phone Number: 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Updates for November 09 and 16, 2023, and December 08, 2023

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board copies 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 November 09 and 16, 2023, and December 08, 2023, are attached and include the following articles:

- California Makes Gains to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism – November 08, 2023
- Proposed California Initiative Strips Parental Right to Obtain Affirming Care for Children – November 06, 2023
- California Grants Create Collaboratives to Improve Access to Education, Careers – November 07, 2023
- COLA Is What?! – November 16, 2023
- Boosting Student Success After Covid is a Team Effort, Panel Says – November 16, 2023
- Climate and Labor Advocates Demand CalPERS Divest from Fossil Fuel and Anti-Union Companies – November 14, 2023
- LAO Issues Fiscal Outlook – December 07, 2023
- California Budget Rollercoaster: Analyst Predicts \$68 Billion Deficit – December 07, 2023
- 'Everything Is on the Table' to Fix \$68 Billion California Budget Gap — Even a Fiscal Emergency – December 08, 2023

If you have 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: 12/15/23



1121 L Street

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Suite 1060

•
Sacramento

•
California 95814

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TEL: 916 . 446 . 7517

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FAX: 916 . 446 . 2011

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www.sscal.com

DATE: November 9, 2023

TO: Robert G. Nelson
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

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

It was another slow week here in Sacramento as legislators continue to enjoy their recess. While several states held elections for governor and state legislature and decided various issues like abortion rights and cannabis legalization, it was an off year for state elections in California as its Golden State holds their major elections in even years.

Newsom Approval Rating Declines

On Tuesday, the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies published a [survey](#) showing that more California voters disapprove (49%) of the job that Governor Gavin Newsom is doing than approve (44%).

California Republicans overwhelmingly disapprove of the way the Governor is handling his job, with a 91% disapproval rating compared to a 7% approval rating. Among Democrats, Newsom enjoys a 66% approval rating, but that is 16 points lower than the 82% approval rating he enjoyed from the February 2023 poll. The disapproval rating among no party preference/other voters has increased by 11 percentage points since February 2023, from 43% disapproval to 54%. This corresponds to his approval rating dropping among no party preference/other voters by 12 percentage points, from 49% to 37%.

The Director of the poll, Mark DiCamillo, believes the Governor's declining approval rating is related to him taking a much more active role in national Democratic politics, which has sparked rumors that he may be running for president next year should President Joe Biden not seek reelection.

The survey data seems to somewhat back this theory, as 85% of Republicans oppose the Governor taking a more prominent role on the national scene compared to just 7% in favor. There is a ten-point gap (47% to 37%) among no party preference/other voters opposing the Governor on the national stage versus those favoring a more prominent national presence. Interestingly, more Democrats favor Governor Newsom taking a more prominent role in national politics (70%) than approve of the Governor overall (66%).

With regards to the Governor's recent trip to China, 50% of registered voters approve of the Governor traveling to China to discuss how California and China

can work together to address climate change issues, 39% disapprove, and 11% did not have an opinion. His appointment of Laphonza Butler to carry out the rest of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein’s term drew mixed results, with 37% approving, 30% disapproving, and 33% offering no opinion.

During the 2023 legislative year, Governor Newsom worked with the Legislature to approve Assembly Bill (AB) 531 (Irwin, Statutes of 2023), which will place a \$6.4 billion mental health bond before voters on the March 5, 2024, primary election. The proposed bond would pay for an estimated 10,000 treatment beds and other housing facilities for those who suffer from serious mental illness or serious substance abuse issues. Governor Newsom worked with the Legislature to ensure that AB 531 is the only bond measure placed before voters next March, since only the Legislature can place statewide measures on the primary election ballot.

The poll found that only 15% of registered voters had heard about the bond, but after being told of its major elements, 60% of likely voters said they would vote for the measure, 17% said they would vote no, and 23% said they were undecided.

While polling data is always interesting to analyze, it is important to note that voters’ views on politicians and issues are constantly fluctuating depending on the political and economic climate of the state and nation.

Leilani Aguinaldo

California Makes Gains to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

By Dave Heckler, Patti F. Herrera, EdD, and Wendi McCaskill
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
November 8, 2023

The efforts of local school leaders to reduce the pandemic-related spike in student absences appear to be working, according to statewide data released by the California Department of Education (CDE). This is welcomed news as research indicates that student outcomes improve in direct relation to regular school attendance.

Statewide, 2022-23 chronic absence rates decreased by over 5.0 percentage points from the 2021-22 school year—the trough of student performance in this metric, when chronic absenteeism reached a staggering historic high of 30%. While an improvement from prior year, poor student attendance patterns remain stubborn with a chronic absence rate of nearly 25%—or 12.8 percentage points up from pre-pandemic levels.

Year-over-year gains were made across all student groups with low-income students experiencing the greatest reduction in chronic absence when compared to their peers, decreasing by 6.7 percentage points. This was followed closely by Hispanic/Latino students, for whom chronic absence fell to 28.9% from a high of 35.4%. Similarly, chronic absence rates for African American/Black students fell by 5.9 percentage points from 2021-22.

Chronic Absenteeism, All Grades

	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23
All Students	12.1%	30.0%	24.9%
Low-Income Students	15.2%	37.2%	30.5%
African American/Black Students	22.5%	42.5%	36.6%
Hispanic/Latino Students	13.4%	35.4%	28.9%

Source: CDE

Importantly, while these gains are something to celebrate as local efforts to address student absences take effect, historical gaps persist that will require school leaders to remain vigilant and dig further into the root causes underlying disparate outcomes among students engaged in their learning.

Note: The California Secretary of State's Office has cleared the way for proponents of three anti-transgender ballot initiatives to begin collecting signatures, which includes a proposal that would require school employees to out transgender students to their parents.

Proposed California Initiative Strips Parental Right to Obtain Affirming Care for Children

By Andrew Sheeler
The Sacramento Bee
November 6, 2023

SECRETARY OF STATE CLEARS WAY FOR ANTI-TRANS PROPOSED INITIATIVES

The California Secretary of State's Office has cleared the way for proponents of three anti-transgender ballot initiatives to begin collecting signatures.

Each of the three initiatives must have 546,651 valid California voter signatures collected by no later than April 29 order to qualify for the November 2024 general election ballot.

Proponent Jonathan Zachreson, of the group Protect Kids CA, said that a fourth measure that combines elements of the three initiatives, is currently under review by the state.

One proposal would force school employees to out transgender students to their parents, with no exception for the student's safety or requests for confidentiality.

Surveys show that fewer than a third of transgender and nonbinary youths view their home as a safe and affirming place, and trans youths are more likely to be victims of abuse.

The initiative mirrors a bill introduced in the California Legislature earlier this year (killed without a hearing), as well as a wave of decisions from conservative-controlled school boards to enact such measures at the district level. One such policy, at Chino Valley Unified School District, is currently on pause after a state judge issued a preliminary injunction against it last month.

Another proposed initiative would eliminate transgender students' right to participate in school events consistent with their gender identity. Transgender females in grades 7 and up would be prohibited from participating in girls' sports. Trans youths also would be barred from being able to use the bathroom or locker room matching their gender identity.

Though the groups supporting these initiatives label themselves as pro-child or pro-parental rights, the final initiative actually would strip away the rights of parents to seek gender-affirming medical care for their transgender children, even when that treatment is medically recommended for the minor's physical or mental wellbeing.

The American Medical Association, American Psychological Association and American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, all support gender-affirming medical care as something that improves quality of life for transgender youths.

Studies show that the “regret rate” for gender-affirming medical care is less than 1% for transmasculine surgeries and approximately 1% for transfeminine procedures, and that the “median decisional regret score” for trans people receiving a mastectomy as part of their gender-affirming care is “0 on a 100-point scale.”

Zachreson told The Bee that he recognizes that getting more than half a million signatures in six months’ time is no easy task.

“The hard work is going to be to get on the ballot,” he said.

He said that petitions would be circulated by a combination of volunteers and paid signature-gatherers, and that “we’re actively fundraising for that particular effort.”

Kristi Hirst, a California parent and former teacher who co-founded the group Our Schools USA to push back against anti-transgender policies in the state, told The Bee in a statement that “the people screaming for parental rights are seeking to take rights away from my kids while telling me how to raise them.”

Hirst said that these proposed ballot initiatives “are further proof of a top-down ideological movement that’s been pushing these harmful policies at school boards and losing in court.”

Note: The Regional K-16 Education Collaboratives Grant Program was funded with a one-time \$250 million investment in the 2021-22 State Budget Act.

California Grants Create Collaboratives to Improve Access to Education, Careers

By Diana Lambert
EdSource
November 7, 2023

California is awarding \$72.5 million to four regions of the state to provide jobs and career opportunities for students, with the goal of improving their access to higher education and workforce opportunities.

The Regional K-16 Education Collaboratives Grant Program creates partnerships between businesses and institutions of higher education to improve education-to-career pathways, according to a news release from the Governor’s Office.

“Every Californian should have the freedom to succeed by obtaining real-life skills and fulfilling careers — including those that don’t require college degrees,” said Gov. Gavin Newsom. “With today’s investment, California is yet again going further to prepare students and workers for high-paying, long-lasting and fulfilling careers.”

Four awards of \$18.1 million each will go to four collaboratives — the Bay Area K-16 Collaborative; WE Will! the Northern San Joaquin Valley K-16 Regional Partnership; the Central Coast K-16 Regional Collaborative: Advancing Student Opportunities for Upward Mobility; and the Sierra K-16 Collaborative: Workforce Ready, Future Engaged.



1121 L Street

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Suite 1060

•
Sacramento

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California 95814

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TEL: 916 . 446 . 7517

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FAX: 916 . 446 . 2011

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www.sscal.com

DATE: November 16, 2023

TO: Robert G. Nelson
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

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

LAO Fiscal Outlook Delayed

This is usually the week that the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), the Legislature's nonpartisan policy and fiscal advisor, releases its *Fiscal Outlook* report, which provides an updated analysis of the state's economic and budget conditions.

The report is largely viewed as the last big marker analyzing the budget conditions for the upcoming fiscal year prior to the Governor releasing his January State Budget proposal. However, due to the extension of final payments for tax year 2022 to November 16, the LAO has delayed the release date of its *Fiscal Outlook* report to early December.

Despite this delay, Kenneth Kappahn, the Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst at the LAO, presented at the California School Business Officials CBO Symposium on Thursday and announced that the LAO is now projecting the 2024-25 statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to be approximately 1.00%. This is a significant decrease from the Newsom Administration's June 2023 estimates, which estimated the COLA to be 3.94%.

We expect that the Department of Finance, which has significantly more data now than in June 2023, will downgrade its projection when Governor Gavin Newsom presents his State Budget proposal on January 10, 2024.

We provide more information on the COLA and the LAO's projection in the *Fiscal Report* article, "COLA Is What?!", below.

Congress Approves Another Stopgap Measure

With the current continuing resolution (CR) funding the government set to expire on Friday, November 17, 2023, Congress approved another stopgap measure this week that will keep the government funded into the new year.

It is a unique two-step CR that will extend funding for priorities including military construction, veterans' affairs, transportation, housing, and the Energy Department to January 19, 2024, while the rest of the government agencies will be funded through February 2, 2024.

The CR effectively averts a government shutdown and buys Congress time to negotiate the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget. New House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) has repeatedly said that he wants to approve all 12 appropriations bills that comprise the federal budget and avoid approving one omnibus bill that combines all 12 spending measures into one bill.

It will be interesting to see how the Republican-controlled House will work with the Democratically-controlled Senate and White House over the next couple of months to cut a deal on the FY 2024 budget. House Republicans want significant cuts to federal spending, while Democrats have expressed strong opposition to those reductions.

Thanksgiving Break

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not be providing the *Sacramento Weekly Update* next week unless there is breaking news. We will return to our regular production schedule the week ending December 1. We at School Services of California Inc. wish you a happy Thanksgiving!

Leilani Aguinaldo

COLA Is What?!

By Patti F. Herrera, EdD, and Matt Phillips, CPA
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
November 16, 2023

The month of November ushers in annual certainties—pumpkin spice everything, familial debates about whether turkey or ham is the preferred protein for the Thanksgiving meal, a Thanksgiving Day loss by the Detroit Lions, and the release of the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) *Fiscal Outlook*. However, these are abnormal times, and the recent past has been anything but certain even though the pumpkin spice craze continues, familial debates persist, and the Detroit Lions (who are favored to win their Thanksgiving game this year) seem to have turned things around. Perhaps the changing fortune of the Lions—along with the twice-delayed 2022 tax filing deadline—catalyzed the LAO's decision to delay the release of their much-anticipated *Fiscal Outlook* that is normally released this week.

Of course, the outcome of a football game has no direct impact on the state's General Fund revenues, but the pending results of the 2022 tax collections have an immense impact on the state's economy and financial trajectory. Specifically, the tax collections (or lack thereof) have the potential to change the state's General Fund revenue estimates used to build the 2023-24 State Budget by tens of billions of dollars. The state estimated that October 2023 tax receipts would exceed \$42 billion due to the extension of the tax filing deadline by six months. The first deferred deadline was extended further by the Internal Revenue Service and Franchise Tax Board (FTB) in an announcement made on October 16, 2023. As of October 27, the FTB reported monthly tax collections of only \$14.9 billion—a shortfall from projections of more than \$27 billion.

This shortfall and the one-month extension of the 2022 tax filing deadline caused the LAO to postpone the publication of its *Fiscal Outlook* to early December as multi-billion dollar discrepancies can have significant impacts on the overall State Budget and Proposition 98.

The *Fiscal Outlook* is ripe with salient information and key data points, not the least of which is likely the most anticipated projection of the 2024-25 statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). In recent years, the LAO's projection of the statutory COLA in the *Fiscal Outlook* has been very close to the estimates released by the Department of Finance (DOF) as part of the January Governor's Budget release. Additional angst around the statutory COLA for 2024-25 is brewing as six of the eight data points have been collected, and the 3.94% statutory COLA projected by the DOF in June 2023 is becoming a dimming hope.

Although the *Fiscal Outlook* is delayed, Kenneth Kapphahn, Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst at the LAO, presented today, November 16, 2023, at the California School Business Officials CBO Symposium and announced that the LAO is now projecting the 2024-25 statutory COLA to be approximately 1.00%—a significant decrease from the Newsom Administration's June 2023 estimates. We expect that the DOF, which has significantly more data now than in June 2023, will downgrade its projection when Governor Gavin Newsom presents his State Budget proposal on January 10, 2024.

Local educational agencies that are in midst of preparing their First Interim reports to be approved by December 17 should consider multiple scenarios factoring in lowered revenue projections as a result of a significantly reduced statutory COLA. While the final statutory COLA won't be known until April 2024, the likelihood of it being 3.94% appears to be slim to none.

Note: With chronic absenteeism soaring across the state from 12.1% in 2018-19 to 30.0% in 2021-22, panelists at an EdSource round table said it is critical for schools to go beyond targeting specific causes for absenteeism and create a culture where students feel excited to go to school.

Boosting Student Success After Covid is a Team Effort, Panel Says

By Mallika Seshadri
EdSource
November 16, 2023

Two years after California schools reopened their classrooms to in-person instruction following the Covid-19 pandemic, students continue to struggle – both academically and emotionally.

Both of these factors are deeply connected and recovery requires a team effort, according to panelists at the EdSource round table Nov. 15 discussion, “Reenergizing learning: Strategies for getting beyond stagnant test scores.”

Getting California’s learners back on track, panel members agreed, involves the work of school administrators, teachers, parents and the students themselves.

“Students came back, not just with some of this delayed learning, but they lost a lot of opportunities for socialization, which has led to different kinds of behavior in school that make readiness to learn more difficult,” said Heather J. Hough, executive director of Policy Analysis for California Education.

Keeping students engaged

With chronic absenteeism soaring across the state from 12.1% in 2018-19 to 30% in 2021-22, the panelists said it is critical for schools to go beyond targeting specific causes for absenteeism – and create a culture where students feel excited to go to school.

“Kids need to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of being valued and cared about,” said Yolie Flores, president and CEO of Los Angeles-based Families in Schools.

“.....But I don’t see as much of a focus on [social, emotional] side of the learning. And I wonder if it’s because we still don’t really understand how children learn and what sparks that fire to want to learn.”

Members of the panel discussed programs that are used to gauge students’ concerns so they can be addressed. The San Ramon Valley Unified School District, for instance, holds more regular screenings to measure students’ sense of belonging through a partnership with UC Berkeley, in addition to the statewide California Healthy Kids Survey.

The district is also piloting a diagnostic tool that provides immediate feedback to teachers on students’ thoughts about belonging in their specific classrooms.

Further south, Adalberto Hernandez said at George Washington Elementary School in Madera Unified School District, students recite affirmations: “I am loved; I am valued; I matter,” they declare each morning.

John Malloy, the superintendent of San Ramon Valley Unified, added that schools and educators need to do a better job of getting to know students' needs as well as their "strengths, interests and passions."

A big part of why kids decide to come to school, Hough said, depends on answers to certain questions: "How does this fit into the future that I envisioned for myself? Am I getting the right kinds of training for my college or career goals, or the life that I want to live?"

Malloy added that the most impactful strategy "is listening to our students, creating the conditions for them to share their voice and their wisdom, whether it's kindergarten or 12th grade."

Support for teachers

Students aren't the only ones affected by the pandemic: teachers need to be equally supported, because their jobs have gotten harder in the past couple years, panelists said.

"Teachers have been tasked with the job of accelerating learning, but they're facing much more difficult student needs and, maybe in some cases, students who aren't in school," Hough said, adding that there's widespread vacancies because of problems in filling various school positions.

Parental involvement

Parents, however, are not fully aware of the academic struggles their children may be going through – even though they can play a major role in their child's achievement.

Flores, the president and CEO of Families in Schools, said a nationwide Learning Heroes survey of families found that 92% of families believe their children are on track in reading and math.

"There's confusion between what they see from the state. There's confusion from the report cards that generally say that their kids are getting A's and B's, and yet they're not reading at grade level," Flores said.

"So what needs to happen is much more clarity and targeted information to families so that they can understand specifically how their children are doing."

Some parents may want to be more present at their child's school but may be limited by their work schedules, making involvement challenging. Even in cases where parents may take the time to visit their children's classroom, they don't always know what to look for in terms of effective instruction.

"It's nice when parents are involved, but in a community like ours, we're not depending on that for student success," Hernandez said. "We communicate. We involve them. We invite them, and we do events like the Calenda traditional celebration in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico, and we had great parent involvement after hours. But during the school day, it's on us."

Classroom approach

Getting students to learn – and not just memorize material – is also vital, according to the panelists.

"I've been taught to take tests, but I'm not sure I know how to learn," Malloy said a student told him during a Student Voice Circle, and that the statement has stuck with him, and that his district has since broadened their vision for success.

“If kids are thriving, it means that they are true, independent learners when they graduate from us,” Malloy said. “They have a confidence in their ability to think and to create.”

One strategy to help students really learn, panelists said, is to focus on teaching a few concepts thoroughly rather than covering a broader range of topics on a more cursory level.

If done properly, tutoring also helps, Hough said.

“What makes tutoring effective,” Hough said, “is that those tutors are trained, that they’re being asked to do things that are aligned with the instructional strategies that the teacher is using, so that that’s.... reinforcing what they’re learning in school.”

Note: Labor and climate activists urged members of the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) Board of Administration’s Investment Committee to stop funding companies and private equity firms whose practices, they say, harm workers and the environment.

Climate and Labor Advocates Demand CalPERS Divest from Fossil Fuel and Anti-Union Companies

By Maya Miller
The Sacramento Bee
November 14, 2023

You’ll usually find labor and climate activists waving signs on the steps or lobbying lawmakers in the rotunda of the California Capitol. But with legislators on recess until next year, progressive advocates on Monday turned their attention to the November board meeting of the country’s second-largest pension fund.

Those advocates, many of whom traveled to Sacramento from Los Angeles, urged members of the CalPERS Board of Administration’s Investment Committee to stop funding companies and private equity firms whose practices, they say, harm workers and the environment.

The calls for action come as the California Public Employees’ Retirement System tries to balance its need for strong investment returns with broader commitments to social issues such as workers’ rights and climate protections. Activists say they want to see the fund, which is currently worth about \$463 billion, actively engage with companies and cease new investments until those companies fall in line with CalPERS principles.

“When CalPERS gets engaged, we know they can get results,” said Jordan Fein, lead research analyst with the union Unite Here Local 11, which represents striking Los Angeles hotel workers.

The board on Monday unanimously approved a new set of labor principles to guide its investments and also introduced a new sustainability plan, which notably promises an “exit strategy” so CalPERS could divest from companies that don’t have viable plans to eliminate carbon emissions. The fund wants to make its portfolio net-zero emissions by 2050.

But at the same time, CalPERS in the last two years has upped its investments in private equity and private debt, both of which have drawn ire from labor and climate activists. The fund hopes the riskier investments

will reap larger returns and improve the fund's financial health. Currently, CalPERS is only 72% funded, which means it could afford to pay less than three-quarters of the benefits that it owes to retirees and workers if it had to cough up the money today.

Unions say many private equity-owned companies don't treat workers with respect, such as Los Angeles-area hoteliers whose workers have gone on strike throughout the summer. Meanwhile, climate hawks want private equity firms to ditch fossil fuel assets and are so far unsatisfied with what they call "greenwashed" efforts to decarbonize portfolios.

"We need to move faster than we are," said Miriam Eide, executive director of nonprofit advocacy group Fossil Free California, in an interview last week. The group sponsored Senate Bill 252, a bill that would've forced CalPERS to sell off investments in the 200 largest fossil fuel companies. She characterized the 2030 sustainability plan as "yet another example of 'too little, too late.'"

New strategy opens door to divestment...sort of

CalPERS has always emphasized that fiduciary duty to its members drives its investment decisions, rather than social or moral obligations like climate change and workers' rights. Its 2030 sustainable investment strategy toes this same line.

The plan commits an additional \$50 billion investment toward "climate solutions" by 2030. These could include companies developing carbon capture and sequestration technology, renewable energy methods and drought-resistant crops.

It also lays the groundwork for divestment from companies that don't develop and commit to viable net-zero emissions plans – a component that pleased climate activists to some degree.

"Our approach has always been engagement," said Peter Cashion, director of the sustainable investments team, in a previous meeting with reporters. "This is an evolution of our engagement, and if we feel that there is a financial risk from a company not following our advice, there's the potential to underweight them and possibly exit them."

Cashion admitted that his team doesn't yet have definitive criteria for how they'd decide which investments to keep and which to "exit," or divest from. The Monday presentation to the board did not include an exact timeline for when such criteria would be finalized.

"It's not incredibly easy to predict the future," Cashion told reporters previously. He explained that the risk analysis would likely consider how much CalPERS stands to lose if the company does not have a plan to decarbonize.

The board is still opposed to SB 252, also known as the "divestment bill," which awaits a vote in the Assembly when lawmakers return in January.

Climate advocates, including CalPERS stakeholders, say the plan doesn't move fast enough.

Dan Fuchs, 58, will likely retire in the next five to 10 years from his role as a water attorney with Attorney General Rob Bonta's office. As a soon-to-be state retiree, Fuchs knows what's at stake if CalPERS doesn't fulfill its "fiduciary duty" to its members.

Still, Fuchs is an ardent supporter of complete divestment from fossil fuel companies and recently started advocating with Fossil Free California. He understands CalPERS' argument that maintaining its shareholder status gives the fund power to force fossil fuel companies to meet climate benchmarks. But so far, that hasn't moved the needle enough, he says.

"We need to do something drastic," Fuchs said in a Friday interview. "If we can make fossil fuel companies international pariahs, then maybe we can make some change."

Fuchs said he was "willing to take a little bit of a hit" to the pension fund's investments in the short-term if that's what it took to divest from fossil fuels.

Notably, climate advocates defer to CalPERS investment staff when asked where the divested funds should go, if not into fossil fuel companies.

"That's their full-time job," said Eide in an interview prior to Monday's committee meeting, "and they're good at it. They know how to maximize those returns, and they will do that."

Unions demand divestment from private equity firm

At least two dozen advocates with Unite Here Local 11 took a bus from Los Angeles to share their experiences with the board Monday morning. Most of them work as housekeepers and support staff for hotels owned by the private equity firm Advent International, in which CalPERS invests.

The collective bargaining agreement for about 15,000 workers in the Los Angeles area expired at the end of June, and workers have staged rolling strikes throughout the summer and into the fall as movement at the bargaining table stalled.

Norelis Vargas, 39, told the board how she and her family left their home country of Venezuela for a better life in the United States. They journeyed for a month and a half, on foot and by bus, before crossing the border and settling in a Skid Row homeless shelter.

In order to make money and support her three children, Vargas took a contract job with an agency that placed her in hotels as a housekeeper. Unbeknownst to her, though, the company employed immigrant laborers such as herself as scabs for workers who were on strike. She had to cross the picket line each day she went to work.

"I felt like I disrespected the workers who were on strike," Vargas said in Spanish, via a union translator. "No one ever explained to me what was going on or why they were on strike."

Vargas and her fellow workers urged the board to use CalPERS' voice as a stakeholder and push the hotels to "do the right thing" and "treat workers with respect."



1121 L Street

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Suite 1060

•
Sacramento

•
California 95814

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TEL: 916 . 446 . 7517

•
FAX: 916 . 446 . 2011

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www.sscal.com

DATE: December 8, 2023

TO: Robert G. Nelson
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

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

LAO Releases Fiscal Outlook

The big news out of Sacramento this week was the release of the highly anticipated *Fiscal Outlook* report from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), the Legislature's nonpartisan policy and fiscal advisor.

The report shows that the final estimated tax collections for 2022-23 were approximately \$26 billion less than the projection used in the 2023-24 Enacted Budget. As a result of depressed tax collections attributed to the 2022-23 fiscal year and a softening economy, the *Fiscal Outlook* projects that Proposition 98 is overcommitted by \$15.4 billion in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years when compared against the 2023-24 Enacted Budget.

The three key takeaways from the report are as follows:

- California faces a serious deficit going forward
- Unprecedented prior-year revenue shortfall
- The Legislature will need to utilize tools to address the budget problem

The third bullet point could be the key to mitigating reductions to K-14 funding in the 2024-25 State Budget Act. The report says that the Legislature can choose to lower Proposition 98 spending over the three-year budget window as the minimum guarantee will naturally decline due to the significant revenue shortfall. The other option offered by the LAO is for the Legislature to withdraw funds from the Proposition 98 reserve, which currently sits at \$8.1 billion after adjustments are made to prior- and current-year deposits.

The authority of the Legislature to make automatic withdrawals from the K-14 rainy day fund is formulaic and requires the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee to be lower in one fiscal year than it was in the prior fiscal year. When this occurs, the Legislature can only withdraw funds from the Proposition 98 reserve account in an amount sufficient to bring funding up to the prior-year level. Alternatively, if the Governor declares a State Budget emergency, the Legislature has the discretion to make withdrawals from the rainy day fund and in any amount.

We provide a deeper analysis of the LAO's *Fiscal Outlook* report in the *Fiscal Report* article below entitled, "LAO Issues Fiscal Outlook."

Leilani Aguinaldo

LAO Issues Fiscal Outlook

By SSC Team
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
December 7, 2023

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO)—the nonpartisan budget and policy advisor for the Legislature—issued its highly anticipated *Fiscal Outlook* report today. The expectation of the *Fiscal Outlook* is heightened this year due to the thrice-delayed tax filing deadline, which was shifted from April 2023 to November 2023, and the anticipation of where the dust would settle for tax collections from the 2022 calendar year.

Overall Themes

The health of California's General Fund peaked in the 2021-22 fiscal year with record revenues and reserves. However, most financial experts across the state expected that revenues would begin to taper off beginning in 2022-23 and 2023-24 relative to 2021-22. The tapering quickly turned into an exceptional shortfall, as the final estimated tax collections for 2022-23 were approximately \$26 billion less than the projection used for the 2023-24 Enacted Budget. As a result, the *Fiscal Outlook* provides three key takeaways:

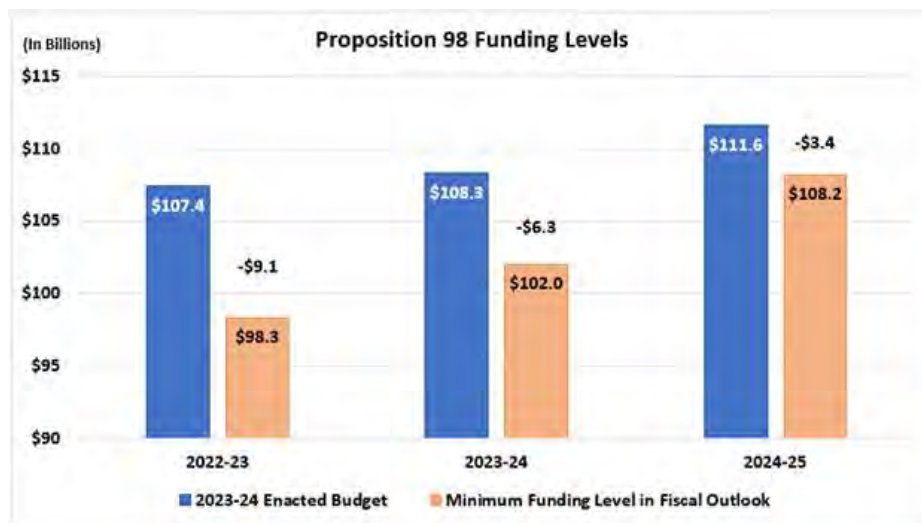
- California faces a serious deficit going forward
- Unprecedented prior-year revenue shortfall
- The Legislature will need to utilize tools to address the budget problem

The *Fiscal Outlook* reports that the state's economy entered a downturn in 2022 due to higher borrowing costs and reduced investments. This is highlighted by a decline in home sales of approximately 50%, lowered investments in startup and technology companies, and a decline of more than 80% in the number of California companies with initial public offerings. In total, the *Fiscal Outlook* estimates that the state faces a \$68 billion deficit over the three-year period covering 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Outlook for Schools and Community College Funding

As a result of depressed tax collections in 2022 and a softening economy, the *Fiscal Outlook* projects that Proposition 98 is overcommitted by \$15.4 billion in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years when compared against the 2023-24 Enacted Budget.

The *Fiscal Outlook* estimates that the state would need to spend \$109.3 billion to cover the cost of existing programs, adjusted for



attendance and a cost-of-living adjustment—estimated to be 1.27%—in the 2024-25 fiscal year. This amount exceeds the LAO’s projected Proposition 98 funding requirement by approximately \$1.1 billion.

LAO Recommendations for Education

The LAO highlights two pathways available to the Legislature as they enter 2024-25 budget negotiations. First, the Legislature could lower Proposition 98 spending down to the minimum funding levels noted in the chart above. This would require schools and community colleges to “send back” funding that has already been apportioned or is scheduled to be apportioned. Second, the Legislature could withdraw funds from the Proposition 98 reserve—the current balance is \$8.1 billion after adjustments are made to prior- and current-year deposits—to support a funding level that is greater than the minimum funding levels. The second option has ripple effects in 2024-25. Should the Legislature choose to “over-appropriate” Proposition 98 in 2022-23 and 2023-24 at the levels in the 2023-24 Enacted Budget, the projected minimum funding level in 2024-25 would increase from \$108.2 billion to \$113 billion, an amount greater than what was included in the 2023-24 Enacted Budget. However, that effect is partially blunted by the use of Proposition 98 reserves, which, from an accounting perspective, do not count as spending for the purpose of determining the minimum funding requirement in future years. Regardless of which scenario is selected, the *Fiscal Outlook* projects that the entire Proposition 98 reserve will be required to be withdrawn no later than the 2024-25 fiscal year, but the reserve could be exhausted in the current fiscal year should the Legislature choose to “over-appropriate” Proposition 98 in the prior and current fiscal years.

The Road Ahead

The figures in the *Fiscal Outlook* report, while somewhat anticipated, still create an unpleasant reverberation in the state and K-14 community that will impact every corner of the state. The sobering news that 2021-22 was indeed the peak now begs the question, “How far will state revenues fall before normalizing?” Although that answer will not be known for several months, if not a year, more information about how the state will address the revenue shortfall will be available on or before January 10, 2024, when Governor Gavin Newsom unveils his priorities for the state and education as part of his 2024-25 State Budget proposal. We look forward to seeing you at our [Governor’s Budget Workshop](#) in either Sacramento or Anaheim.

Note: The LAO also recommends that Governor Newsom declare a fiscal emergency to allow the state to dip into as much as \$24 billion of its reserves, and that legislators pull back on one-time spending allocations that have not yet been distributed.

California Budget Rollercoaster: Analyst Predicts \$68 Billion Deficit

By Alexei Koseff
CalMatters
December 7, 2023

With tax revenues in a free fall comparable to the Great Recession and the dot-com bust, California faces a projected \$68 billion budget deficit next year that will require spending cuts and reserve funds to close, state finance officials said today.

The new estimate from the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, released as Gov. Gavin Newsom finalizes his January budget proposal, reflects a substantially delayed tax-filing period this fall where collections came in far below what lawmakers expected when they adopted a spending plan over the summer.

This projected deficit would be a record for California. But officials noted that it is partly because the budget has grown so much in recent years — the most recent was more than \$300 billion — and that the state has closed similar or worse spending gaps, by percentage, in the past.

Legislative analyst Gabriel Petek cautioned that California is better prepared to respond to the situation than during the economic recession 15 years ago, because it has since built several multibillion-dollar rainy-day funds, though the state is also looking at a structural deficit of about \$30 billion annually going forward.

"I go with the word 'serious.' A serious budget problem," Petek said during a briefing with journalists. "I would stop short of calling it a crisis."

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for Newsom's Department of Finance, said the administration will have different numbers when the governor presents his 2024-25 spending plan next month, but Newsom is preparing to address a significant deficit.

"Both the Governor and the Legislature have a substantial challenge before them in closing a very large revenue gap in this budget," Palmer told CalMatters. "The IRS, with the best of intentions, created a situation this year that is entirely new territory."

Severe winter storms prompted the federal government to delay the income tax filing deadline for most Californians from April until November, and the state followed suit, giving an incomplete picture when legislators and the governor crafted the budget this summer.

It already accounted for a \$30 billion deficit, after two years of record surpluses driven by economic recovery and federal aid related to the coronavirus pandemic. But those collections were ultimately another \$26 billion below estimates — a drop of 25% from the prior year — digging a financial hole based on money the state committed in its spending plan.

This year looks weak as well, according to finance officials. California has been hit particularly hard by inflation, which pinched the housing market; a stock market downturn, affecting capital gains; and a drop in investments in the tech industry, which has pulled back on initial public offerings. Overall tax revenues are projected to be \$58 billion below assumptions in the multi-year budget window.

Though the Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that tax revenues will begin growing again next year, the recovery is likely to be slow, opening up long-term funding shortfalls that could affect essential programs in future years.

"There are enough options available to address this immediate problem," Petek said. "Our high-level suggestion to the Legislature is just to be judicious about reserves because there's a lot of uncertainty ahead, so preserving some of that resilience would be helpful."

His office recommended that Newsom declare a fiscal emergency, allowing the state to dip into as much as \$24 billion of its rainy-day funds, and that legislators pull back on one-time spending allocations that have

not yet been distributed, potentially saving \$10 billion or more that had previously been set aside for transportation, environmental and education programs.

Petek also suggested that California could cut the deficit by nearly \$17 billion over the next three years by recalculating its constitutionally-mandated funding obligation to schools and community colleges, known as Proposition 98, based on the lower revenues. Though this would decrease the state's base education funding over the long term, Petek said the immediate effects could be offset with reserves.

That option, in particular, could encounter stiff resistance in the Legislature. Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, a Hollister Democrat, released a statement last week, when it became clear that tax revenues would be substantially below estimates, committing to a budget that "protects classroom funding."

Newsom and lawmakers are also likely to confront months of tremendous pressure from advocates arguing that their priorities should be protected in any budget solutions. Statements started rolling out mere minutes after the Legislative Analyst's Office published its report.

"California leaders have stepped up before to prioritize Californians who are struggling to get by and they must continue this in 2024," said Pete Manzo, president & CEO of United Ways of California.

Republican legislators chastised their Democratic colleagues for continuing to make new spending commitments in recent budget cycles even as it became clear that the economy was increasingly shaky.

"Hopefully, the supermajority will see it is time for a more realistic budget strategy," Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones of San Diego said in a statement, "instead of throwing money at a laundry list of projects that sounds nice on the national television debate stage."

Note: The sobering revenue news means that lawmakers will need to think carefully about 2024 legislation that will require the state to spend more money or risk a veto by Governor Newsom, who has used underperforming revenues as his prime rationale for vetoes the last two years.

'Everything Is on the Table' to Fix \$68 Billion California Budget Gap — Even a Fiscal Emergency

By Lindsey Holden
The Sacramento Bee
December 8, 2023

California lawmakers will return to Sacramento next month to deal with a looming problem — a \$68 billion budget gap that may require an emergency declaration to fix.

A report the Legislative Analyst's Office released on Thursday showed a tax revenue shortfall has created a "serious budget deficit" for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. California's projected \$14 billion spending gap has grown substantially as higher interest rates and stock market uncertainty have lowered tax payments from wealthy residents with earnings that come from capital gains and dividends.

The LAO suggested the increased budget gap could merit Gov. Gavin Newsom declaring a fiscal emergency, which would give lawmakers access to a portion of the state's reserves. It could also prompt leaders to pull back on some hard-fought but costly initiatives they won last year.

Some lawmakers have also raised the possibility of reconfiguring the 2023-2024 budget they passed last year, even as others want to prioritize preserving social safety net programs.

"I think everything is on the table right now as we consider how to get to where we want to be and where we need to be," said newly-appointed Assembly Budget Chair Jesse Gabriel, D-Woodland Hills.

Declaring a fiscal emergency?

This year, Newsom and lawmakers used a combination of cuts and deferred spending, as well as borrowing, to close a \$31.5 billion spending gap. But in November, tax revenues delayed months by winter storms came in \$26 billion under projections, compounding the gap expected in 2024-2025.

Legislators will have their first floor session of the new year on Jan. 3, and Newsom must submit his proposed budget by Jan. 10.

In 2023, the state avoided dipping into reserves. This budget cycle, that might be necessary, according to the LAO.

"Given the state faces a serious budget problem, using general purpose reserves this year is merited," the LAO reported. "That said, we suggest the Legislature exercise some caution when deploying tools like reserves and cost shifts."

If Newsom declares a fiscal emergency, the LAO reported, that would give the Legislature access to \$24 billion in general purpose reserves.

The governor has not taken that sort of action since June 2020, when California was in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic and facing a \$54.3 billion budget gap.

"No final decision has been made regarding the reserves as they're going to be used to close the shortfall," said H.D. Palmer, a Department of Finance spokesman.

Legislative budget priorities

Lawmakers currently planning their 2024 bills will need to think carefully about legislation that will require the state to spend more money. And they will likely face even tougher economic decisions than they did last year, Gabriel said.

"Anything that costs money is going to have a huge uphill path this coming year," Gabriel said. "People really need to recalibrate their expectations and understand the gravity of the moment that we're in, the gravity of the challenges that we're facing."

The assemblyman is new to the budget chair position, as Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, D-Hollister, appointed him in November. He will officially take over from Assemblyman Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, on Jan. 22.

Gabriel declined to say whether he supports specific strategies to close the spending gap, such as opening up the 2023-2024 budget or making use of a fiscal emergency. He said the Assembly Democratic Caucus will need to discuss the direction it would like to take.

“The top priorities here are to avoid cuts to safety net services for our most vulnerable,” Gabriel said. “That’s absolutely the last thing that we want to do. To protect classroom funding, to protect a lot of the progress that we’ve made over recent years, but we’re going to have to make some difficult choices.”

One such choice may involve the hard-fought \$25 health care worker minimum wage bill Newsom signed in October.

The Los Angeles Times on Thursday reported Newsom and Democratic leaders have been working on changes to the bill that were “all part of an understanding” the governor reached with labor advocates before he signed it.

“SEIU California has committed to working with the administration and the Legislature to ensure safeguards are in place to guarantee that this critical measure is taken in a way that preserves California’s fiscal health, just as we did when negotiating the last statewide minimum wage increase,” said Tia Orr, SEIU California executive director, in a statement.

Sen. Roger Niello, R-Fair Oaks, who serves as vice-chair of the Senate Budget Committee, said he would like to see the Legislature consider opening the 2023-2024 budget and “adjusting some of our current year spending to make it easier for subsequent years.”


Niello also said he would like to “avoid reduction in expenditures in in the education area,” but he sees other parts of the budget that leaders could curtail. The senator believes the state could draw money away from high-speed rail, exercise “much wiser spending” around homelessness and cut back on efforts to expand Medi-Cal for undocumented Californians.

Any messaging around avoiding budget cuts entirely is misguided, Niello said.

“I don’t see this budget being solved without some reductions in spending,” he said. “And to suggest that that doesn’t have to happen, necessarily, is creating expectations that I think are not wise.”

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number C-1

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Maiyer Vang, Executive Director
Cabinet Approval: 
11/14/2023 (Doc ID: 2023-034 P51)

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 250-1322

Regarding: Teachers Professional Learning Courses – Winter Summit 2024

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding Parent University's new investment and collaboration with the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning (CIPL) Department to bring six (6) new offerings of professional learning courses for teachers during the Winter Summit 2024. The professional learning will be presented virtually on Thursday, January 04, 2024, and Friday, January 05, 2024. Each participant will receive the *Everyone Wins* book by Dr. Karen Mapp and her colleagues for attending the session.

The professional learning will provide teachers with in-depth findings regarding the essential conditions for successful family engagement and share some practical strategies to move forward and implement these high-impact family engagement practices.

By the end of the summit, teachers will better understand the latest research on family engagement that shows when families, educators, schools, and communities collaborate, *Everyone Wins*. For more information, please see the attached.

Courses offered:

- Course 1: Parent University 101!
- Course 2: Family Engagement and Students
- Course 3: Family Engagement and Educators
- Course 4: Family Engagement and Families
- Course 5: Family Engagement and Schools, Districts, and Communities
- Course 6: Implications for Practice: Acting on the Research

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Maiyer Vang at 250-1322.

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Date: 12/15/23

**PARENT UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
SUMMIT 2024 WINTER**

**TEACHERS
SIGN UP!!!**



6 new professional learning to support family engagement. Participants will receive the *Everyone Wins* book!

More information to register see the the course form or email Anna Yang at anna.yang@fresnounified.org

**JANUARY
4 & 5, 2024**



**Parent University
Professional Learning (PL) Summit 2024 Winter**

Course Title 1: PL Summit 2024 Winter - Parent University 101!

Course Description 1: In this course, you will be able to explore the Parent University program and its various programs that aim to support families in our district. You will learn about the resources and tools available through Parent University and how they can help families in our community. By the end of the course, you will have a comprehensive understanding of the programs and services offered and how to access them to receive support for families. Join us on this journey to discover how Parent University can help enhance your family engagement and contribution to students' academic success.

iAchieve Course Code: 22504

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p95sz4y>

Course Title 2: PL Summit 2024 Winter – Family Engagement and Students

Course Description 2: In this course, we will dive into Chapter 1 of "Everyone Wins," a book by Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues. This session will explore the positive effects of family engagement practices on students' outcomes. It will highlight the importance of creating seamless pathways for families to navigate the education system, from pre-K through high school, to ensure student academic and social-emotional well-being.

By the end of this course, you will thoroughly understand the significance of family engagement in a child's education. You will learn practical strategies to improve family engagement in your classroom and recognize the positive impact of a strong family engagement foundation on student success.

iAchieve Course Code: 22507

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/bpjeukz9>

Course Title 3: PL Summit 2024 Winter – Family Engagement and Educators

Course Description 3: During this course, we'll dive into Chapter 2 of "Everyone Wins" by Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues, which discusses the importance of building genuine and trustworthy relationships between educators and families. This can positively impact how educators view and interact with their students' families.

We aim to help you recognize the vital role that family engagement plays in a child's education by the end of our session. We'll explore practical strategies to improve family engagement in your classroom, and you'll see firsthand the benefits of a strong foundation of family involvement.

iAchieve Course Code: 22509

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/rzpjzuwt>

Course Title 4: PL Summit 2024 Winter – Family Engagement and Families

Course Description 4: In this course, we will dive into Chapter 3 of Everyone Wins by Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues. This session will take you through the crucial role of family engagement practices in a child's education. This session will give an in-depth insight into these practices' significance for

Parent University
Professional Learning (PL) Summit 2024 Winter

families by focusing on the "family" side of family-school partnerships. By attending this session, you will learn how family engagement practices can help families develop a sense of self-efficacy in supporting their children's education and become influential leaders within their families.

At the end of this session, you will be able to understand the importance of family engagement in a child's education and learn practical strategies to improve family engagement in your classroom. You will also identify why a strong family engagement foundation is essential for students' success.

iAchieve Course Code: 22511

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3m2htezy>

Course Title 5: PL Summit 2024 Winter – Family Engagement and Schools, Districts, and Communities

Course Description 5: In this course, we will dive deeper into Chapter 4 of "Everyone Wins" by Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues, discussing the significance of family engagement practices in schools, districts, and communities. Through discussions and research, we will explore how ongoing and reflexive family engagement practices in school systems can achieve educational and social justice rather than simply being a means to an end. By implementing these practices, schools can become more welcoming and inclusive, with communities following suit.

By the end of this session, you will better understand why family engagement is crucial for a child's education. You will learn practical strategies to enhance family engagement in your classroom and appreciate the positive impact of solid family engagement foundations on students.

iAchieve Course Code: 22512

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/4c84tarv>

Course Title 6: PL Summit 2024 Winter – Implications for Practice: Acting on the Research

Course Description 6: In this course, we will dive deeper into Chapter 5 of "Everyone Wins" by Dr. Karen Mapp and colleagues. We will discuss the significant findings regarding the essential conditions for successful family engagement. We will also share some practical strategies to move forward and implement these high-impact family engagement practices.

By the end of this session, you will understand why the latest research on family engagement shows that when families, educators, schools, and communities collaborate, Everyone Wins.

iAchieve Course Code: 22513

Microsoft Teams Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3exuz7j2>

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number: C-2

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Maiyer Vang, Executive Director
Cabinet Approval: *Nikki Henry*
(11/14/23 - 12/15/23) (1/24/24)

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 250-1322

Regarding: Black Voices in Literacy Event

The purpose of this communication is to update the Board information regarding the partnership between Parent University and the African American Academic Acceleration (A4) Departments. We are collaborating to bring the first Black Voices in Literacy event to support our African American families and students. You are invited to attend the event on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. at the Fresno Convention Center, 848 M Street, 93721.

The event aims to bring literacy activities and community resources to support and build trust and relationships with our African American families and students. Over 500 participants are expected to attend. Families and students will have the opportunity to listen to motivational guest speakers, participate in many hands-on literacy activities, and receive educational resources. Every child who attends will receive free books.

Attached is the flyer. Please feel free to share it with families. The flyer will be posted on Peachjar, ParentSquare, and Parent University and A4 social media accounts. Personal phone calls will be made districtwide to African American families. For more information, please click on the link as follows: [Family Engagement Events | Fresno Unified Parent University](#)

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Maiyer Vang at 250-1322.

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Robert L. Nelson

Date: 12/15/23

African American Academic Acceleration
and Parent University Present:

Black

Voices in Literacy

Fresno Unified Family Event



Raffle Giveaways:

- * Disney on Ice Tickets
- * Chaffee Zoo Annual Passes
- * Free Books
- * Tech Prizes
- * Free Lunch
- And Much More!

Lunchtime Entertainment Hosted
by:
DJ Fidget

- * Transportation will be provided
- * Lunch - First Come First Served



Featured Author
Kobie Da Wiz

SCAN ME!



01/27/2024
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Fresno Convention Center
848 M Street
Fresno, CA 93721



Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number: C-3

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Maiyer Vang, Executive Director
Cabinet Approval: *Nikki Henry*
Nikki Henry (Dec 11, 2023 1:24 PST)

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 250-1322

Regarding: Parent University Family Leadership Academies' Fall Field Trips

The purpose of this communication is to update the Board with information regarding Parent University Family Leadership Academies' fall field trips.

Parent University provided leadership team-building opportunities for 20 family leaders to gain real-world experience at the Hands-on Gourmet, San Francisco, on November 17, 2023. The Hands-on Gourmet team building is designed to increase leadership, productivity, communication, motivation, and unite individuals toward a common goal.

In addition, in partnership with the Fresno Chaffee Zoo, on November 22, 2023, 150 family leaders and their students had an opportunity to build their leadership by leading their students to learn about animal science, explore the Chaffee Zoo at no cost, and receive community resources.

Attached are photos captured. For more information about family leadership academies, please visit this link: [Parent University Parent Leadership Academies](#).

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Maiyer Vang at 250-1322.

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Robert L. Nelson

Date: 12/15/23



Family Goal

Increase inclusive opportunities for families to engage in their students' education



Family Leadership Field Trip to Fresno Chaffee Zoo





Family Goal

Increase inclusive opportunities for families to engage in their students' education

Hands On Gourmet


Private Cooking Parties & Culinary Team Building

Family Leadership Field Trip to Hands-On Gourmet San Francisco



Fresno Unified School
District Board
Communication

BC Number DEI-1

From the Office of the Superintendent
To the Members of the Board of Education
Prepared by: Carlos Castillo, Chief of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Cabinet Approval 

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3471

Regarding: Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board information on the new structure of the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The district aims to align resources to better support students in our schools. The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is designed to provide a wide array of district supports to school staff as well as direct services to students that include but are not limited to, socio-emotional services, academic tutorials, and overall equitable student access to quality education. As a result, the following departments make up the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- Office of African American Academic Acceleration
Department Lead: Lisa Mitchell, Ed.D.
- Department of Prevention and Intervention
Department Lead: Rita Baharian
- Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Includes American Indian Education)
Department Lead: Armen Karamanian, Ed.D.
- Community Schools (Includes Student Wellness)
Department Lead: Vacant
- Transfers Department
Department Lead: Julie Hoopes

Fresno Unified values the importance of providing our students with the best quality education possible. Aligning resources that improve services for students and families is our priority.

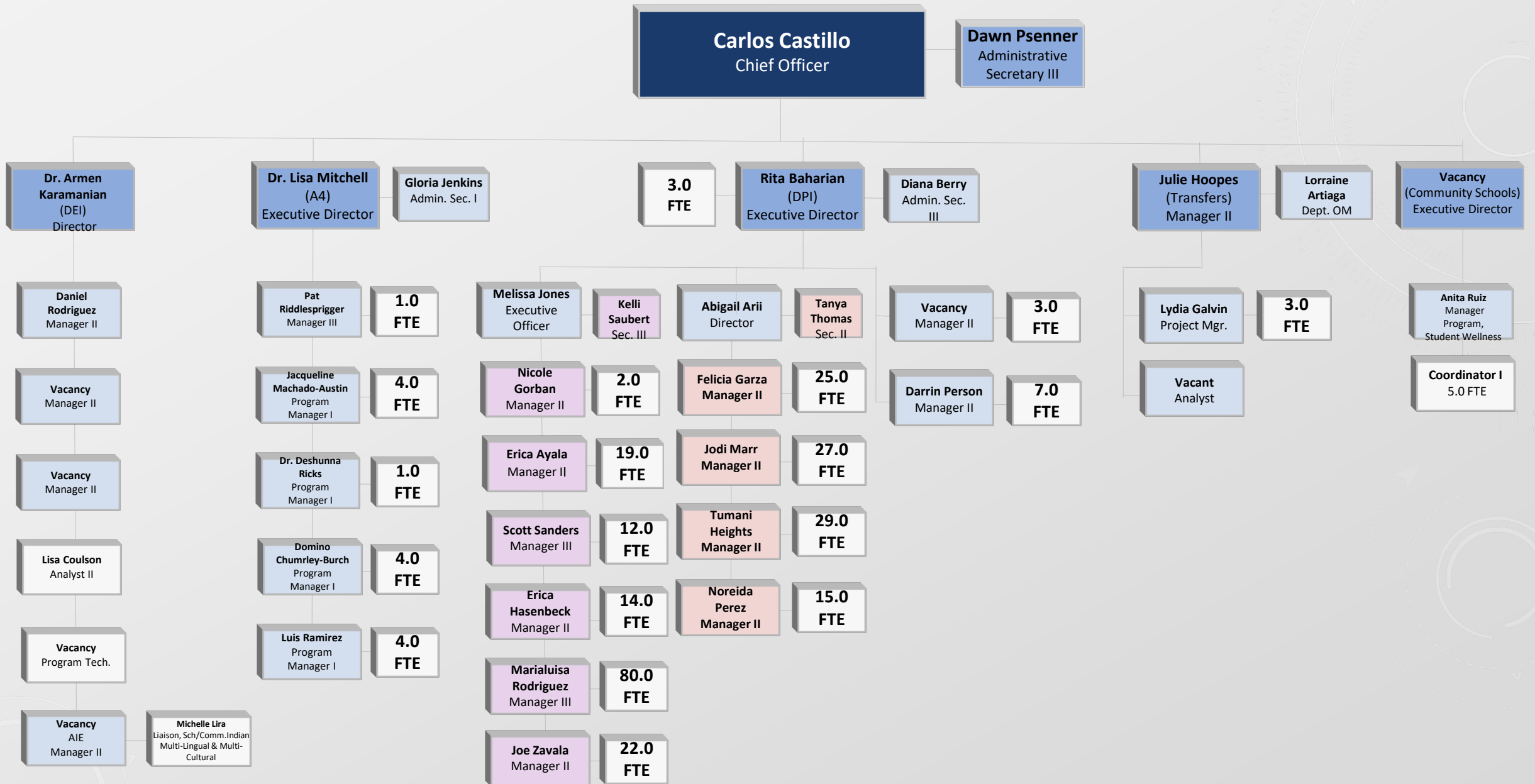
If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Carlos Castillo at 457-3471

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

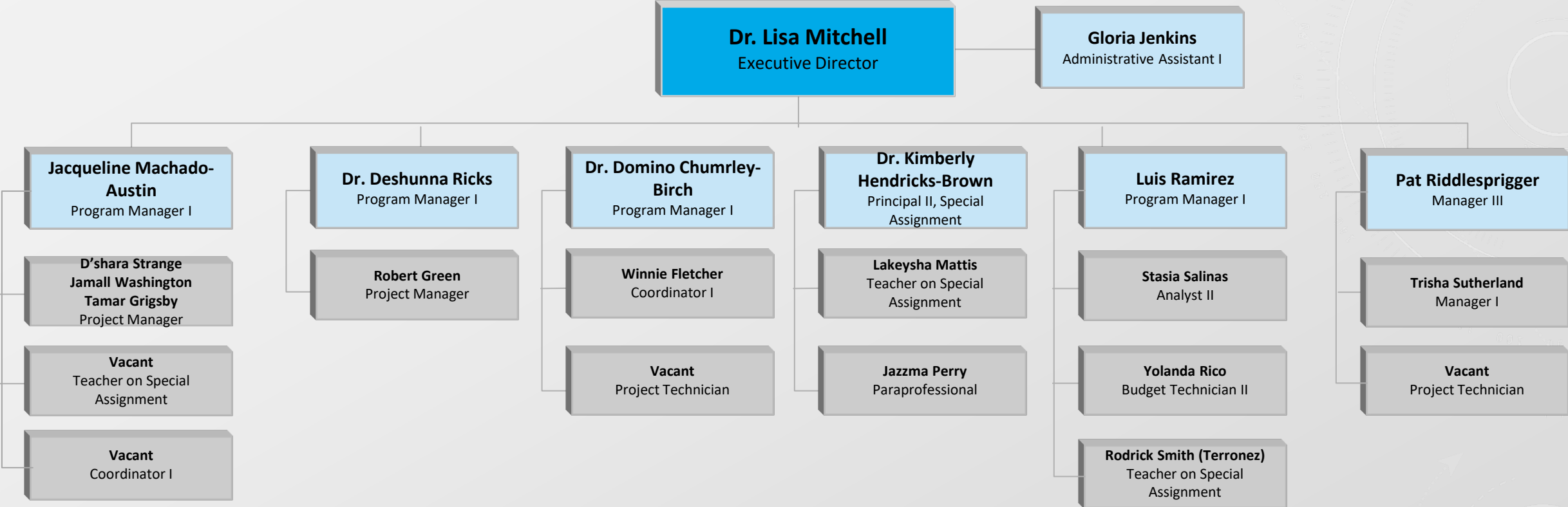


Date: 12/15/23

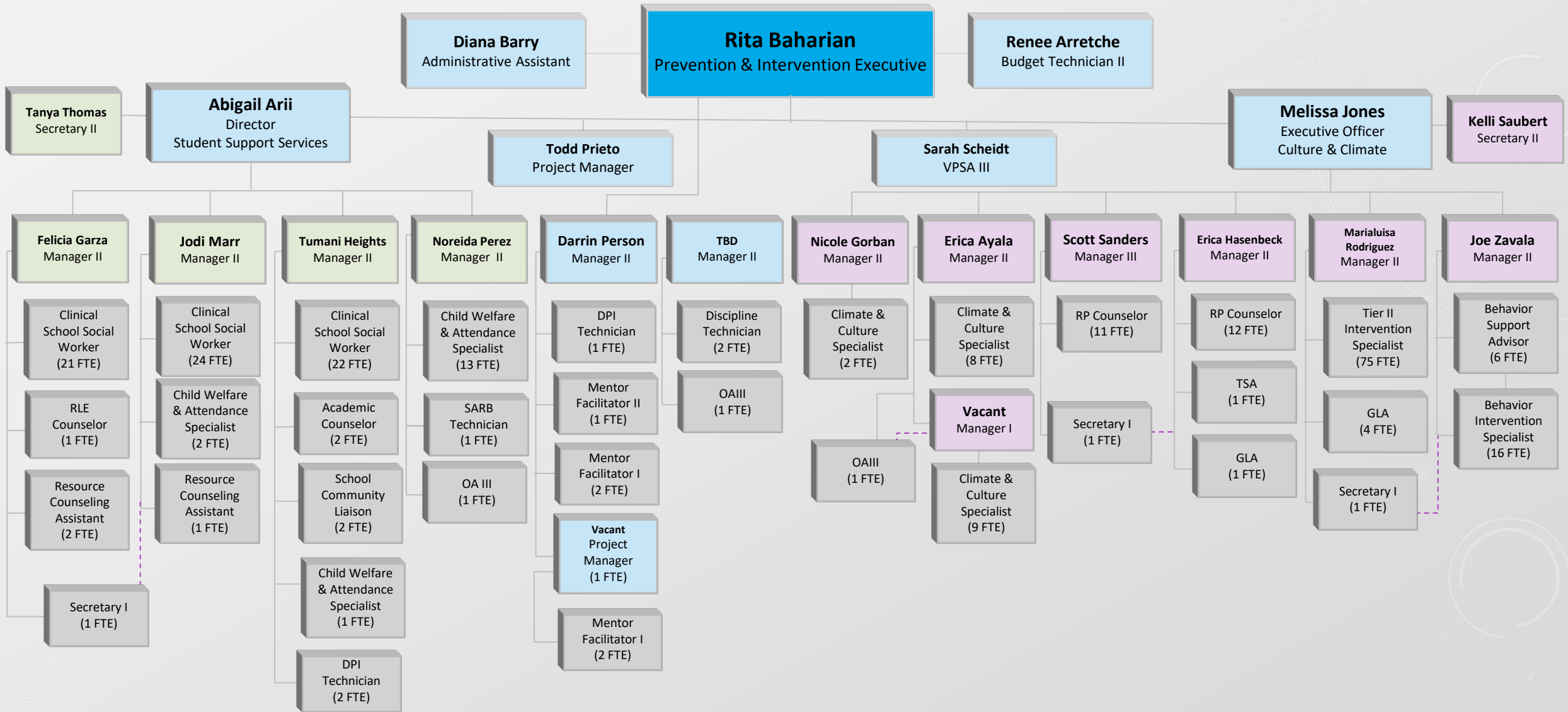
DIVISION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION – 457-3895



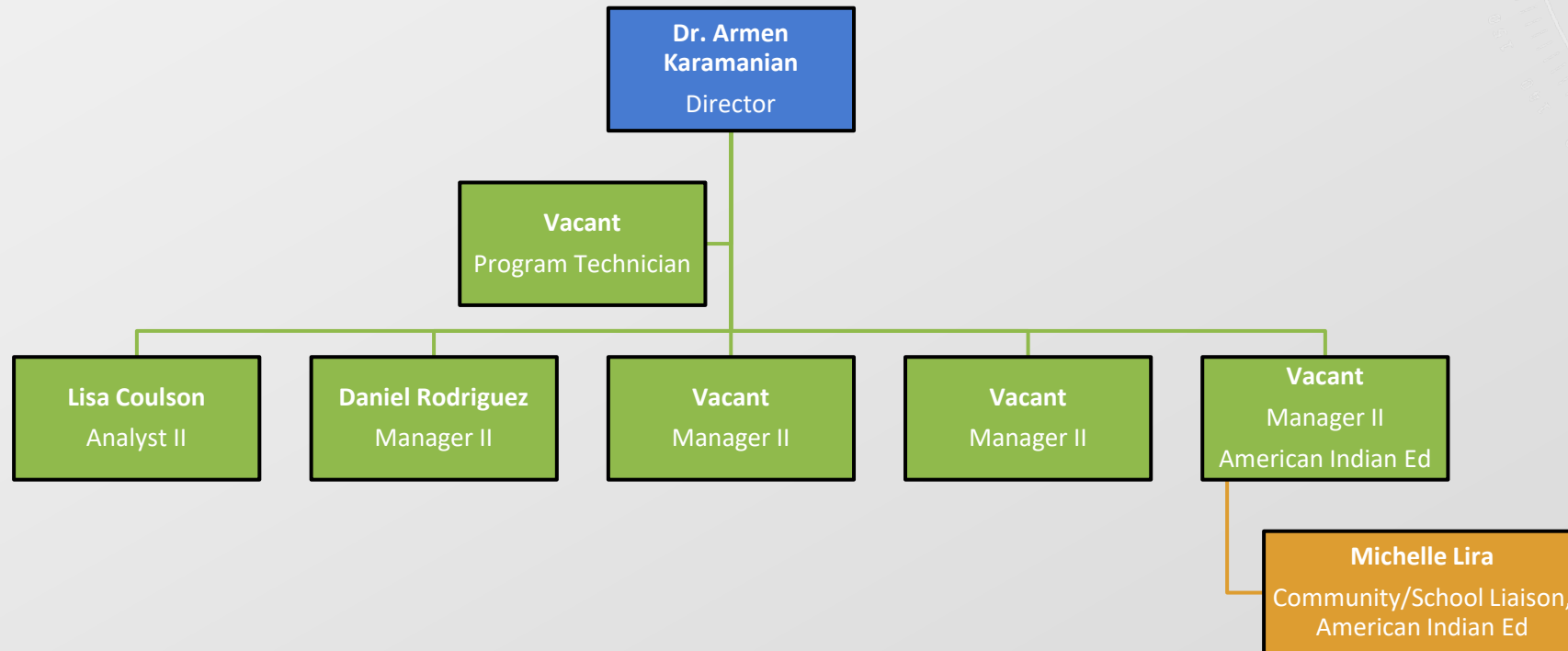
OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ACADEMIC ACCELERATION - (559)457-3728



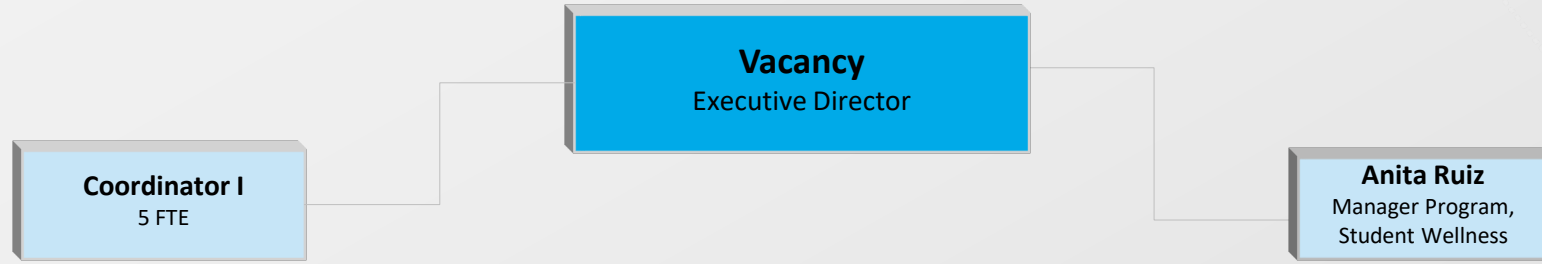
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION (559) 457-3340



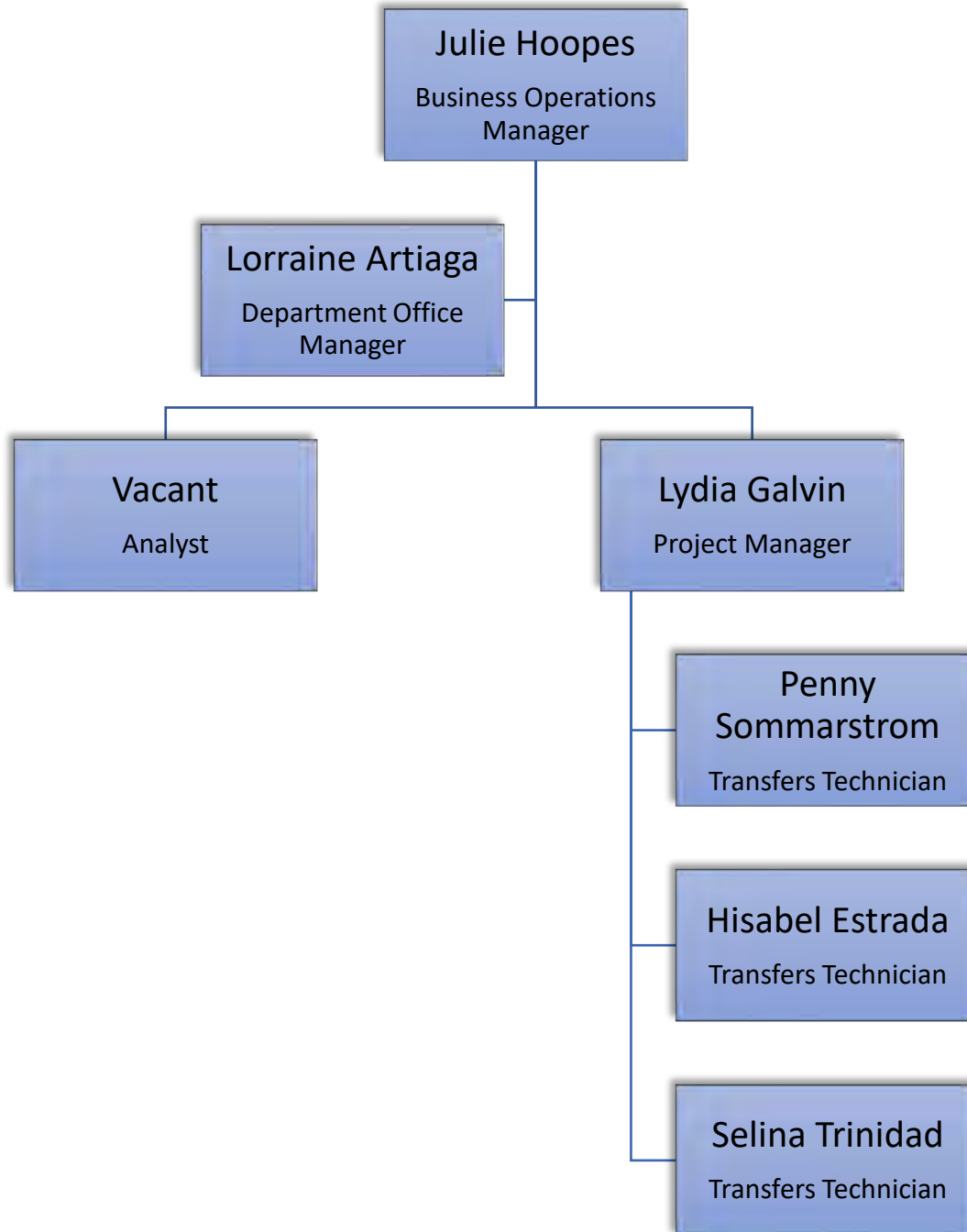
DEPARTMENT OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – 457-3471




Transfers Department 248-7538



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: Marie Williams, Ed.D., Instructional Superintendent
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3731

Regarding: Meeting on the Expulsion Process with Sunnyside Region Trustee

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board information regarding the Sunnyside region trustee expulsion information meeting held on Friday, December 08, 2023, at Terronez Middle School.

The meeting was attended by several district departments including Prevention and Intervention (DPI); Analysis, Measurement and Assessment (AMA); and School Leadership, Sunnyside and Kings Canyon middle school site leadership and Trustee Valerie Davis. The purpose of the meeting was to present an overview of the district's expulsion process, review disaggregated suspension and expulsion trend data, visit classrooms, and receive input to inform next steps in reducing rates of exclusionary school discipline and enhancing measurable and effective student support.

The following observations were made regarding the classroom walks:

- Students were engaged and encouraged by the teacher when they did not want to do work.
- Students were passionate about the learning in which they were engaged.
- Students had a choice in how they wanted to learn (i.e., laptop, paper, and pencil).
- Students were observed annotating text to ensure comprehension.

The following feedback was noted regarding the classroom walks:

- How are we creating a positive physical learning environment?
- Classroom walls should reflect student work and who they are.
- Students would benefit from behavioral expectations posted in the classroom, so they know how to conduct themselves.
- Students would benefit from learning targets posted in the classroom, so they know what they are learning.

Terronez Middle School has been working to refine their Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) structures and has made significant progress towards equitable outcomes concerning student behavior management.

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Billy Chan at 457-6168.


Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 12/15/23

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: Marie Williams, Ed.D., Instructional Superintendent
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: December 15, 2023

Phone Number: 457-3731

Regarding: Interpreting Services for Newcomers

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board an update on language interpretation services provided to newcomer students through the English Learner Services Department.

Newcomer students who have been in the country for less than six months have received between eight to forty hours of interpretation support at their respective school sites. This temporary support aims to equip newcomers with the necessary help to succeed as they adjust and transition to their new school environment. This support prioritizes less commonly spoken languages in our system, including, but not limited to, Arabic, Armenian, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu.

As of December 11, 2023, the approved agreement allocation amount was exceeded. In February 2024, English Learner Services will be requesting an amendment to the current agreement to cover the amount exceeded. We will also review the approved vendor list and select a vendor that will be able to provide this service. Our current vendor did not complete the Request for Qualification (RFQ) process and will no longer be able to provide this service.

At this time, staff needing interpretation support for newcomers that meet the criteria noted above can submit a request using the link as follows [Translation and Interpretation Services Department | Fresno Unified School District](#).

If you have questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Erica Piedra at 457-3928.

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



Date: 12/15/23