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BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – JANUARY 12, 2024

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
January 05, 2023

OPERATIONAL SERVICES – Paul Idsvoog, Chief Officer

OS-1 Paul Rosencrans Electric/Clean School Bus Update

Fresno Unified School District
Board Communication

BC Number S-1

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

Date: January 12, 2024
Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Attended the Californians for Civic Learning Executive Committee Meeting
- Held dinner with McLane Hmong Dance Teams to recognize their performance at CSBA
- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Attended CART Board Meeting
- Participated in briefing on Governor Newsom's 2024-25 Budget with the Department of Finance
- Attended the Principals Operational Team Meeting
- Attended the Kremen Administrative Leadership Meeting
- Spoke at the CSUF Journey to Success Event
- Met with the Laotian-American Community of Fresno
- Attended Martin Luther King Jr. event at Fresno City Hall

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



Date: 01/12/24

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: January 12, 2024

Phone Number: 457-3907



Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for January 05, 2024

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 January 05, 2024 are attached and include the following articles:

- New Laws for 2024 – January 03, 2024
- California Legislature Starts 2024 Session with Big Budget Deficit and Big Protest – January 03, 2024
- California Democrats Face Tough Year at the Capitol. What to Watch as Lawmakers Return to Work – January 03, 2024

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: 01/12/24



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: January 5, 2024

TO: Robert G. Nelson
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

Legislature Returns From Holiday Break

On Wednesday, the Legislature officially gaveled in for the final year of the 2023-24 legislative session. The two floor sessions they held this week before returning to their districts for the weekend were brief and not substantive. When they return next week, they will have a chance to respond to Governor Gavin Newsom's 2024-25 State Budget proposal and continue to introduce legislation. They likely will not begin to do any policy committee or budget subcommittee work until late January or early February unless the Governor proposes an early action package.

Governor Newsom to Unveil 2024-25 State Budget Proposal Next Week

Governor Newsom is required to release his proposed 2024-25 State Budget by next Wednesday, January 10, 2024.

With the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) projecting that California faces a \$68 billion budget deficit heading into the 2024-25 fiscal year, we will be looking for the following education issues when Governor Newsom introduces his 2024-25 State Budget proposal next week:

- **Budget Deficit**—Will the Newsom Administration's projected budget deficit align with the LAO projection?
- **Proposition 98**—The LAO *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. Will Newsom retain the current Proposition 98 levels for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years, or will he reduce the funding to align to the minimum guarantee?
- **Rainy Day Fund and Proposition 98 Reserve**—Will the Administration state their intent to declare a budget emergency and tap into the state's Rainy Day Fund and/or the Proposition 98 Reserve?
- **COLA**—How will the Administration's statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) estimate compare with the LAO's 1.27% estimate?

- **LCFF**—Will the Governor commit to fully funding the statutory COLA for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and will he propose any changes to the formula?
- **Categorical Programs**—Will Governor Newsom propose to apply the statutory COLA to the K-12 and community college categorical programs? Will the Governor introduce any new programs despite the projected budget deficit?
- **Reductions**—The LAO estimates that the state has at least \$8 billion in one-time and temporary spending in 2024-25 that could be pulled back to help address the budget problem. Will the Governor propose clawing back some of that \$8 billion to mitigate the budget deficit?

We will provide more information about what is in the Governor’s State Budget proposal in subsequent *Sacramento Updates* over the next several weeks and will provide updates on the proposals as they begin to be vetted by legislative budget subcommittees.

Leilani Aguinaldo

New Laws for 2024

By Kyle Hyland
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*
January 3, 2024

Over the fall, School Services of California Inc. highlighted the most important bills signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in his fifth year in office that will affect education in 2024 and beyond.

As we enter into the new year, we wanted to give you a refresher of some of the more significant bills affecting local educational agencies (LEAs) that officially went into effect on January 1, 2024:

- Assembly Bill (AB) 248 (Mathis, Statutes of 2023) eliminates obsolete and offensive terminology for students with disabilities throughout the health and safety code and the welfare and institutions code.
- AB 446 (Quirk-Silva, Statutes of 2023) defines handwriting, in the adopted course of study for grades 1-6, to include cursive and joined italics.
- AB 452 (Addis, Statutes of 2023) 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 472 (Wicks, Statutes of 2023) requires districts to pay a classified employee their full compensation upon returning to service for the district from a period of involuntary leave of absence following a finding in favor of the employee.
- AB 483 (Muratsuchi, Statutes of 2023) modifies and imposes new requirements related to timelines, reporting, technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, and guidance for the Local Education Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program.
- AB 557 (Hart, Statutes of 2023) eliminates the sunset date on provisions of law allowing local agencies to use teleconferencing without complying with specified Brown Act requirements during a proclaimed state of emergency.
- AB 873 (Berman, Statutes of 2023) requires the Instructional Quality Commission to consider incorporating the Model Library Standards and media literacy content into the English language arts/English language development curriculum framework when it is next revised.
- AB 1503 (Lee, Statutes of 2023) extends the excused absence provision for a student to attend a religious retreat from four hours, or a half-day, to one full day.
- AB 1722 (Dahle, Statutes of 2023) 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.
- Senate Bill (SB) 10 (Cortese, Statutes of 2023) requires school safety plans serving students in grades 7-12 to include a protocol for responding to an opioid overdose.

- SB 274 (Skinner, Statutes of 2023) extends the prohibition against the suspension of pupils enrolled in grades 6-8 for willful defiance to July 1, 2029, and prohibits the suspension of pupils enrolled in grades 9-12 for willful defiance until July 1, 2029.
- SB 348 (Skinner, Statutes of 2023) requires schools to provide students with adequate time to eat following guidelines established by the California Department of Education (CDE).
- SB 494 (Newman, Statutes of 2023) 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.
- SB 515 (Stern, Statutes of 2023) limits the cost of complying with the requirement to provide an accessible path of travel to a free-standing, open-sided shade structure project to 20% of the adjusted construction cost, as defined, of the shade structure project.
- SB 616 (Gonzalez, Statutes of 2023) amends the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act to guarantee five paid sick days per year for employees.
- SB 848 (Rubio, Statutes of 2023) requires employers to provide eligible employees with up to five days of reproductive loss leave following a reproductive loss event.

There are also a number of measures that Governor Newsom signed that became statute on January 1, 2024, but their provisions or requirements do not take effect until a later date. The significant bills that fit this mold include the following:

- AB 5 (Zbur, Statutes of 2023) requires LEAs to provide at least one hour of training annually to all certificated staff, beginning with the 2025-26 school year through the 2029-30 school year, on cultural competency in supporting LGBTQ+ students.
- AB 10 (Lowenthal, Statutes of 2023) requires the CDE, by June 30, 2025, to 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 230 (Reyes, Statutes of 2023) expands the requirement that schools serving students in grades 6-12 stock specified restrooms with menstrual products to include schools serving students in grades 3-5 beginning with the 2024-25 school year.
- AB 579 (Ting, Statutes of 2023) requires, by January 1, 2035, 100% of all newly purchased or contracted school buses of an LEA to be zero-emission vehicles.
- AB 721 (Valencia, Statutes of 2023) repeals, on January 1, 2027, 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.
- AB 723 (Quirk-Silva, Statutes of 2023) requires, beginning with the 2024-25 school year, a nonpublic, nonsectarian school 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 897 (McCarty, Statutes of 2023) requires, beginning July 1, 2024, adult education teachers to attain permanent employee status after completing a probationary period akin to general education teachers.
- AB 1228 (Holden, Statutes of 2023) implements a \$20.00 minimum wage for national fast-food chains in California beginning April 1, 2024.
- AB 1273 (Bonta, Statutes of 2023) requires the CDE to convene the Classified Employee Staffing Ratio Workgroup by December 31, 2024, and for the workgroup to recommend staffing ratios per identified grouping of classified assignments to the Legislature by December 31, 2025.
- SB 88 (Skinner, Statutes of 2023) establishes, beginning July 1, 2025, or upon the expiration of an LEA's transportation contract, whichever is later, new requirements for drivers who are compensated to provide school-related transportation services to students whether they are employed or contracted by an LEA.
- SB 291 (Newman, Statutes of 2023) 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.
- SB 760 (Newman, Statutes of 2023) requires LEAs to provide at least one all-gender restroom for pupil use at each of its school sites by July 1, 2026.
- SB 765 (Portantino, Statutes of 2023) temporarily, from July 1, 2024, through July 1, 2026, 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 from service during the fiscal year ending in the previous calendar year.
- SB 857 (Laird, Statutes of 2023) requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), by July 1, 2024, to convene an advisory task force to identify the statewide needs of LGBTQ+ pupils and report its findings to the Legislature, SSPI, and Governor by January 1, 2026.

Some measures, such as urgency bills, took effect immediately upon Governor Newsom's signature. The following bills signed by the Governor last fall went into effect when they were signed:

- AB 1078 (Jackon, Statutes of 2023) makes various changes to the requirements on local school governing boards regarding the adoption of instructional materials for use in schools, including a provision that prohibits a governing board from disallowing the use of an existing textbook, other instructional material, or curriculum that contains inclusive and diverse perspectives.
- SB 432 (Cortese, Statutes of 2023) 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.
- SB 531 (Ochoa Bogh, Statutes of 2023) exempts contracts for work-based learning from current requirements related to fingerprinting but preserves student safety by ensuring that at least one adult employee at the workplace that supervises the student is fingerprinted and that school staff visit the workplace at least once every three weeks.

Lawmakers return to Sacramento today, January 3, 2024, to begin their work on the final year of the 2023-24 Legislative Session. We will cover bills as they are introduced by the Legislature and make their way through the legislative process in our “Top Legislative Issues” series.

Note: While there will be many issues on the docket for the Legislature this year, the top issue will be how to solve the \$68 billion budget shortfall.

California Legislature Starts 2024 Session with Big Budget Deficit and Big Protest

By Jeanne Kuang and Sameea Kamal
CalMatters
January 3, 2024

California lawmakers gaveled in today for the 2024 legislative session with plenty to do, but scant cash to go around — and protesters supporting a ceasefire in Gaza prompting a quick adjournment.

Health care, housing, schools and environmental programs will jockey for lawmakers’ attention — and state money — as they face the prospect of plugging a \$68 billion hole in the budget for 2024-25. Legislative budget analysts have identified \$10 billion in cuts in one-time spending and dipping into \$24 billion in reserves.

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, an Encino Democrat who just took over as chairperson of the budget committee, said the deficit is likely to impact everything the Legislature does this year.

“It’s going to require us to make some tough choices. But that’s what government is about — making tough choices,” he told *CalMatters*. “Our top priority is going to be to protect vulnerable communities.”

That includes social services and classroom funding, as well as protecting recent investments in climate and homelessness programs, he said.

Senate Budget Chairperson Nancy Skinner, an Oakland Democrat, said her goal is to avoid cuts that “will create harm for people,” and instead modify new programs that haven’t started yet. Delaying planned new spending was one of the strategies the state employed to close a more than \$30 billion deficit last year; it’s unclear whether that will be enough this year.

Gov. Gavin Newsom will help frame the debate when he unveils his initial budget proposal next week. He rebuffed a Dec. 14 call from Assembly Republicans to call a special session focused on the budget deficit, or to take further actions other than some spending freezes. His Department of Finance spokesperson H.D. Palmer declined to comment.

Outgoing Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, a San Diego Democrat, said she expects Newsom’s administration to both delay programs and propose cuts, and has told colleagues not to expect any new spending.

“That is pretty much the mood of the moment,” she said. “Be prepared for the worst, and understand we’re not going to be talking about any new expenditures, and we may have to really slow down some rolling out of resources for programs.”

The deficit is partly a consequence of California’s progressive tax system that relies heavily on the incomes and capital gains of very wealthy residents — producing revenues that infamously seesaw alongside the booms and busts of the stock market.

When the incomes of the rich soared amid low interest rates during the pandemic, taxes on their earnings and federal COVID-19 aid filled the state’s coffers with a nearly \$100 billion surplus. Then interest rate hikes slowed down the housing market and investments in the tech sector. That, combined with delayed tax filings caused by last year’s winter storms, has prompted revenues now to come in short.

This year’s projection by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office is the state’s largest deficit to date, though not by its percentage of the overall budget. And the state is in better shape to handle it than during the Great Recession, having put billions of dollars into reserves since then.

The situation is likely to prompt some discussion of whether to stabilize the state’s revenue sources. In the past, proposals to bring in revenue through taxing business services have been seen as too politically unpopular.

“We need structural tax reform,” Sen. Scott Wiener, a San Francisco Democrat, wrote on social media Tuesday. “We need to broaden out our tax base to make it more stable.”

Wiener, through a spokesperson, declined to comment on whether he will introduce legislation to do so.

Such a proposal, Atkins said, would be unlikely to go anywhere, “even though we all think there should be a different” system. She said the state’s creation of a rainy day fund after the Great Recession will be enough to “manage through this deficit,” leaving lawmakers less incentive to back any new taxes or changes to the tax structure.

“I’m not optimistic that it gets done,” she said. “If California doesn’t withstand this crisis, then I would say there’s the leverage to do something.”

Gabriel said that he would consider all the options for addressing the shortfall, although he hadn’t heard any serious conversations around raising taxes.

“Certainly, that’s something that some people may propose and want to talk about,” he said. “But I think the first step here is to try to understand how we can address the current shortfall with reserves and with some of the other options we have at our disposal.”

Budget cuts are also likely to pit parts of the Legislature’s Democratic supermajority — and the interest groups they represent that rely on state funding — against each other. For some Republicans, it’s already an opportunity to float cuts to programs they oppose.

Assemblymember Bill Essayli, a Riverside Republican, introduced a bill today to roll back funding for California’s expansion of Medi-Cal to low-income undocumented immigrants, citing the deficit.

The expansion went into its final phase (immigrants aged 26-49) this month at a cost of \$1.2 billion this year, estimated to grow to nearly \$3 billion in the upcoming fiscal year. California years ago expanded Medi-Cal coverage for undocumented children and last year did so for seniors; Essayli's bill would cut "all taxpayer funding" for the program's coverage of undocumented immigrants. Newsom, though, told reporters in southern California that he's "committed" to the expansion.

Health spending is also expected to rise with the introduction of phased minimum wage hikes for health care workers, prompting the state to pick up some of the increases for workers in the University of California and state hospital systems, as well as increased costs in public health care.

But there's far more than the budget before lawmakers. Some other pressing issues:

Israel-Hamas war: While the state's role is limited, some lawmakers have either willingly stepped into the conversation, while others face pressure from constituents to address their concerns, whether that's advocating for the release of hostages still held by Hamas, or calling for a ceasefire. Shortly after the Assembly gaveled in, dozens of protesters from Jewish Voice for Peace and IfNotNow began singing in support of a ceasefire in Gaza.

Calling the action "out of order," lawmakers quickly called a recess, emptied the chamber and adjourned soon after until Thursday. Outside in the rotunda, more than 100 protesters chanted, citing a national activist group's calculation that California taxpayers contribute about \$600 million to U.S. military aid to Israel, and calling for the money to be put toward state priorities instead.

Speaking to reporters, Wiener and Gabriel, co-chairpersons of the Legislative Jewish Caucus, said they support the right to demonstrate but criticized the protesters for disrupting the session. The caucus has called for bills to address what it says is a rise in antisemitism in schools and universities after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel.

Retail theft: Assemblymember Carlos Villapudua, a Stockton Democrat, introduced a referendum to revise the much-debated Proposition 47. He said his proposal would fix "unintended outcomes" of the measure approved by voters in 2014. Specifically, it would change the \$950 threshold for petty theft and shoplifting to be charged as a felony, which he said has "fueled a market of petty and repeat offenses with zero-to-low accountability." Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas already created a special committee to look into retail theft, but the Legislature has rejected GOP moves to repeal Prop. 47 altogether. Politicians in recent years have seized on rising voter concerns of theft, though late last year a national retail group retracted an oft-cited claim about how much stores had lost from "organized" shoplifting.

Reparations: Last year, a state task force released a final report tallying up for the Legislature what it would take to offer reparations to Black Californians descended from enslaved people. Lawmakers are now expected to introduce bills to make those recommendations actually happen. Sen. Steven Bradford, an Inglewood Democrat, already filed one last year to create a new state agency to administer reparations. But it won't be an easy road ahead, despite the backing of Democratic lawmakers and Newsom to create the task force. The report put an \$800 billion price tag — two and a half times this year's state budget — on compensating eligible Black residents for the enduring harms of discrimination in areas like policing and housing. So far most lawmakers and Newsom have demurred on supporting the recommendations.

Artificial intelligence: More proposals are expected to address rising concerns about artificial intelligence and its applications, including in campaigns and elections. Legislators will consider bills to create a new

regulatory framework for AI systems and to give entertainment artists some authority to nullify contracts over the use of their “digital replicas.” Today, Chula Vista Democratic Sen. Steve Padilla introduced a bill to “establish safety, privacy, and nondiscrimination standards” for any AI companies with state contracts. A law passed last year requires the state’s department of technology to create a “comprehensive inventory” of “high-risk automated decision systems” by September.

Wildfire insurance: Legislators failed to fix the home insurance market before adjourning last year’s session, after several major insurance companies decided to stop selling new homeowner policies. The state’s Department of Insurance is working on new regulations, but such rules may not be enacted until 2026.

Maternity wards: Citing CalMatters’ reporting about the alarming rate at which California maternity wards are shutting down, Assemblymember Akilah Weber, a La Mesa Democrat, is introducing a measure for additional state review, including how a closure would impact the nearby community.

Note: The 2024 election will play a critical role in what issues lawmakers prioritize this year, as many will be vying to keep their seats.

California Democrats Face Tough Year at the Capitol. What to Watch as Lawmakers Return to Work

By Lindsey Holden
The Sacramento Bee
January 3, 2024

California lawmakers face all sorts of political brushfires as they return to work Wednesday — the budget shortfall is huge, crime is on the minds of constituents, and voters start casting ballots in a month.

Assembly members and senators come back to a \$68 billion budget gap while trying to look as attractive as possible ahead of the March 5 primary election. Voters will start receiving their mail-in ballots in about a month.

Democrats now have huge majorities in the Legislature. But they’re going to have to endure Republican attacks around crime, drugs and cost of living issues. And Gov. Gavin Newsom’s priorities, and what to many seems a shifting political philosophy, will undergird everything.

Here are five story lines that will affect lawmakers arriving at the Capitol for another year.

An enormous budget gap

The budget will be top of mind for lawmakers, who will be involved in fixing a growing budget problem caused by a late-2023 tax revenue shortfall.

Assembly and Senate budget leaders in December told *The Sacramento Bee* “everything is on the table” to address the lack of funds, including spending cuts and dipping into reserves.

Newsom will unveil his budget proposal by Jan. 10. After that, his administration will begin negotiating a financial plan with Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, D-Hollister, and Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, D-San Diego.

In addition to developing budget solutions, lawmakers must tailor their bills and political expectations to fit a leaner year. Republicans have already been pushing belt-tightening, urging Democrats to pull back on priorities such as expanding Medi-Cal and providing reparations for Black descendants of slaves.

But Democrats are hoping to avoid cutting funds for social services and schools.

The 2024 election

Many lawmakers, especially Assembly members, will be on the 2024 ballot.

That means every vote and public statement will be subject to a special amount of scrutiny as opponents hunt for campaign ad material. Even 2023 decisions could pop up as voters begin to return ballots.

Election concerns likely factored into Democrats' decision to back a bill from Sen. Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield, adding child sex trafficking to the state's "three strikes" list. The controversial policy increases prison sentences for those repeatedly convicted of felonies.

The need to attract Republicans in purple districts likely motivated two Central Valley Democrats, Marie Alvarado-Gil of Jackson and Jasmeet Bains of Delano, to vote against a Newsom plan last year to hold oil companies accountable for high gasoline prices.

A handful of longtime lawmakers are also in their last year in the Legislature as they term out or pursue local or national offices, leaving their seats open.

In Sacramento, Assemblyman Kevin McCarty is running for mayor, creating a competitive race to represent the city in the Capitol.

Assembly and Senate leadership shakeups

Both legislative bodies will have new leaders for most of the year. That brings a shift in priorities and committee assignments, which could spark fresh policy-making approaches.

Rivas took charge of the Assembly on June 30, after a bitter and extended leadership battle with outgoing Speaker Anthony Rendon, D-Lakewood. But he began his tenure late in the legislative year, after budget negotiations and before a month-long summer recess.

January will mark the true start of his speakership, although he began making significant leadership and committee chair changes in November. Perhaps most significantly, the powerful Assembly Appropriations and Budget committees will get new chairs for the first time in years.

In the Senate, Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, will succeed termed-out Pro Tem Atkins on Feb. 5 after a quick and amicable leadership transition. McGuire will have more involvement in the budget and legislative priority-setting than Rivas initially did, but it remains to be seen whether he plans to make major Senate-side committee changes.

GOP pressure on crime and drugs

Republicans have little power in a Legislature dominated by a Democratic supermajority, but GOP lawmakers managed to exert some influence over crime and drug policy in 2023.

In the spring, former Assembly Public Safety Committee Chair Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, ended up holding a special hearing for fentanyl-related legislation after Republicans publicly pressured him.

Bills to increase penalties for drug-related crimes did not get out of the committee, but the hearing and appearances from families who had lost loved ones to fentanyl overdoses were notable.

The success of Grove's child sex trafficking bill also stirred controversy in the Capitol, and it could spur similar bills adding new three-strikes crimes.

This year, Newsom already announced he plans to push legislation to curb xylazine trafficking and use, an indication he sees the importance of being proactive on the issue. Xylazine is a strong sedative often mixed with fentanyl.

Rivas' creation of an Assembly Select Committee on Retail Theft further shows Democrats' desire to address crime before Republicans use it to hit them.

Newsom's shifting politics and priorities

Newsom in 2023 made it crystal-clear that he intends to seek a place on the national political stage, which appeared to affect his political decision-making and will continue to do so moving forward.

He created a political action committee to support Democratic causes, took a tour of Republican states and debated Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on national television. Newsom continues to deny he is seeking the presidency in 2024, but his actions suggest a future bid.

This may have motivated the governor to take a more cautious approach when it came to bill-signings. In September, he vetoed a bill that would have required judges to take parents' acceptance of their children's gender identities into consideration when negotiating custody arrangements.

He also declined to sign bills that would have given unemployment pay to striking workers and workplace protections to domestic employees.

Newsom likes to remind reporters he leaves office in about three years. This, and his future ambitions, will inevitably be on his mind as he enters 2024.

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: Paul Rosencrans, Director
Cabinet Approval:

Date: January 12, 2024

Phone Number: 457-3138

Regarding: Electric/Clean School Bus Update

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board with information regarding Fresno Unified School District's clean school bus fleet and our Five-year plan to add Electric School Buses.

The district's current fleet of school buses demonstrates the district's commitment to environmentally friendly options. Notably, most of the fleet is powered by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a sustainable and environmentally conscious choice. Our fleet consists of 111 School Buses including 85 Compressed Natural Gas (76.58%) and 26 Clean Diesel Buses (23.42%).

The district has been awarded a grant administered by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for six Clean School Buses which will be assigned to routes serving South Central Fresno. The new Electric Vehicle (EV) buses will take approximately one year to arrive. The grant includes funding for up to 17 charging stations which aligns with the District's Five-year plan to add electric school buses.

To further our commitment to provide environmentally friendly transportation options. The district has authorized First Student to apply for an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Electric Vehicle grant for buses to be used in service to Fresno Unified. First Student will handle the application and all the work involved with bringing in the buses and charging infrastructure to their site.

In conclusion, Fresno Unified School District is committed to a sustainable and environmentally conscious transportation system.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication, or require additional information, please contact Paul Idsvoog at 457-3134.

Approved by Superintendent
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 01/12/24