

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

**BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – MARCH 01, 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, Ed.D. Superintendent Calendar Highlights

**BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES – Patrick Jensen, Chief Financial Officer**

BFS-1 Kim Kelstrom School Services Weekly Update Reports for  
February 23, 2024

**ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS – Wendy McCulley, Chief Officer**

E&EP-1 Wendy McCulley Partnerships Summary #2

**HUMAN RESOURCES – David Chavez, Chief Officer**

HR-1 Kimberly Villescaz Wallace Equity-Centered Principal Initiative

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

OS-1 Paul Rosencrans Transportation Plan for 2024/25

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: March 01, 2024

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

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

- Spoke at the Principal's Meeting
- Met with Designated School Principals
- Met with Executive Cabinet
- Held interviews for Executive Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Attended the Foundation for Fresno Unified Schools Board Meeting
- Recorded a PSA for Mothers Against Bullying (MAB)
- Attended the President's Commission on Teacher Education Meeting at Fresno State
- Celebrated Read Across America at Birney and Bakman schools
- Attended the Labor Management Partnership Meeting
- Attending the "Every Child is a Reader" Celebration

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D. \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 03/01/24

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number BFS-1**


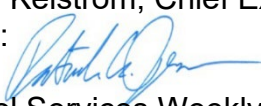
From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education

Date: March 01, 2024

Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Chief Executive

Phone Number: 457-3907

Cabinet Approval:

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Reports for February 23, 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 February 23, 2024 are attached and include the following articles:

- January 2024 State Cash Receipts Below Forecast – February 20, 2024
- California's Budget Deficit Is Worse Than Anticipated – and Much Worse Than Newsom Projected – February 20, 2024
- CTA-Sponsored Legislation Would Remove One of State's Last Required Tests for Teachers – February 23, 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: 03/01/24



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: February 23, 2024

TO: Robert G. Nelson  
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

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### Bill Introduction Deadline

Last Friday, February 16, 2024, was the deadline for legislators to introduce bills to be considered for the second and final year of the 2023-24 Legislative Session. The Capitol community has been sifting through the more than 2,200 measures that have been introduced for 2024.

Policy bills must be in print for 30 calendar days before they can be heard in a committee. With the introduction deadline passing, bills will be assigned to policy committees, and hearings will begin in March.

Over the last several *Sacramento Updates*, we have detailed a number of education bills that have been introduced. Over the course of the legislative year, culminating with Governor Gavin Newsom's action deadline of September 30, 2024, we will be using subsequent updates to highlight and provide our analysis on legislative issues that will be important for local educational agencies to follow.

### LAO Recommends Rejecting Governor Newsom's \$8 Billion Proposal

Governor Newsom's proposal to combat the \$8 billion downward revision of the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee for the 2022-23 fiscal year is facing scrutiny from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), the Legislature's nonpartisan policy and fiscal advisor.

Rather than having the \$8 billion be returned to the state, the Governor proposes no changes to the funds that have already been distributed for 2022-23 on a cash basis. This means those payments would not be offset or recouped, and K-14 districts would not be expected to make any changes in their local budgets. At the same time, however, in order to score budgetary savings, the Governor proposes to delay recognizing these payments in its budget documents.

The Governor's 2024-25 State Budget proposal does not address the misalignment between the state's cash and budget positions until future years. Starting in 2025-26, the Newsom Administration would recognize the

budgetary costs in increments of \$1.6 billion annually for five years. The payments would be scored outside of the state's Proposition 98 requirements, meaning they would add to the state's projected deficits in those years. What this means is that the Governor is proposing to revise the 2022-23 Proposition 98 minimum guarantee downwards by \$8 billion but will backfill that \$8 billion with General Fund dollars in future years.

The LAO's analysis is critical of the proposal, stating that it creates a new type of budget solution by effectively providing an interest-free loan to Proposition 98 from the General Fund side of the Budget. The LAO believes that this proposal obfuscates the true condition of the State Budget by reducing the size of the budget problem on paper and obscuring the proposed solution in the documents presented to the Legislature as part of the Governor's Budget. They argue that the proposal creates a binding obligation that magnifies the structural deficit and sets a problematic precedent.

For these reasons, the LAO is strongly recommending that the Legislature reject the proposal.

*Leilani Aguinaldo*

## January 2024 State Cash Receipts Below Forecast

By John Gray and Patti F. Herrera, EdD  
 School Services of California Inc.’s *Fiscal Report*  
 February 20, 2024

State General Fund cash receipts for the month January 2024 were almost 20% below the most recent updated Governor’s Budget forecast. The California Department of Finance’s (DOF) February 2024 *Finance Bulletin* highlighted that fiscal year-to-date cash receipts are down 4.8% below forecast, as noted in Figure 1 below. As the Governor’s Budget forecast was recently updated at the end of November 2023, the year-to-date shortfall to forecast is almost all related to the January 2024 cash receipts.

The bulk of the month’s shortfall was due largely to lower-than-expected personal income tax receipts. Withholdings were down by \$1 billion (10.8%) while estimated payments were down by almost \$4 billion (36.1%) for January. Monthly withholdings represent a more real-time indicator of economic activity while estimated payments are often more volatile and tied to stock market compensation as noted in the *Finance Bulletin*.

Both corporation and sales and use tax revenues were down slightly on both a monthly and year-to-date basis by 4.6% and 1.1%, respectively.

Figure 1: 2023-24 Comparison of Actual and Forecast Agency General Fund Revenues (Dollars in Millions) Year-to-Date through January 2024

Revenue Source	Forecast	Actual	Difference	Percent Difference
<b>Personal Income</b>	\$76,176	\$71,491	-\$4,685	-6.2%
<b>Corporation</b>	\$21,506	\$20,527	-\$980	-4.6%
<b>Sales and Use</b>	\$18,756	\$18,557	-\$199	-1.1%
<b>Total*</b>	\$121,467	\$115,586	-\$5,882	-4.8%

\*Includes other agency cash receipts

Regarding labor market conditions, the DOF noted that California’s unemployment rate rose by 0.2% in December 2023 to 5.1%. Also, 3,600 Californians dropped out of the labor force causing the labor participation rate to fall to 62.0%, a decrease of 0.2% from November 2023. The U.S. unemployment rate remained at 3.7%.

In California, construction is an important economic driver and leading economic indicator. Building activity is slowing down with the number of building permits down 2.0% from November 2023 and down 2.9% from a year ago. December 2023 year-to-date permits of 56,000 single-family homes and 54,000 multi-family units were down 6.0% and up 0.6%, respectively.

With the Governor’s Budget forecast barely a month old, January’s revenues are not encouraging when compared to the recently revised forecast. While it is too early to tell, we will be monitoring and reporting as we head towards the Governor’s May Revision.



*Note: The LAO's updated revenue forecast now estimates that the \$58 billion budget deficit that they estimated back in November has ballooned to \$73 billion.*

## **California's Budget Deficit Is Worse Than Anticipated — and Much Worse Than Newsom Projected**

By Andrew Sheeler and Lindsey Holden  
*The Sacramento Bee*  
February 20, 2024

The tug-of-war between California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office over the state's projected budget deficit took a new turn Tuesday, when the LAO announced a revised shortfall of \$73 billion — \$15 billion more than previously forecast, and significantly more than the \$38 billion gap that Newsom has estimated.

The LAO reported that recent revenue collection data “reflect even further weakness” for the state's financial outcome.

“All else equal, this means the budget problem is likely to be higher” when the governor gives his revised projection of the state's finances in May, the LAO said in a Tuesday update.

The LAO said that the actual budget shortfall will depend on a variety of factors, such as mandatory Proposition 98 spending on schools and community colleges.

“Roughly, a \$24 billion erosion in revenues corresponds to a \$15 billion increase in the budget problem. This would expand the \$58 billion estimated deficit to \$73 billion under our updated revenue forecast,” the LAO report read.

That means lawmakers are going to have to find “new budget solutions” to ensure a balanced budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The LAO said solutions could include increasing revenue, reducing either — or both — one-time and ongoing spending, and exploring the possibility of cost shifts or dipping into reserves.

The LAO listed several areas of one-time and temporary spending where cuts can be made, totaling nearly \$16 billion. Categories of cuts include business and labor, criminal justice, education, health and human services, housing and homelessness, resources and environment and transportation.

H.D. Palmer, a spokesman for Newsom's Department of Finance, emphasized the state is still forecast to see more than \$51 billion in income and corporate tax receipts.

“No one can say today with certainty how those numbers may change the budget estimate of a \$38 billion shortfall,” Palmer said in a statement. “A responsible step would be for the Legislature to act now on the early action budget measures needed for \$8 billion in solutions to help close this gap.”

Newsom during his January budget presentation suggested this move, which would mean opening up last year's budget to make changes to the existing funding plan.

Department of Finance director Joe Stephenshaw said in January one early action item would involve increasing the managed care organization tax by \$1.5 billion to help fund a Medi-Cal expansion for

undocumented immigrants. Health insurers pay the MCO tax, and the federal government must approve any increases.

Senate Republicans on Tuesday afternoon released a statement expressing concern about how Newsom and the Democratic-controlled Legislature are handling the budget.

“Democratic legislators and the governor’s continued fiscal irresponsibility is troubling, as evidenced by their unchecked spending and the alarming growth of the state’s budget problem,” said Sen. Roger Niello, R-Fair Oaks, in a statement.

Niello vice-chairs the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee. He called for “a course correction” and a “renewed commitment” to a responsible budget.

Senate Minority Leader Brian Jones, R-Santee, blasted Newsom for “trying to fool the public that the deficit is \$38 billion.”

“How are we supposed to balance the budget when our governor can’t even admit the true size of the deficit his administration racked up?” Jones said in a statement.

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, D-Hollister, said during a Tuesday press conference the budget gap is his “biggest concern.”

The Assembly Democratic Caucus has been meeting to develop strategies to deal with the spending shortfall, and Rivas emphasized budget negotiations are still in their early stages. Cynthia Moreno, Rivas’s press secretary, later said conversations about early legislative budget action are already underway.

“The governor’s budget has been more optimistic than the LAO,” Rivas said. “And I sure hope that the governor is right. We would all like to be wrong when it comes to the deficit. And that’s why I firmly believe that it’s always better to plan for the worst.”

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*Note: The California Teachers Association sponsored measure Senate Bill 1263 (Newman, D-Fullerton) would eliminate all performance assessments teachers are required to pass, including one for literacy that it supported three years ago.*

## **CTA-Sponsored Legislation Would Remove One of State’s Last Required Tests for Teachers**

*State could retain unpopular written literacy test*

By Diana Lambert  
*EdSource*  
February 23, 2024

Newly proposed legislation sponsored by the California Teachers Association would eliminate all performance assessments teachers are required to pass, including one for literacy that it supported three years ago. The result could leave in place an unpopular written test that the literacy performance assessment was designed to replace.



Senate Bill 1263, authored by state Sen. Josh Newman, D-Fullerton, would do away with the California Teaching Performance Assessment, known as the CalTPA, through which teachers demonstrate their competence via video clips of instruction and written reflections on their practice.

Eliminating the assessment will increase the number of effective teachers in classrooms, as the state continues to contend with a teacher shortage, said Newman, chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

“One key to improving the educator pipeline is removing barriers that may be dissuading otherwise talented and qualified prospective people from pursuing a career as an educator,” Newman said in a statement to EdSource.

The bill also would do away with a literacy performance assessment of teachers and oversight of literacy instruction in teacher preparation programs mandated by Senate Bill 488, authored by Sen. Susan Rubio, D-West Covina, in 2021.

The literacy performance assessment is scheduled to be piloted in the next few months. It is meant to replace the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment set to be scrapped in 2025.

### **New law could leave RICA in place**

The proposed legislation appears to leave in place a requirement that candidates for a preliminary multiple-subject or education specialist credential pass a reading instruction competence assessment, said David DeGuire, a director at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

“At this time, it is unclear what that assessment would look like, but it could be that the state continues to use the current version of the RICA,” he said.

Newman will present the legislation to the Senate Education Committee in the next few months. Discussions about whether the RICA remains in use are likely to take place during the legislative process.

Rubio recently became aware of the new legislation and had not yet discussed it with Newman.

“For three years, I worked arduously and collaboratively with a broad range of education leaders, including parent groups, teacher associations and other stakeholders to modernize a key component of our educational system that in my 17 years as a classroom teacher and school administrator I saw as counterproductive to our students’ learning,” Rubio said of Senate Bill 488.

### **Teachers union changes course**

The California Teachers Association, which originally supported Senate Bill 488, now wants all performance assessments, including the literacy performance assessment, eliminated.

“We are all scratching our heads,” said Yolie Flores, of Families in Schools, a Los Angeles-based education advocacy organization. “We were really blindsided by this (legislation), given the momentum around strengthening our teacher prep programs.”

The results of a survey of almost 1,300 CTA members last year convinced the state teachers union to push for the elimination of the CalTPA, said Leslie Littman, vice president of the union. Teachers who took the

survey said the test caused stress, took away time that could have been used to collaborate with mentors and for teaching, and did not prepare them to meet the needs of students, she said.

“I think what we were probably not cognizant of at that time, and it really has become very clear of late, is just how much of a burden these assessments have placed on these teacher candidates,” Littman said.

Teacher candidates would be better served if they were observed over longer periods of time, during student teaching, apprenticeships, residencies and mentorship programs, to determine if they were ready to teach, Littman said. This would also allow a mentor to counsel and support the candidate to ensure they have the required skills.

### **California joins science of reading movement**

California has joined a national effort to change how reading is being taught in schools. States nationwide are rethinking balanced literacy, which has its roots in whole language instruction or teaching children to recognize words by sight, and replacing it with a method that teaches them to decode words by sounding them out, a process known as phonics.

Smarter Balanced test scores, released last fall, show that only 46.6% of the state’s students who were tested met academic standards in English.

Last week Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, D-Baldwin Park, introduced Assembly Bill 2222, which would mandate that schools use evidence-based reading instruction. California, a “local control” state, currently only encourages school districts to incorporate fundamental reading skills, including phonics, into instruction.

“It (Newman’s SB 1263) goes against not only the movement, but everything we know from best practices, evidence, research, science, of how we need to equip new teachers and existing teachers, frankly, to teach literacy,” Flores said. “And that we would wipe it away at this very moment where we’re finally getting some traction is just very concerning.”

Lori DePole, co-director of DeCoding Dyslexia California, said the proposed legislation would cut any progress the state has made “off at the knees.”

Among her concerns is the elimination of the requirement, also authorized by Senate Bill 488, that the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing certify that teacher preparation programs are teaching literacy aligned to state standards and a provision that requires the commission to report to the state Legislature annually on how stakeholders are meeting the requirements of the law.

“It would be going away,” DePole said. “Everyone agreed with SB 488, all the supporters agreed, this was the direction California needed to go to strengthen teacher prep with respect to literacy. And before it can even be fully implemented, we’re going to do a 180 with this legislation. It makes no sense.”

Flores said teachers want to be equipped to teach reading using evidence-based techniques, but many don’t know how.

“We know that reading is the gateway, and if kids can’t read, it’s practically game over, right?” said Flores. “And we are saying with this bill that it doesn’t matter, that we don’t really need to teach and show that teachers know how to teach reading.”


## **Teacher tests replaced by coursework, degrees**

California has been moving away from standardized testing for teacher candidates for several years as the teacher shortage worsened. In July 2021, legislation gave teacher candidates the option to take approved coursework instead of the California Basic Education Skills Test, or CBEST, or the California Subject Examinations for Teachers, or CSET. In January's tentative budget, Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed eliminating the CBEST and allowing the completion of a bachelor's degree to satisfy the state's basic skills requirement.

Littman disagrees with the idea that there will be no accountability for teachers if the legislation passes. "There's always been, and will continue to be, an evaluation component for all of our teachers in this state," she said. "It just depends on what your district does and how they implement that. There's always been a system of accountability for folks."

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number E&EP-1**

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

Date: March 1, 2024

Phone Number: 457-3749

Regarding: Partnerships Summary #2

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding partnerships with Neighborhood Industries, Installnet, and A4/AANG for a virtual screening of *The Right to Read*.

For our upcoming Suit Drive during the week of March 18-22, 2024, the Office of Engagement and External Partnerships partnered with Neighborhood Industries to enhance this year's expected reach of the Suit Drive. They have agreed to assist with collection, transportation, and sorting of items. There will be two collection locations at their Neighborhood Thrift and BlkMktPlc (Black Marketplace) storefronts. Additionally, if we do not reach our goal of 5,000 collected items, they have generously offered to make up the difference in items. By comparison, our suit drive in 2023 received just over 2,000 items. We look forward to their assistance during the suit drive and with future partnership opportunities.

On February 29, 2024, The Office of Engagement and External Partnerships collaborated with the Office of African American Academic Acceleration (A4) and the African American Networking Group (AANG) to provide a free virtual screening of the film *The Right to Read*. Community members were invited to attend and used a QR code to receive the video link. Gift bags of snacks were given to families who wished to receive them and added to their experience during the film screening. Participants received a viewing guide for the film and were asked to respond to a survey seeking their thoughts about "take aways" from the film, an opportunity for questions, and suggestions for their school.

In addition, through partnership with The Foundation for Fresno Unified Schools, Installnet made a second donation of furniture which included 45 items to families such as bookcases, whiteboards, chairs, and filing cabinets. The donation has an estimated value of \$5,500. Our last giveaway to parents and families had a value of \$107,050, for a total of \$112,550 to benefit our families. On March 02, 2024, in collaboration with Parent University and the FUSD Warehouse, our families will receive the donated items.

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


Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 03/01/24

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number HR-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Kimberly Villescaz, Executive Officer,  
Leadership Development  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: March 01, 2024

Phone Number: 355-3660

Regarding: Wallace Equity-Centered Principal Pipeline Initiative

The purpose of this board communication is to provide the Board information regarding the Wallace Equity-Centered Principal Pipeline Initiative.

In the 21-22 cohort, 1 out of 21 of those applied and were admitted into Fresno Unified' s Preliminary Administrative Service Credential (PASC) Program were Black/African American. During the 22-23 cohort, 3 out of 20 Black/African American candidates applied and were admitted into the program. In the 23-24 cohort, the number increased to 6 out of 34 applied and were admitted, but 3 chose to not participate in the program for various reasons. The number further decreased in the 24-25 cohort to 1 out of 26 Black/African American aspiring leaders applying and admitted into the program.

To increase the number of Black/African American representation in Fresno Unified' s PASC Program. Men of Color in Educational Leadership in partnership with Black Educators United developed a "Representation-based Mentorship Program." This program aims to address the lack of Black/African American representation among site leaders in Fresno Unified by cultivating leadership skills that will enable our staff to thrive in their current roles and ascend to leadership positions in the future. This initiative is dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that our district's leadership reflects the rich tapestry of our community.

The program objectives include the following:

- Provide mentoring support to foster growth for current and aspiring African American leaders.
- Provide training for staff to enhance their skills to be promoted and be retained in current and new positions.
- Develop and implement succession planning specifically tailored for African Americans within the organization.
- Establish pathways for career progression leading to leadership roles.
- Deliver targeted coaching sessions to mentors, enhancing their effectiveness in guiding and supporting their mentees.
- Establish a network to connect African American staff across the district.

In implementation of the program, we are expecting to see an increase in the number of Black/African American candidates applying, accepting, and successfully completing Fresno Unified' s PASC program. Thus, increasing our efforts of creating an equity centered principal pipeline. We intend to further this program to increase the support of recruiting and retaining our Asian American Pacific Islander and Latinx aspiring leaders.

If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this communication or require additional information, please contact Kimberly Villescaz at 355-3660.


Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D. \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 03/01/24

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  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: March 01, 2024

Phone Number: 457-3134

Regarding: Transportation Plan for 2024/25

The purpose of this board communication is to provide information on the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Transportation Plan that will be presented at the March 20, 2024 Board Meeting.

The Transportation plan and revenue calculations were developed in accordance with Education Code Sections 39800.1 and 41850.1. The transportation services plan is required as a condition of apportionment which is based on reported transportation expenditures. The plan must be adopted by the school district's governing board on or before April 01, 2024, and does not need to be submitted to CDE. The plan adoption will be checked in the Local Educational Agency (LEA) annual audit.

The California Department of Education (CDE) recently provided new guidance for the upcoming update of transportation services plan. The guidance clarifies that how an LEA updates the plan and whether to obtain approval by the governing board is a local decision. There is no requirement for the update to be formally placed on an agenda, adopted, or approved, and any update could be placed on the consent agenda as determined locally.

The plan includes implementation of a new field trip management system that will significantly enhance communication processes by consolidating various functions onto a singular platform. This comprehensive solution will facilitate seamless management of field trip requests, approval workflows, pertinent notes, and any subsequent change requests. Through this integrated system, requestors and approvers will gain direct access to all pertinent information related to their respective trips and requests, streamlining the approval process, and fostering enhanced transparency and efficiency throughout the communication chain.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Paul Idsvoog at 457-3134.

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 03/01/24