

California State Assembly



Agenda

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Education Finance

Assemblymember David Alvarez, Chair

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

9:00 A.M. – State Capitol, Rm 437

ITEMS TO BE HEARD		
Item	Description	Page
6100	California Department of Education	
3900	California Air Resources Board	
Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Universal School Meals Oversight & Proposals2. Expanded Learning Opportunities Program Oversight3. Green School Buses Proposal4. State Parks Pass Proposal5. College & Career Guidance Initiative6. Community Schools Partnership Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2813192124

Public Comment will be taken in person after the completion of all panels and any discussion from the Members of the committees.

Items To Be Heard

6100 California Department of Education
3900 California Air Resources Board

Issue 1: Universal School Meals Oversight & Proposals

This panel will provide an update on recent Budget Act investments offering a universal school meal program in all public schools, and January Budget proposals to increase program appropriations.

Panel

- Melissa Ng, DOF
- Sara Cortez, LAO
- Kim Frinzell, California Department of Education (CDE)
- Josh Rogers, Greenfield Union School District
- Itzúl Gutierrez, California Food Bank

Background

Universal School Meals

During the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, the federal government funded school meals for all students at no charge, in order to address the dramatic increase in food insecurity among families with children after schools shut down in March 2020. This federal provision allowing for meals to be free for all students ended after the 2021-2022 school year.

California was the first state to adopt a statewide Universal School Meals program starting in the 2022-23 school year, after the expiration of the federal universal COVID-19 program. To support the program's development, an initial \$650 million was also invested to help schools improve kitchen infrastructure and provide staff training and technical assistance, and improve meal quality.

According to Nutrition Policy Institute research studies in California, nearly half (45.7%) of food-service leaders reported reductions in student stigma as a result of providing free school meals to all students, and nearly three-quarters of respondents reported increases in student meal participation. These and other data suggest that universal school meals are meeting their legislative intent, to increase student participation while providing nutritionally balanced meals.¹

¹ <https://npi.ucanr.edu/>

Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, under the state’s new Universal School Meal program, all public schools are required to provide two free meals per school day to any student who requests a meal, regardless of income eligibility. The 2023-24 enacted budget includes \$1.6 billion Proposition 98 General Fund and \$2.6 billion federal funding to provide a projected 813 million school meals to students.

Under federal law, student eligibility for free and reduced price meals is determined by family income levels. The free guidelines are 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines (currently \$32,318 annually for a family of three), and the reduced price guidelines are 185 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines.

To be reimbursed by the federal government, schools typically must track which student is served a meal to determine the reimbursement rate. LEAs may identify eligible children in a few different ways. They must notify all families of free and reduced price meals and provide applications for families to complete. In addition, LEAs may directly certify student eligibility by using information from other means-tested programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or by determining that a child is eligible due to identification as homeless, runaway, migrant, or foster child, or enrollment in federal Head Start.

Comparing Reimbursement Options

	Traditional	Community Eligibility Provision
Site Eligibility	All schools.	In 2023-24 and prior years, only schools with an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) at or above 40 percent. ISP is calculated by the share of students directly certified for free lunch, based on participation in certain programs. Beginning in 2024-25, program is available to schools with an ISP at or above 25 percent.
Method of Determining Student Eligibility	Schools directly certify students and collect meal applications.	Schools directly certify students. They do not collect meal applications.
Federal Reimbursement Rates	Schools reimbursed at free, reduced, or paid rate. Based on meal count and student household income.	ISP is multiplied by 1.6 to determine the share of meals served that will be reimbursed at the free rate. All other meals will be reimbursed at the paid rate.
Federal Reimbursement Example	School A serves ten lunches to students with household incomes at the free level and ten lunches to students with household incomes at the reduced level. School A would receive meal reimbursement for 20 lunches, half at the higher free rate and half at the lower reduced rate.	School B serves 20 lunches and has an ISP of 50 percent. School B would have 80 percent of meals served reimbursed at the free rate. School B would receive reimbursement for 16 meals at the free rate and 4 meals at the paid rate.

Source: LAO

Alternative Federal Eligibility Provisions. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a four-year reimbursement option for eligible high poverty schools (defined as sites with 25% or higher directly certified eligible students for free and reduced price meals). A district can decide if they want school sites to participate individually in the CEP, if they want to group some schools together in order to meet eligibility requirements, or if they want the entire district to participate.

This reimbursement option is based solely on direct certification data, which means that agencies operating CEP do not have to collect household meal applications for four years.

Reimbursement under CEP is determined by multiplying the direct certification percentage by a federal multiplier, which is 1.6 (a number set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture). This is the percentage of meals that can be claimed at the free rate. The meals reimbursed at the free rate will be reimbursed with federal reimbursement, while additional state reimbursement will cover the cost of any meals claimed at the paid rate.

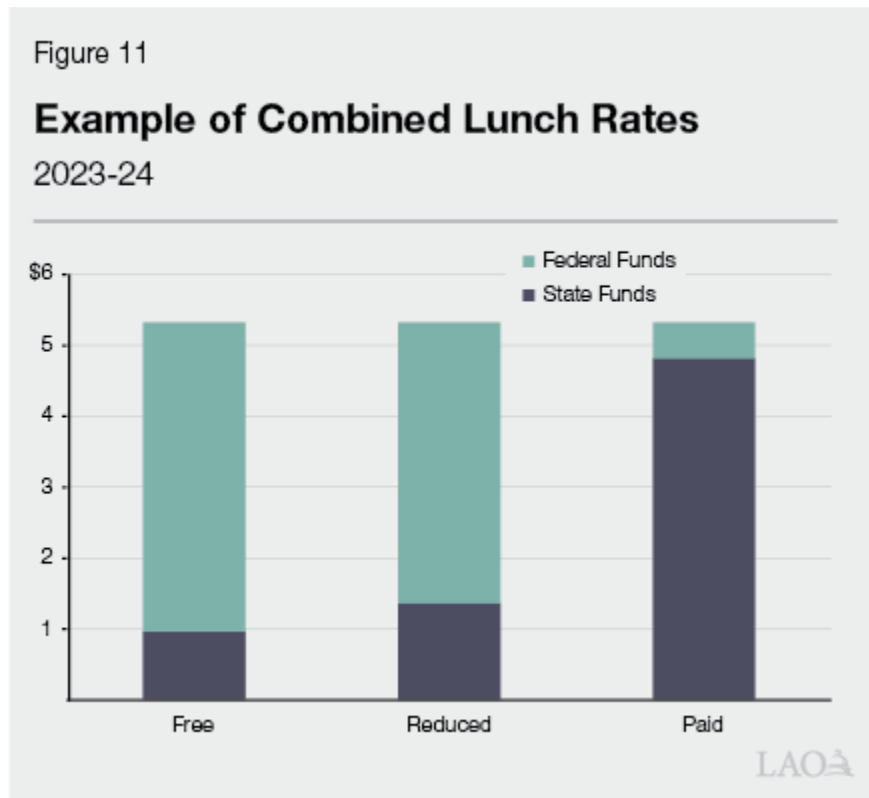
Other federal option, Provision 2, requires the use of free and reduced-price meal applications, but reduces the frequency in which applications must be collected and processed to once every four years. Unlike CEP, there is no minimum threshold required to participate in this provision.

To increase federal reimbursements, state law requires schools eligible for CEP to participate in either CEP or one of the other alternative reimbursement options. All schools eligible for the CEP, were required to apply for the program by June 30, 2022. This has resulted in significantly higher CEP participation. In 2018-19, 24 percent of schools participated in CEP, compared to 51 percent of schools in 2022-23.

Federal & State Reimbursement Rates. In 2023-24, the federal government reimburses schools up to \$4.35 for lunches served at the free rate and up to 50 cents for lunches served at the paid rate. Federal meal reimbursement rates are adjusted annually by a federal price index that reflects changes in the costs of prepared food.

State law sets a specific state rate for each type of school meal, above that rate reimbursed by the federal government, for free, reduced, and paid rate meals. For meals reimbursed by the federal government at the reduced or paid rates, the state provides the amount of funds necessary to ensure the combined state and federal rate is equal to combined rate for free meals. This results in free, reduced, and paid meals generating the same total reimbursement for schools. A meal reimbursed by the federal government at the free rate receives the smallest amount of state funds whereas a meal reimbursed at the paid rate receives the largest amount of state funds.

Prior to the universal school meals program, school would charge individual students for meals, at a reduced or full price, if they were not eligible for a free meal. The state now reimburses that cost.



Prior to 2022-23, the state contributed roughly 25 cents per free and reduced meal served (the state did not reimburse paid meals). In 2022-23, the state provided a new rate increase of 63 cents per paid meal to reflect costs of the universal school meal mandate. The state reimbursement rate for school meals is grown annually by the statutory COLA provided for LCFF and select TK-12 categorical programs.

Other State School Nutrition Investments

Kitchen Infrastructure Grants. The 2021-22 and 2022-23 budget packages provided a total of \$720 million one-time for local education agencies (LEAs) - school districts, charter schools, and COEs - to upgrade their kitchen infrastructure and increase school capacity to prepare fresh meals on-site. To be eligible for funds, LEAs must attest that at least 40 percent of reimbursable meals will be freshly prepared on-site by 2023-24. Each eligible LEA may receive a base grant of \$100,000 and the remaining funds will be distributed based on the number of reimbursable meals the LEA served in October 2021. The base grant and half of the funds distributed on a per-meal basis must be spent on specified activities, such as cooking equipment, service equipment, refrigeration, training, and compensation. The LEA may spend the remaining funds on facility improvements and other equipment upgrades.

By June 30, 2025, LEAs are to report to CDE how they used funding to improve the quality of school meals, increase participation in the subsidized school meal program, and increase capacity for freshly prepared on-site meals.

School Meal Quality Funds. The budget also included \$100 million one-time that LEAs can use for a variety of purposes related to school meals. Specifically, LEAs can use funds to (1) purchase California-grown or produced foods that are sustainably grown, whole, or minimally processed; (2) purchase plant-based or restricted diet meals; and/or (3) freshly prepare meals on-site. Each eligible LEA may receive a base grant of \$50,000. Half of the remaining funds will be distributed based on the number of reimbursable meals the LEA served in October 2021. The other half of the remaining funds will be distributed proportionally to LEAs based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

The Governor’s 2024-25 Budget

The Governor’s budget provides a one-time allocation of \$65 million in 2023-24 and an ongoing increase of \$122 million in 2024-25 to support growth in the universal school meals program.

LAO Comments

Given the budget situation, the Legislature may want to be proactive in containing future cost growth in the school nutrition program. In the “K-12 Spending Plan” section of this report, we recommend the Legislature reject the COLA for all K-12 programs this year and reject the other proposed adjustments to school nutrition. This is because Proposition 98 funding is not sufficient to cover the state’s current ongoing spending level. In this section, we identify several options for further containing the growth of the school nutrition program in 2024-25 and future years. These options are focused on reducing state reimbursement rates and maximizing the amount of federal funding the state receives for school meals. They would not change the requirement that public schools offer free meals to all their students.

Suspend Administrative Augmentation Authority. The Legislature could remove the provisional language that requires the administration to provide additional funds for school nutrition programs if CDE projects a shortfall. The Legislature could instead decide on an amount through the budget process. In the event of a projected shortfall and if budget conditions allow, the Legislature could provide an additional augmentation. This allows the Legislature to consider increases in the school nutrition program along with other priorities within K-12 education.

Remove Mandatory Participation Requirement for Newly Eligible CEP Schools. Given the likely state costs associated with newly eligible schools using CEP, we recommend the Legislature amend the existing state participation requirement. The Legislature could maintain the requirement for previously eligible CEP schools (schools with an ISP of 40 percent or higher). For newly eligible CEP schools, the Legislature could allow CEP participation only if schools demonstrate their projections indicate this option would maximize federal meal reimbursements.

Staff Comments

Adequate meal funding. In the creation of the universal school meals program, the state adopted the 63 cent paid meal reimbursement rate increase, which had been funded by USDA during the COVID-19 pandemic universal meals program. The sufficiency of this per-meal rate has not been analyzed.

Because the state's share of the meal reimbursement is designed as a fixed pot of funds, rather than a per-meal entitlement for LEAs, it is crucial that estimates for the state-level funding to be adequate, or even over-appropriated. If the funding level is insufficient for actual service levels in 2023-24, LEAs would receive a lower, pro-rated, reimbursement rate.

Cost containment. The Universal Meal Program's costs are growing more rapidly than estimated at the adoption of the 2021-22 Budget Act. One key reason is that paid meal demand has been growing faster than estimated, and free and reduced meal demand has been dropping. LEAs have expressed concerns since the adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), that free and reduced meal applications are harder to collect. Finding a way to boost the state's USDA-subsidized meal counts is crucial.

Recent new USDA regulations on CEP may further impact USDA contribution rates in the near term, requiring an intensive state role in boosting federal support.

Questions

- Is the Universal Meal program adequately funded to support standards and demand? At state level? At local level?
- How are LEAs utilizing the school breakfast and snack program as part of the new ELOP standard for nine hours of on-campus opportunities?
- How can the state support LEAs in boosting USDA form collection and maximizing meal subsidy contributions from the federal government?

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open. Direct staff to work with LAO to identify ways to maximize federal meal reimbursements.

Issue 2: Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant Program

This panel will review implementation of the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP), the state's universal after school and summer school program. The January Budget proposal addressing learning recovery in the context of ELOP will be heard at a future hearing.

Panel

- Michael Funk, CDE
- Nicole DeWitt, San Diego Unified School District
- Eduardo Caballero, EDMO
- Jackie Barocio, LAO
- Sabrina Adams, DOF

Background**Expanded Learning Opportunities Program**

“Expanded learning” means before school, after school, summer, or intersession learning programs that focus on developing the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and interests of pupils through hands-on, engaging learning experiences. Expanded learning programs are pupil-centered, results driven, include community partners, and complement, but do not replicate, learning activities in the regular school day and school year.

The 2021-22 Budget Act authorized the on-going Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) and the 2022-23 Budget Act provided \$4 billion in annual, ongoing funding for school districts and charter schools to provide in-person expanded learning time opportunities to students in TK through grade 6.

The ELO-P program is intended to be California's universal “after school” program, and provide all students with no- or low-cost access to a total of nine hours of developmentally appropriate academics and enrichment activities per instructional day and for 30 non-school days of summer/intersession days. The nine hours of activities are inclusive of the traditional school day bell schedule. All local educational agencies, regardless of community demographics, are encouraged to offer free or subsidized ELOP services to all students, using a fee schedule that considers family income and ability to pay.

In 2023-24, districts and charter schools with a student body that is equal to or more than 75 percent unduplicated pupils receive \$2,750 per unduplicated student enrolled in TK through grade 6 for ELO-P allowable services. LEAs with concentrations of unduplicated pupils less than

75 percent receive approximately \$1,800 per unduplicated student enrolled in TK through grade 6. The minimum LEA apportionment is \$50,000.

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, as a condition of ELOP funding, districts and charter schools with a student body that is equal to or more than 75 percent unduplicated pupils must offer the program to all TK through grade 6 students in classroom-based settings and provide access to any students whose parent or guardian requests their placement in a program. LEAs with less than 75 percent concentrations of unduplicated pupils all districts and charter schools must offer expanded learning opportunity programs to all TK through grade 6 students attending classroom-based programs who are unduplicated and must provide access to at least 50 percent of these students. These two levels of service requirements are intended to mirror the differences in funding made available for this program and inside LCFF for higher-poverty schools.

ELO-P quality standards and the program plan guide are aligned to the pre-existing After School Education & Safety (ASES) statute, however, ELO-P does not require a local funding match or competitive application process. The most significant programmatic differences are 1) that the ELO-P teacher to child ratio for TK and kindergarten is 1:10, while ASES allows 1:20, and 2) ASES funding explicitly funds students through grade nine, while ELO-P funds may support students through the twelfth grade, but only requires access through the sixth grade.

According to CDE, 539 school districts that received initial ELO-P funding in 2021-22 did not have a history of receiving ASES or federal 21stCCLC expanded learning funding, and thus were created brand new after school offerings.

Funds provided to a LEA are to be used to support student access to ELO-Ps, which may include, but is not limited to hiring literacy coaches, high-dosage tutors, school counselors, and instructional day teachers and aides to assist students as part of the LEAs program enrichment activities.

Carryover Flexibility. The 2021-22 and 2022-23 appropriations for ELOP are available to LEAs for the purposes of this program through June 2024. This flexibility was provided in the 2023-24 Budget Act to promote LEA ramp up of after school and summer services, to a historic new scale.

Other California “After School” Investments

The After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program. ASES baseline funding is required by the 2002 voter-approved initiative, Proposition 49. This proposition expanded and renamed the former state Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnerships Program. The ASES Program funds the establishment of local after school education and enrichment programs. These programs are created through partnerships between schools and

local community resources to provide literacy, academic enrichment and safe constructive afterschool alternatives for students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through ninth grade. ASES programs must include an educational and literacy element that provides tutoring or homework assistance, as well as an educational enrichment element, physical activity, and a healthy snack or meal. Funding is designed to maintain pre-Prop 49 before and after school program funding, and provide eligibility to all public elementary and middle schools that submit quality applications.

Proposition 49 requires a minimum of \$550 million in annual state funding for after school programs. No more than 1.5 percent of these funds is available to the Department of Education (CDE) for technical assistance, evaluation, and training services. The 2022-23 funding level for the ASES program is \$744,866,000. Per statute, CDE awards ASES grants on a competitive, 3-year grant cycle, which provides priority for current grantees.

ASES currently supports 4,231 elementary and middle schools offering afterschool and summer programs to more than 400,000 students daily. According to CDE, in 2020-21 the agency awarded \$213,312,709 in ASES funds for schools serving grades 7 or higher. The current state funding rate for ASES programs is \$10.18 per day. A 30 percent local funding match is required to supplement the state rate, and the program is also authorized to collect family fees for students with a family income above 185 percent of federal poverty.

21st Century Community Learning Centers. The 21st Century program was established by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994, and reauthorized in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program, as described in federal statute, provides opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities that focus on improved academic achievement, enrichment services that reinforce and complement the academic program, and family literacy and related educational development services.

California uses 21st CCLC funds to support TK-12 afterschool programs through state statute. TK-8 programs are aligned to ASES standards and high school programs are guided by After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETS) statutory standards.

The CDE conducts a competitive grant process for any available 21st CCLC funds. Unlike ASES, 21st CCLC fund cycles are five years in length, and do not necessarily fund the same grantees each cycle. \$146 million in annual 21st CCLC funds currently support 721 school sites, serving students TK-12. 374 school sites are funded with both ASES and 21st CCLC funds.

ELO-P and ASES/21st CCLC. CDE guidance has allowed ASES and 21st CCLC funds to be blended with Expanded Learning grants and ELO-P to create streamlined expanded learning opportunities. For example, unduplicated students who are counted towards ASES program funding are allowed to be counted towards the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program requirements, and funds provided through the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program are

allowed to be used for the local match in ASES. However, ASES and 21st CCLC are funded at the school site level, while the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program funds are allocated to local educational agencies, with a priority for school sites in the LEA's lowest income communities while maximizing the number of schools and neighborhoods with expanded learning opportunities programs across their attendance area.

Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant. The revised 2020-21 Budget included \$4.6 billion one-time funding in Expanded Learning Opportunities Grants that was provided to LEAs proportionate to each agency's share of the Local Control Funding Formula allocation. These funds are for local educational agencies to provide supplemental instruction and support to students in TK through grade 12 to address learning loss due to pandemic school closures. Specified uses included extended instructional learning time, accelerated learning strategies, summer school, tutoring or one-on-one support, professional development, and social-emotional wellbeing supports, among others. LEAs have until September 2024 to encumber these grant funds, which can include afterschool support for learning recovery. According to CDE, approximately \$1.7B in ELOG had not been encumbered by LEAs, as of their last report.

System of Support for Expanded Learning. The state uses a portion of ASES (1.5% Prop 49) and 21st Century program (5%) allocations (\$16 million in 2020-21) to fund a regional system of support for expanded learning programs. This system of support includes the California Department of Education, 16 county offices of education across 11 regions, and contracted technical assistance providers. The technical assistance provides schools with ongoing support to help them create effective programs. The specific technical assistance activities can include coaching, training, resource brokering, and mentoring. The 2021-22 Budget Act increased the CDE staff capacity for the new universal Expanded Learning system, but did not increase funding for the regional systems of support.

The 2021-22 Budget Act also provided \$5 million one-time to the Collaborative for Education Excellence (CCEE) to provide statewide technical assistance on expanded learning and learning recovery. The specific support to LEAs can include guidance on the effective use of diagnostic and formative assessments, curricular resources, best practices for contacting and reengaging disengaged students, models for providing supplemental instruction, and models to address student social-emotional needs. Funding was for May 2021 through June 30, 2023.

Governor's 2024-25 Budget

The January Budget maintains the Expanded Learning Opportunity Program funding at \$4 billion on-going Proposition 98 funding for after school and summer options for all students.

The Budget also contains a trailer bill flexibility proposal that will be heard in the context of the other January Budget learning recovery proposals.

Staff Comments

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program is intended to be one transformation investment in student engagement and learning recovery - germane to post-pandemic response as well as long-term policy goals for student outcomes - but in the midst of nationwide staffing shortages and general initiative exhaustion, some LEAs are struggling to see how to leverage ELO-P funding as an asset.

In this fourth year of program planning, implementation, and investment, it will be imperative to identify and strengthen key design elements for the program to support student outcomes and access: data and accountability, final funding formulas, program standards, and system supports. These design elements should be sensitive to the current environment in which schools and students are, but also focus on long-term student engagement and learning.

Questions:

- Is the Administration's final funding goal for the ELO-P initiative still \$5 billion? What will that final goal look like, programmatically and for the program funding rates?
- Should all LEAs be expected to "offer" a program to all students, regardless of income? Does statute support inclusion?
- How are LEAs "offering" their ELOP options to parents? Are stronger state standards for parent engagement needed?
- How many LEAs, representing what ADA total, have reported no ELOP expenditures to date for the 2021-22 appropriation?
- How is the student transportation requirement being tracked?
- What student data is being tracked for ELOP?

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open. Ask staff to work with LAO on recommendations for a more stable Tier 2 funding amount.

Issue 3: Zero Emission School Buses

This panel will hear the January Budget proposal to expand the existing zero-emission school bus program at the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

Panel

- Katie Lagomarsino, DOF
- Ken Kappahn, LAO
- Michelle Buffington, CARB

Background**School Buses & School Transportation**

The federal government periodically collects information about school transportation and other travel information through the National Household Travel Survey. According to the 2017 version of the survey, most students in California travel to school in private automobiles. Only about 9 percent of students receive transportation on school buses. A comparison with the previous version of the survey indicates that school bus ridership has declined over time.

In California, state law does not require districts to transport students from home to school. However, federal law requires districts to provide transportation to students with disabilities, students attending federally sanctioned schools, and homeless students. State law also allows LEAs to charge student fees for transportation. CDE estimates that 21,000 iconic, yellow school buses are currently in operation statewide.

Green School Buses

Prior to the 2021-22 Budget Act, no fewer than 10 programs and seven different agencies have administered electric bus programs, for which LEAs are or were eligible. This does not include the school bus replacement program and Home to School Transportation categorical programs for LEAs, or various locally developed programs such as the Fresno County local sales tax program that funds school bus replacement.

Rural School Bus Pilot Project. This program provided funding for districts to replace buses more than 20 years old with electric and other low-emission buses. Grants generally covered the full cost for electric buses and most of the cost for other types of buses. The program prioritized applicants located in small air districts. The state provided nearly \$62 million for the program from cap-and-trade revenues between 2016 and 2018.

Previous Funding for School Bus Replacement in California

Amounts Through August 2021 (In Millions)

Program ^a	Administrator	Amount Allocated ^b	Period	Projects Funded			
				Electric Buses	Other Buses	Infrastructure	Retrofits
Lower-Emission School Bus Program	Various ^c	\$310	Since 2001		X		X
AB 923 (vehicle registration surcharge for emission reductions)	Local air districts	237	Since 2008	X	X	X	X
Clean Truck and Bus Vouchers (HVIP)	CALSTART ^d	89	Since 2010	X	X		
School Bus Replacement Program	CEC	75	Since 2019 ^e	X			
Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust	SJVAPCD	65	Since 2018	X			
Small School District and County Office of Education Bus Replacement Program	CDE	64	Since 2000 ^f		X		X
Rural School Bus Pilot Project	NCUAQMD	62	Since 2016 ^g	X	X	X	
Community Air Protection Incentives	Local air districts	56	Since 2017	X	X	X	
Clean Mobility in Schools Pilot Project	CARB	25	Since 2018	X		X	
Clean Transportation Program	CEC	21	Since 2012		X	X	
Carl Moyer Program and State Reserve	Local air districts	16	Since 1998	X	X	X	
Federal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act	U.S. EPA	15	Since 2008	X	X		X
Sacramento Regional Zero-Emission School Bus Deployment Project	SMAQMD	15	Since 2017 ^h	X		X	
Supplemental Environmental Projects for School Buses	CARB	5	Since 2012		X		X
Totals		\$1,054					

^aExcludes new state program established by the June 2021 budget plan and new federal program established in November 2021. These programs have not yet allocated any funding.

^bAmounts reflect estimates by CARB except for Small School District and County Office of Education Bus Replacement Program.

^cVarious iterations of this program have been managed by CARB, local air districts, and SJVAPCD.

^dCALSTART is a national nonprofit organization focused on clean transportation.

^eProgram funds fully allocated and additional allocations not expected.

Source: Legislative Analyst’s Office

2021-22 Budget Plan Created New Program to Fund Electric School Buses. The new program has two components. The first component is administered by CARB and will provide \$400 million for districts to replace 1,000 older buses with electric buses. The second component is administered by the California Energy Commission and will provide \$50 million for charging infrastructure to support these buses. This program supersedes the Rural School Bus Pilot Project but will retain some elements of that program, including priority for small and rural areas and the requirement to scrap the buses being replaced. CARB and the California Energy

Commission are currently developing the application procedures and other program guidelines. The authorizing legislation allows the program to fund any type of zero-emission school bus, but battery powered electric buses are the only technology currently available to meet this requirement.

The 2023-24 Budget Act reduced the \$1.5 billion appropriation for this program to \$500 million, with statutory commitments to delay the funding to the 2024 and 2025 Budgets.

As of February 2024, no RFA for the 2021-22 funding had yet been issued, and no awards.

DOF and CARB can provide an update on the program delay at this hearing.

Federal Infrastructure Bill Included School Bus Replacement Funding. The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, enacted in November 2021, contains \$5 billion for school bus replacement grants. The U.S. EPA will allocate the funding in installments of \$1 billion per year for the next five years. The law sets aside half of the annual amount for electric school buses. The other half is available for any type of bus powered by alternative fuels, including electric, CNG, and propane buses.

Additionally, in 2018, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandated that California transit bus fleets must be zero-emission by 2040. Starting in 2029, mass transit agencies in California will be required to purchase battery electric or fuel cell electric transit buses for their fleets. To help local agencies meet this mandate, the Department of General Services established three statewide contracts with electric bus manufacturers with preset pricing, and these contracts are available for use by local agencies who can then purchase the buses with local, state, and/or federal funds.

The Governor's 2024-25 Budget

The Governor's budget provides one-time \$500 million Proposition 98 funding from the 2024-25 guarantee, for a second round of zero-emission school bus grants.

LAO Comments

Retains Most Intended Funding for Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Programs. Previous budgets included a commitment of \$10 billion for a variety of ZEV-related activities from 2021-22 through 2026-27. As shown in Figure 3, the budget package maintains \$9.2 billion of this funding (92 percent), primarily through using GGRF revenues in place of some planned General Fund. Specifically, the spending plan shifts a total of \$2.3 billion in intended ZEV expenditures to GGRF through 2026-27 - achieving a like amount of General Fund savings - including \$720 million in 2023-24. As shown in the figure, the budget does include net reductions to a few ZEV programs, most notably a total of \$550 million - \$380 million through the California Energy Commission (CEC) and \$170 million through the California Air Resources Board (CARB) - for transit buses and infrastructure. (As noted below in the section on cap-and-trade spending and discussed in

our companion post, *The 2023-24 Spending Plan: Transportation*, the budget package also established a new program that transit agencies can use either for ZEV buses and infrastructure or to support their base operational costs.)

Figure 3

Revised Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Package

General Fund Unless Otherwise Noted (In Millions)

Program	Department	Net Reductions ^a	Revised Funding Levels					Totals
			2021-22 and 2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Light-Duty Programs								
ZEV fueling infrastructure grants	CEC	—	\$530	—	\$120 ^b	\$140 ^b	\$80 ^b	\$870
Clean Vehicle Rebate Project	CARB	—	525	—	—	—	—	525
Clean Cars 4 All	CARB	—	531	\$80 ^c	45 ^b	—	—	656
Equitable At-Home Charging	CEC	—	20	100 ^b	80 ^b	60 ^b	40 ^b	300
Heavy-Duty Programs								
School buses and infrastructure	CARB	-\$135	\$640 ^d	—	\$375 ^d	\$375 ^d	—	\$1,390
	CEC	-15	160 ^d	—	125 ^d	125 ^d	—	410
Clean trucks, buses, off-road equipment	CARB	—	1,100	—	—	—	—	1,100
	CEC	—	299	\$145 ^b	137 ^b	89 ^b	—	670
Transit buses and infrastructure	CARB	-380	140	—	—	—	—	140
	CEC	-170	60	—	—	—	—	60
Drayage trucks and infrastructure	CARB	—	232	80 ^b	48 ^b	48 ^b	\$37 ^b	445
	CEC	—	266	85 ^b	50 ^b	50 ^b	49 ^b	500
Drayage trucks and infrastructure pilot	CARB	—	40	—	—	—	—	40
	CEC	—	25	—	—	—	—	25
Ports	CARB	-65	—	—	—	—	185 ^b	185
	CEC	-20	—	—	—	—	130 ^b	130
ZEV manufacturing grants	CEC	—	250	—	—	—	—	250

Near-zero heavy duty trucks	CARB	—	45	—	—	—	—	45
ZEV consumer awareness	Go-BIZ	—	5	—	—	—	—	5
Other								
Transportation package ZEV	CalSTA	—	\$484 ^e	\$77 ^f	\$77 ^f	\$76 ^f	\$76 ^f	\$790
Sustainable community plans and strategies	CARB/CalSTA	—	—	60 ^b	100 ^b	100 ^b	79 ^b	339
Emerging Opportunities	CARB	—	53	—	—	47 ^b	—	100
	CEC	—	54	—	—	46 ^b	—	100
Charter boats compliance	CARB	—	60	—	20 ^b	20 ^b	—	100
Hydrogen infrastructure	CEC	-\$60	—	— ^g	— ^g	— ^g	—	—
Totals		-\$845	\$5,519	\$627	\$1,177	\$1,176	\$676	\$9,175

^aReflects the reduction in total funding from 2022-23 through 2025-26.

^bGreenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF).

^cIncludes \$30 million GGRF.

^dIncludes Prop 98 General Fund.

^eIncludes \$200 million Public Transportation Account and \$157 million federal funds.

^fFederal funds.

^gProgram funding eliminated.

CEC = California Energy Commission; CARB = California Air Resources Board; CalSTA = California State Transportation Agency; and Go-BIZ = Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development.

Reject All One-Time Spending Increases. We recommend the Legislature reject all of the one-time increases proposed in the Governor’s budget to achieve savings of \$599 million. The largest proposal affected by this recommendation is the \$500 million allocation for green school bus grants. Although the Legislature previously expressed its intent to provide additional funding for this program, the state has not yet awarded any grants from the initial \$500 million it provided in previous budgets. In addition, federal grants (administered by the Environmental Protection Agency) and local funding (administered by air quality districts) are available to support the purchase of low- and zero-emission school buses. Regarding the other one-time increases, we do not think any of the proposals are urgent enough to justify the additional spending reductions or reserve withdrawals that would be needed to fund them in 2024-25. We provide additional analysis and considerations for a few of these proposals later in this report.

Review Unallocated Funds and Reduce Lower-Priority Grants. We recommend the Legislature review existing grants with unallocated funding and reduce or eliminate any grants that do not represent its highest priorities. One reasonable starting point would be to rescind some of the funding for community schools. For example, the Legislature could rescind \$1 billion out of \$2.4 billion currently set aside for future rounds of implementation grants and extension grants for current grantees. This would leave about \$1.1 billion for providing implementation grants to roughly 400 grantees that are currently in the planning process and eligible for implementation grants this year and next year, as well as maintain \$280 million for providing two-year extension grants to current grantees. This reduction also accounts for the likelihood that in tighter fiscal times, districts are likely to have less interest in implementing the community schools model this grant is intended to support. Any savings the Legislature identifies from unallocated grants would help address the budget shortfall and reduce the likelihood of other reductions that districts might find more disruptive.

Staff Comments

In light of the billions in federal and state funding options to potentially support zero-emission school buses, and the condition of the Proposition 98 guarantee, it does not seem prudent to expand this program in the current budget climate. Any ongoing growth in the Prop 98 guarantee is available for the 2024-25 school year, the priority should be for funding ongoing prior year commitments. The Committee may want to reconsider the original \$500 million program investment, as no applications have been awarded for local schools.

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open.

Issue 4: State Parks Pass Proposal

This panel will review the January Budget Proposal create a \$2.1 million annual state park pass program for fourth grade students.

Panel

- Katie Lagomarsino, DOF
- Ken Kapphahn, LAO

Background

The state park system, managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), contains nearly 280 parks and serves about 70 million visitors a year. These parks cost over \$400 million a year to operate. These costs are mainly supported by the General Fund and revenue generated by the parks, including roughly \$100 million in fees paid by park users for day use, camping, and special events.

As part of the 2021-22 Budget Act, the state funded the California State Park Adventures passes, which expire in the current year. The Budget Change Proposal for this original program cited this purpose: “This pilot program will implement the California State Park Adventure pass, which will waive day-use entrance fees for fourth graders and their families at participating state parks to encourage them to get outdoors and explore the cultural and natural resources of California. The programs will also provide transportation funding to provide access to underserved students.”

Governor’s 2024-25 Budget

The January Budget proposes an ongoing appropriation of \$2.1 million in Proposition 98 funding for the County Office of Education to disperse free state park passes for fourth grade students. The proposed trailer bill language is limited in other proposal details.

LAO Comments

Makes a Few Targeted Reductions to Other Programs. The budget includes General Fund reductions to a few other programs, mostly in the areas of parks and access. (The allocations to most of these programs were not included in a defined programmatic budget package but rather funded as stand-alone proposals.) Specifically, the budget reduces General Fund support for:

- The Department of Parks and Recreation’s (Parks’) Statewide Parks Program (\$183 million across several years, retaining \$197 million).
- Parks’ deferred maintenance projects (\$31 million in 2021-22, retaining \$138 million).

- CNRA's Recreational Trails and Greenways Program (\$25 million in 2022-23, retaining \$10 million).
- DOC's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (\$25 million in 2022-23, which eliminates the recent General Fund support for the program).
- The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CalFire's) deferred maintenance projects (\$13 million in 2021-22, retaining \$37 million).
- SCC's Explore the Coast program (\$1 million in 2021-22, retaining \$13 million).

Additionally, the budget reverts \$115 million of General Fund that was set aside in a designated fund in 2021-22 and 2022-23 for park-related activities but is not urgently needed.

Staff Comments

In light of the Proposition 98 guarantee forecast, it does not seem prudent to entertain any new ongoing spending proposals, and in particular, proposals that do not directly fund resources on a school site. To the extent the Legislature is interested in supporting more equitable access to our state's parks for public school students, other direct supports could be explored, including fee exemptions, and providing information to local school leaders about how to leverage state parks for field trips aligned to the curricula.

To the extent the Legislature is concerned about student access to open space, it may be of interest to examine school funding for playgrounds and open space, in a joint-use environment with local and state parks, including weekend, after school, and intersession use.

Suggested Questions:

- Why is it necessary to spend Proposition 98, through an intermediary with overhead costs, to promote free park access for fourth grade students?
- Would this proposal require rebenching the Prop 98 guarantee, since free park pass funding is currently outside the guarantee?
- How was the \$2.1 million cost estimated? What price per fourth grader, annually?
- What are the usage rates, for prior state park pass appropriations, for children? Low income children? What was the final annual program cost per pass?
- What is the extent of joint-use agreements between local and state parks and school district spaces, to promote after school and intersession student access to safe outdoor spaces?

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open. All proposals for new one-time and ongoing Proposition 98 funding will be considered in the context of May Revision revenues.

Issue 5: College and Career Guidance Initiative

This panel will review the January Budget proposal to fully scale the College and Career Guidance Initiative, with trailer bill and an increase of \$5 million annually.

Panel

- Melissa Ng, DOF
- Jackie Barocio, LAO
- Tessa De Roy, CCGI

Background**College and Career Guidance Initiative (CCGI)**

CCGI is an initiative of the not-for-profit California Community College Foundation, and offers access to college planning, financial aid, and career exploration tools to students from grades 6 to 12 through its online platform CaliforniaColleges.edu. CCGI also partners with school districts to streamline the college application process through verified electronic transcripts. Partner districts can upload verified academic transcript data onto the platform and into students' accounts. When students from these partner districts apply to a California Community College (CCC) or California State University (CSU), relevant high school data is automatically shared. The college or university, in turn, can use the data to inform decisions about admissions and course placement. (CCGI is currently working with the University of California (UC) Office of the President to provide the same transcript functionality to UC applicants.) As of February 2024, nearly 240 of 417 eligible school districts partner with CCGI.

Students in districts that partner with CCGI have access to transcript-informed accounts in the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform, which allow them to use all available tools and features, including the ability to import verified transcript data into CSU and CCC applications. Students in districts that are not partnered with CCGI can choose to create basic accounts to access non-transcript-informed resources, such as lessons in financial aid process, high school coursework planning, and career planning. CCGI is in the process of scaling up the ability to automatically generate universal basic accounts for all students in grades 6 to 12 in districts that are not CCGI partners.

In 2023-24, the state provided CCGI \$18.4 million ongoing Proposition 98 for operational costs. The state currently funds CCGI as part of CDE's budget, with Riverside County Office of Education and the nonprofit Foundation acting as intermediaries. CCGI generates some additional funding by collecting fees from participating districts and charter schools. Fee revenue for 2023-24 is projected to be slightly less than \$700,000. CCGI also receives funding from

private philanthropy and institutional partners, which is projected to be less than \$1 million in 2023-24.

The 2022-23 budget increased CCGI funding by \$9.2 million Proposition 98 (bringing total Proposition 98 funding to \$16.8 million). These funds were meant to cover the costs of technological development projects, new staff, and new districts joining the platform. By the end of 2022-23, \$3.9 million of Proposition 98 funds went unspent due to hiring and project delays. These unspent funds carried forward into 2023-24 on a one-time basis.

California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI). The budget provides a \$2 million augmentation (bringing total Proposition 98 funding to \$18.6 million) to hire additional CCGI personnel to support the full-scale implementation of the college planning online platform, CaliforniaColleges.edu. Trailer legislation requires the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) provide CCGI with specific student financial aid data to better align reports across CSAC and CCGI, and allows CCGI to provide its services to all local educational agencies. Additionally, the budget package amends 2022-23 budget bill language to include higher education campuses as eligible entities for collaborative partnerships with CCGI. (Previously, CCGI was only authorized to develop partnerships with COEs.)

The Governor's 2024-25 Budget

The January Budget proposes \$5.1 million in ongoing Proposition 98 funding to support the CCGI at scale. This funding is intended to cover costs associated with providing universal accounts to all students in grades 6 to 12, expanding the number of partner school districts, enhancing the functionality of CaliforniaColleges.edu, and further supporting communications with other state agencies and offices to promote use of CaliforniaColleges.edu. The proposed augmentation would bring total ongoing Proposition 98 funding levels to \$23.4 million (a 24 percent increase relative to 2023-24). The 2024-25 budgeted authority does not include any expected one-time Proposition 98 carry over funds.

Current law requires LEAs provide students entering grade 12 with information about the college financial aid application process. Additionally, LEAs are required to ensure high school seniors apply for college financial aid unless the student has opted out of the requirement.

The Governor's budget proposes trailer bill language that would require LEAs to direct students to complete financial aid lessons and submit financial aid applications through the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform. The Governor's proposed trailer bill language also requires all LEAs enter into a data sharing agreement with CCGI to support the implementation of universal basic accounts. In addition, the Governor's proposed trailer bill language requires community colleges and student information system contractors to share additional student data for purposes of improving the functionality of CaliforniaColleges.edu.

LAO Comments

Proposed CCGI-Related Trailer Bill Language May Increase District Participation in CCGI. In a recent report, CCGI noted that small districts generally do not have the sufficient information technology staff to transfer the necessary student data to CCGI in order to support transcript-informed accounts for students. The Governor’s budget proposes to reduce this burden by requiring student information system contractors automatically transfer this information to CCGI instead. This could be an effective way to increase participation of small school districts. The proposal that requires LEAs to direct students to use financial aid resources from CaliforniaColleges.edu seems reasonable, as it would take advantage of existing resources that are free to students. These proposed changes, however, may increase workload for school districts. (We are in the process of learning more about the possible workload impacts of the Governor’s proposed trailer bill language.)

Consider Workload Costs Associated With CCGI-Related Trailer Bill Language. While the proposed changes may improve the reach of CaliforniaColleges.edu across eligible districts, the Legislature may want to consider if these changes would require additional resources to implement. To the extent these changes require additional resources, the Legislature could consider delaying the implementation date until budget conditions improve.

Reject Proposed CCGI Augmentations. Due to the Proposition 98 shortfall, the state cannot support additional spending without making reductions to existing commitments. As a result, we recommend the Legislature reject the proposed increase to Proposition 98 funding levels in CCGI. Given that this recommended action would delay CCGI expansion activities, the Legislature could consider amending statute to delay the implementation date of impacted activities.

Staff Comments**Suggested Questions:**

- Does every sixth through twelfth grade student need the full scope of CCGI services directly?
- Are data sharing agreements, as proposed by the trailer bill language, going to address the current insufficient data definitions that impact student eligibility for college admission and other services?
- Will the entire \$23.4 million ongoing budget be necessary after all LEAs have had their initial onboarding process? What is the ongoing out year cost once all LEAs are fully implementing?

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open. Direct staff to work with the Administration and CCGI to explore cost containment policies.

Issue 6: Community Schools Proposal

This panel will provide an implementation update on the Community Schools Partnership Program, and hear the January Budget proposal impacting Community Schools.

Panel

- Pete Callas, CDE
- Melissa Ng, DOF
- Ken Kappahn, LAO

Background**The California Community Schools Partnership Program**

According to CDE, a community school is a public school that serves prekindergarten through grade twelve and has community partnerships that support improved academic outcomes, whole-child engagement, and family development. Community school partnership strategies include integrated supports services, extended learning time, and collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators.

Community schools can increase equitable student learning outcomes by addressing the conditions for teaching and learning. Community schools support the needs of the whole child by strengthening family and community foundations with approaches that sustain mental and behavioral health through healing-centered practices, social–emotional learning, and restorative justice.

Community schools also ensure that students, families, and community members are embraced as full partners in every aspect of decision-making that affects the conditions for teaching and learning. Authentic power sharing and shared decision-making in all aspects of school governance is another cornerstone of community school implementation.

Community schools use this community-driven shared decision-making approach to increase access to nurses, counselors, and social workers. This creates campuses that are community hubs where students and families have easy access to the services needed to close opportunity gaps.

The final 2020-21 Budget Act authorized the initial California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) grants and appropriated \$45 million in one-time federal relief aid from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, with the intent to support existing Community School models during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to CDE and the Budget Act, grant funding may be used for any of the following purposes:

- Expanding and sustaining existing community schools
- Coordinating and providing health, mental health, and pupil support services to pupils and families at community schools
- Providing training and support to local educational agencies (LEAs) personnel to help develop best practices for integrating pupil supports.

Applicants are also required to include four key pillars in their community school model, which are aligned and integrated into high-quality, rigorous teaching and learning practices and environments:

- Integrated support services;
- Family and community engagement;
- Collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators; and
- Extended learning time and opportunities.

Community Schools At Scale. The final 2021-22 Budget Act appropriated \$3 billion through June 2028 to plan for, implement, expand, and sustain Community school models across the state. This investment marks the largest investment in school transformation through community schools strategies in the nation. The California Community Schools Partnership Act prioritizes school sites whose unduplicated count exceeds 80 percent of the overall enrolled student body.

Based on statute and feedback ascertained through a facilitated community input process, the CDE drafted the California Community Schools Framework (Framework) which outlines California's intentional approach to community schools as a school transformation approach rooted in equity and charged with changing outcomes for students most impacted by present and historical educational disparities. The SBE approved the proposed Framework at its January 2022 meeting, which supplements state statute on program design.

Under the new investment, Community schools continue to include four evidence-informed programmatic features, which are aligned and integrated into high-quality, rigorous teaching and learning practices and environments:

- Integrated support services;
- Family and community engagement;
- Collaborative leadership and shared decision-making; and
- Extended/expanded learning time and opportunities.

While aligning governmental and community resources is central to the community schools approach, elevating the assets and meeting the needs of children by building a positive school

climate through trusting relationships, combined with rich learning opportunities that prepare all students to succeed in life, is the foundation of the program.

Notably, the Community Schools RFA emphasizes that the funding is not for program, but rather for an equity-enhancing strategy that aligns with and can help coordinate and extend a wide range of state, district, and school site initiatives. These initiatives include new state investments in youth-focused behavioral health, nutrition, universal prekindergarten, and expanded learning, as well as ongoing efforts involving Multi-Tiered System of Supports, social-emotional learning, college and career readiness, and school improvement.

Planning Grants. The California Community Schools Partnership Program offered two rounds of planning grants. CCSPP planning grants are for LEAs with no existing community schools.

The CCSPP provides funding for a planning grant period beginning June 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024. Funds available to each applicant are based on the content and quality of the submitted application and proposed budget. According to statute, awards for the CCSPP planning grant shall not exceed \$200,000 for a two-year period for LEAs.

The total grant budget for Cohort 1 planning grants was up to \$134.7 million. CDE provided 192 LEA awards for a total of \$38 million.

The total grant budget for Cohort 2 planning grants is up to \$231 million. CDE provided 223 LEA awards for a total of \$44 million.

Qualifying Entities are required to provide a local match equal to one-third of the CCSPP grant amount. The local match shall be contributed in cash or as services/resources of comparable value, as determined by the CDE.

According to the RFA, planning grant funding may be used for any of the following purposes:

- Staffing costs for a community school coordinator.
- Conducting a comprehensive school and community needs and asset assessment, including, but not limited to, student and community demographics, school climate, integrated support services, expanded learning time, family and community engagement, new or existing partnerships with governmental entities or community-based organizations, and available funding sources.
- Grant application support, service billing development, and other administrative costs necessary to launch a community schools model at scale.
- Partnership development and coordination support between the grantee and cooperating agencies.
- Providing training and support to LEA and cooperating agency personnel to develop best practices for integrating student supports.

- Preparing a community school implementation plan for submission to the governing board or body of the LEA and to the CDE.

Pursuant to the California EC Sections 8900–8902, the application scoring process will prioritize grant funding to qualifying entities that meet all of the following competitive priorities, not listed in any specific order of importance:

1. Applicants serving students in schools in which at least 80 percent of the pupil population are unduplicated pupils.
2. Applicants with a demonstrated need for expanded access to integrated services, including those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Applicants that involve students, parents, certificated and classified school staff, and cooperating agency personnel in the process of identifying the needs of students and families, and in the planning of support services to be offered.
4. Applicants that commit to providing trauma-informed health, mental health, and social services for students within a multitiered system of support at or near the school site, and partner with other schools, school districts, county agencies, or nongovernmental organizations.
5. Applicants that commit to providing early care and education services for children from birth to five years of age, inclusive, through one or more LEAs or community-based organizations.
6. Applicants that identify a cooperating agency collaboration process, including cosignatories, a mechanism for sharing governance, and for integrating or redirecting existing resources and other school support services.
7. Applicants that identify a plan to sustain community school services after grant expiration, including by maximizing reimbursement for services from available sources, including, but not limited to, the LEA Medi-Cal Billing Option Program, School-Based Medi-Cal Administrative Activities program, and reimbursable mental health specialty care services provided under the federal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment program (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1396d(a)(4)(B)).

According to SBE approval in January 2022, the application scoring process will also prioritize grant funding to qualifying entities that meet the following competitive priority:

8. Applicants serving small and rural schools.

The CDE will provide an update on the LEAs receiving Planning Grants, and their progress toward implementation, at the hearing.

Implementation Grants. Pursuant to the Budget Act, up to seventy percent of total CCSPP grant funding (\$2,011,914,800) is available for Implementation Grants for the 2021–22 through 2027–28 program years. As the name suggests, Implementation Grants are for conducting a Community Schools initiative on one or more eligible school campuses, and expanding the initiative to new schools.

LEAs that have existing community schools and want to expand, continue or add new schools to their community schools initiative are not eligible to apply for CCSPP Planning Grants and are encouraged to apply for a CCSPP Implementation Grant. LEAs may apply for implementation grant funding in each of the funding rounds to support the establishment of new community schools and/or expansion or continuation of their existing community schools.

The CCSPP will offer multiple rounds of implementation grants. Cohort 1 awards were made in May 2022 to 76 LEAs, for a total of \$611 million. Cohort 2 awards were made in May 2023 to 129 LEAs for a total of \$750.5 million. Cohort 3 applications were due last month.

Implementation grant funding to LEAs supporting community schools may be used for any of the following purpose:

- Staffing, including, but not limited to, a community school coordinator, and contractor capacity.
- Coordinating and providing support services to pupils and families at or near community schools, including through childcare, expanded learning time before and after school, and during school intersessions.
- Providing training and support to local educational agency personnel, and partner agency personnel on integrating school-based pupil supports, social-emotional well-being, trauma-informed practices, and establishing sustainable community school funding sources.
- Designing and executing community stakeholder engagement strategies.
- Ongoing data collection and program evaluations.

Statute dictates that awards shall not exceed \$500,000 per school and that new community schools shall be funded for at least five years. Annual grant amounts will step down in year five by twenty-five percent to encourage LEAs to ensure sustainability after grants expire:

Enrollment Category	Annual Grant Amount Years One through Four	Annual Grant Amount Year Five	Total Grant Amount over Five Years
Very Small: 25-150 students	\$150,000	\$112,500	\$712,500
Small: 151-400 students	\$250,000	\$187,500	\$1,187,500
Medium: 401-1,000 students	\$300,000	\$225,000	\$1,425,000
Medium/Large: 1,001-2,000 students	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$1,900,000
Large: 2,001 or more students	\$500,000	\$375,000	\$2,375,000

Source: CDE

Applicants are required to provide a local match equal to one-third of the total CCSPP implementation grant amount. The local match shall be contributed in cash or as services/resources of comparable value, as determined by the CDE.

Extension Funding. Statute allows CDE to provide funding for CCSPP Implementation grantees to extend CCSPP funding for an additional two years. The grant awards are up to \$100,000 annually, beginning in the 2025–26 fiscal year. The intent of this extension option is to support ongoing, unique Community School approach costs that may not be available through MediCal or other ongoing local sources.

Evaluation. CDE is required to evaluate the CCSPP annually. The first evaluation is now posted on the CDE website, and it included here as Appendix A. The report provides information gathered from the 2020-21 Budget Act grantee cohort, on current 2021 and 2022 cohort CCSPP grantees, and the establishment and activities of the statewide CCSPP technical assistance system.

According to CDE, the study found statistically significant gains in the extent to which the schools were able to engage in desired community school activities over the course of the grant year from fall of 2021 to fall of 2022. These gains include the following, as organized by the Four Pillars of the Community Schools:

In the area of Integrated Student Supports, the schools were able to offer significantly more:

- Medical services
- Dental services
- Legal services
- Housing services for students and families experiencing homelessness
- Attendance supports
- Dropout prevention
- Tutoring

They also reported that they were able to provide significantly more access for students and families to:

- Educational technology
- Assistive technology for students with disabilities
- Mental health services and supports

In the area of Extended Learning Time and Opportunities, schools that received community schools grants significantly increased their ability to offer students:

- Summer and/or weekend learning opportunities and programs
- After-school programs
- Arts integration
- Mentoring
- Internships or other service-learning opportunities

Schools were significantly more likely to report that these programs were well-coordinated with school day learning and that educators had resources to plan and execute expanded learning time activities and to use project-based learning strategies that connect to real-world experiences.

There were significant gains in the extent to which schools were able to implement a Coordination of Services Team (COST) as well as develop partnerships with community partners in the following areas:

- Early childhood education (e.g. childcare, Early Head Start, Head Start)
- Medical and mental health services
- Nutrition services
- Social services
- Housing services
- Family centers
- Crime prevention
- Violence prevention
- Legal services

In the area of Family and Community Engagement, schools reported that they were significantly more able to offer events or supports to students and families in the following areas:

- Improving reading and math skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Digital literacy
- Job search and preparation services
- Access to legal services
- Language supports
- Physical health

Schools reported they were significantly more able to engage in Collaborative Leadership and Practices with health professionals, governmental agencies, community service organizations, parents, and school staff both to provide services and to share in data collection and analysis for continuous improvement.

Finally, grantees and schools discussed the needs they have moving forward. As summarized by WestEd:

Grantees shared a consistent message—they need sustained, flexible, and long-term funding to continue and expand this work. This funding could be used to develop and maintain partnerships; hire and retain staff; collaborate with others doing community schools work; develop and provide professional development; carry out needs and assets assessments in the community; and develop and operate comprehensive wellness centers. Schools echoed this need with requests for continued funding with no expiration date being the most common request. At the school level, funds were requested to maintain and expand current programs (e.g., wellness centers, food pantries, hire key staff, and support new partnerships). Other areas of need related to memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and contracts, staff training and hiring, understanding Medi-Cal reimbursement, and other resources to support the work (e.g., physical space).

Technical Assistance. The CCSPP is supported by a system of support that includes a Lead Technical Assistance Center (TAC), Regional TACs and County Offices of Education.

The Lead Technical Assistance Center, known as the [State Transformational Assistance Center](#), is led by the Alameda County Office of Education in partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Community Schooling, the National Education Association and Californians for Justice.

The CCSPP Regional Transformational/Technical Assistance Centers provide technical assistance to potential applicants and grant recipients seeking to establish or expand community schools.

Regions	Counties Served	Regional TAC's Webpages
Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma	Santa Clara County Office of Education
Capitol Area	Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Solano, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba	Sacramento County Office of Education
Central Coast	Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura	Monterey County Office of Education
Central Valley	Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Kern , Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne	Fresno County Office of Education
Greater Los Angeles	Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education
Northern California	Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity	Shasta County Office of Education
Southern Coast	Imperial, Orange, and San Diego	San Diego County Office of Education
Southern Inland	Inyo, Mono, Riverside, and San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

Source: CDE

County Offices of Education, with two or more grantees in their county, receive funds to support the coordination of county-level government agencies, nonprofit community-based organizations, and other external partners to support regional community school's implementation.

Governor's 2024-25 Budget

The Governor's January Budget not changing the overall appropriation for the California Community Schools Partnership, but is proposing to extend the encumbrance period for the \$3 billion in total funding from 2031 to 2032, to align with current LEA program award timelines.

STAFF COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

The 2021-22 Budget Act committed historic funding amounts to a state-wide community schools approach, however, the design of current statute may not have benefited fully from the best practices and research on prior California community school initiatives:

Lessons Learned from Healthy Start. A 1996 longitudinal evaluation of the Healthy Start Initiative, conducted by Stanford Research Institute International (SRI) found improved student outcomes in reading, math, and student attendance. The SRI evaluation also recommended five policy changes to Healthy Start to strengthen the program (*emphasis added by staff for recommendations not fully addressed in current Community Schools statute*): 1) *Better integration of student services with direct instruction*, 2) Inclusion of parents and families in decision-making bodies, 3) Greater support for coordination time to manage and lead local initiatives and partnerships, 4) *Better follow-up for student service integration into a comprehensive service plan*, and 5) Recognize the trade-offs between single school and multiple-school LEA approaches in systems-change goals.

A 2011 white paper by the UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships, CRESS Center (the original Healthy Start Initiative technical assistance provider) and the Partnership for Children and Youth, made further recommendations to strengthen the original Healthy Start model for future Community School initiatives: 1) *Limit grant funding to planning and coordination, rather than services*; 2) *Require LEA commitment beyond single-site models*, 3) *Encourage greater involvement from county health and human service agencies*, 4) *Require more intentional integration of plans for providing learning support services in to the educational systems at the school and district levels*, and 5) *Provide guidelines for tracking outcomes*.

They further recommend two state-level improvements to support local models: 1) *a state-level "Children's Cabinet" to improve interagency partnering at the state level*, and 2) *state guidance around best practices for local interagency partnerships*.

The first WestEd evaluation of the CCSPP points to these very same recommendations as areas of grantee needs moving forward.

A common theme throughout the various community school analyses: As the state develops the regional and state infrastructure authorized in current statute, it will be crucial to address these best practices, and revisit local requirements as necessary to drive systems change and sustainability, as well as a community school approach that is integrated with school-day

instruction, rather than merely a programmatic layer for out-of-school time. Further, sustainable funding sources, and a state role in securing various strands of local funding, including medical services billing, remains necessary.

Questions:

- How is the Collaborative for Education Excellence and the state's Differentiated Assistance systems integrating support for a community schools approach?
- Per the WestEd evaluation, what improvements could be made to the Community Schools program to support student outcomes and sustainability?
- How many implementation grant awardees are including student behavioral health in their approaches?
- What is the status of the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative's service fee schedule work, to support sustainable behavioral health services in Community School models?
- How can the Community Schools model be sustainable without ongoing state funds?
- What percentage of Planning Grant awardees are moving forward with Implementation Grant applications? If not all, have reasons been identified?

Staff Recommendation: Hold Open.

This agenda and other publications are available on the Assembly Budget Committee's website at: [Sub 3 Hearing Agendas | California State Assembly](#). You may contact the Committee at (916) 319-2099. This agenda was prepared by Erin Gabel.