

# California State Assembly



## Assembly Budget Agenda

### Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Education Finance

Assemblymember David Alvarez, Chair

Tuesday, April 14, 2026  
9:00 A.M. – State Capitol, Rm 447

ITEMS TO BE HEARD		
Item	Description	Page
6100	<b>California Department of Education</b>	<b>2</b>
Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. California Community Schools Partnership Program &amp; Proposals</li><li>2. Expanded Learning Opportunities Program &amp; Proposals</li><li>3. Differentiated Assistance &amp; System of Support</li><li>4. Universal School Meals, Kitchen Infrastructure and Training</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2</li><li>24</li><li>32</li><li>41</li></ol>

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

#### Issue 1: California Community Schools Partnership Program

The following panels will hear the January Budget proposals impacting the California Community Schools Partnership Program.

#### Panel 1

- Sade Neri, Department of Finance (DOF)
- Michael Alferes, Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO)
- Kimberly Rosenberger, California Department of Education (CDE)

#### Panel 2

- Linda Darling Hammond, Learning Policy Institute
- Celia Medina-Owens, Pittsburg Education Association
- Jason Babineau, San Diego Unified School District
- Angelica Jongco, Partnership for the Future of Learning
- Navdeep Purewal, Sacramento County Office of Education

#### Background

A community school is a “whole-child” school improvement strategy where the local educational agency (LEA) and school(s) work closely with teachers, students, and families to identify root causes of student struggles and build comprehensive approaches to support teaching, learning, and continuous improvement. Community schools also partner with community agencies and local government to align community resources to improve student outcomes. These partnerships “provide an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.” Many community schools operate year-round, morning to evening, and serve children and adults. Community schools often serve neighborhoods where economic and social barriers to learning are prevalent.

#### Healthy Start model

The Healthy Start Support Services for Children Act (Healthy Start Initiative) was established in 1991, and provided comprehensive, school-community integrated services and activities to improve the lives of children, youth, and families. The services included health, dental, and vision care; mental health counseling; family support and parenting education; academic support;

health education; safety education and violence prevention; youth development; employment preparation; and others—serving as the seed funding for most existing Community School models in California. The Healthy Start Initiative provided grants to local education agency partnerships for program development and implementation. Schools with 50 percent of the students eligible for free and reduced meals in the lower grades, and 35 percent eligible in middle through high schools were eligible for the competitive grant. In addition, English learners were a targeted population. Planning, operational, and combined grants that included planning and implementation activities were awarded to local educational agencies and their collaborative partners for locally coordinated, school-linked services.

The Healthy Start Initiative was designed to do the following:

- Ensure that each child receives the physical, emotional, and intellectual support that he or she needs—in school, at home, and in the community—to learn well.
- Build the capacity of students and parents to be participants, leaders, and decisionmakers in their communities.
- Help schools and other child and family-serving agencies to recognize, streamline and integrate their programs to provide more effective support to children and their families.

The CDE administered Healthy Start and awarded two- year planning, five year operational, and seven-year combined planning and operational grants to LEAs. Healthy Starts developed community partnerships with public and private partners to deliver coordinated physical and mental health services to children and their families. These services were provided to students at the school site or at other district locations. After the Healthy Start grants expired, LEAs were expected to sustain the partnerships, programs, and services through other funding sources. State funding for the Health Start Initiative funding was eliminated in 2007. Some community school models found other funding sources to maintain services, including MediCal LEA billing (MAA), local First 5 funding, and other local health and community partnership funding. A total of 823 Healthy Start planning grants, 651 operational grants, and 19 combined grants were awarded during the Initiative’s existence, impacting over 1,500 school sites.

### **Promise Neighborhoods**

According to the U.S. Department of Education website, the initiative’s “vision is to ensure all children growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong family and community support systems that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career.

As a place-based program, a Promise Neighborhood is both a place and a set of strategies. Because of inequitable and exclusionary practices, many people living in the footprint of a Promise Neighborhood have experienced economic distress and its consequences. These communities may face inadequate access to high-quality early learning opportunities, struggling schools, low rates of high school and college graduation, high rates of unemployment, high rates

of crime, and indicators of poor health. Nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and Indian/Native American Tribes that receive U.S. Department of Education’s 5-year implementation grants serve as a backbone organization to anchor the Promise Neighborhood in a community. Grantees and community partners build a Promise Neighborhood as unique as the community itself.

A Promise Neighborhood is also a set of strategies for addressing the issues faced by the community. Strong lead organizations and partners work to ensure that over time all children in a Promise Neighborhood have access to a continuum of solutions, or a pipeline, that support them from cradle to career. By braiding federal and other resources, communities can create opportunity and achieve better results for all. Promise Neighborhoods build pipelines of solutions to ensure children and youth in distressed communities can succeed in school and beyond. The pipeline is part of a multiagency strategy to address struggling schools, high unemployment, inaccessible housing, persistent crime, and other problems resulting from systematically underresourced neighborhoods.

The Promise Neighborhoods program builds on the Results-Based Accountability framework, with 10 results each community aims to achieve, from children being ready for kindergarten to families and community members supporting learning in Promise Neighborhoods schools. Grantees measure progress in achieving these results using associated indicators. The Promise Neighborhoods program also recognizes that each community is unique and provides flexibility in how the results are achieved<sup>1</sup>.”

Prior to the Trump Administration’s defunding of the Promise Neighborhood program, there were eight California community grantees.

### **The California Community Schools Partnership Program**

The existing California Community Schools Partnership Program is 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.

Since 2021-22, the state has provided \$4.1 billion in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP), a competitive grant program that supports the establishment and expansion of the community schools model. Out of the \$4.1 billion provided, the state set aside \$3.9 billion for schools to plan and implement the community schools model, through planning, implementation, and extension grants.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://promiseneighborhoods.ed.gov/>

### Community School Grant Types

(In Millions)

Grant Type	Purpose	Annual Grant	Total Allocation
Planning	For schools to develop plans for implementing the community schools model.	Up to \$200,000 for two years.	\$83
Implementation	For new and existing community schools to implement the community schools model.	Up to \$500,000 for five years.	3,299 <sup>a</sup>
Extension	To extend implementation for two years, beginning in 2027-28.	Up to \$100,000 for two years.	485
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,867</b>

<sup>a</sup>Includes \$204 million initially set aside for planning grants that were used for implementation grants.

To receive funding, local education agencies (LEAs)—school districts, county offices of education (COEs), and charter schools—applied for funding on behalf of eligible school sites. LEAs are able to retain the lesser of \$500,000 or 10 percent of their total allocation to build capacity for supporting community schools across the LEA. The state also set aside \$282 million for support and technical assistance. This included \$140 million to provide grants up to \$500,000 annually for COEs to support the coordination of services across grantees within their county, as well as \$142 million for a statewide system of technical assistance. Under current law, all CCSPP funds are to be allocated by 2031-32.

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 Framework.

To support implementation, the State Board of Education adopted a [Community Schools Framework](#) in 2022 that 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.

For example, it specifies the community schools model has four pillars consistent with research: (1) integrated student support, such as on-site mental and physical health care; (2) family and community engagement; (3) collaborative leadership and practice; and (4) extended learning time and opportunities, such as after school care and summer programs. Additionally, the framework specifies key roles that LEAs and the state have in supporting the community schools model. For example, the framework specifies that LEAs have a key role in developing partnerships with external organizations on behalf of their school sites and building systems to support continuous improvement of the community schools model. The framework also includes four best practices associated with successful community schools implementation:

- **Community Asset Mapping and Gap Analysis.** Engaging with school and community members to identify existing gaps in program services and resources, and engaging with educational partners to identify programs, services, or other resources within the local community that can support students.
- **Community Schools Coordinator.** Having a coordinator that is responsible for overall implementation of the community schools model at the school site.
- **School-Based and LEA-Based Advisory Councils.** Designing shared decision-making models at the school site and at the LEA that engage students, staff, families, and community members.
- **Integrating and Aligning With Other Relevant Programs.** Ensuring schools provide services that align with and can help coordinate and extend state, school, and district initiatives

The Framework now serves as the guiding document to support the implementation of the CCSPP at the school, district, county, and state levels. In addition to signaling California's intent to adopt the Four Pillars of Community Schools, the Framework identifies four cornerstone commitments that will help define California's community schools implementation: (1) a commitment to assets-driven and strength-based practice; (2) a commitment to racially just and restorative school climates; (3) a commitment to powerful, culturally proficient, and relevant instruction; and (4) a commitment to shared decision-making and participatory practices.

The Framework also highlights four key conditions for teaching and learning and the successful implementation of school transformation plans based on the Science of Learning and Development: (1) supportive conditions that foster strong relationships and community, (2) instructional strategies that support students, (3) social–emotional learning, and (4) a system of support focused on student needs and development.

The Framework is widely used in the field and forms the basis for our technical assistance guidance at the state and regional levels. All grantees commit to implementing programs aligned to the Framework. The Framework is available on the CDE CCSP web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gc/hs/ccspp.asp>.

### **Competitive Application Process, Priorities, and Standards**

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.

LEAs were eligible to apply for schools that have either (1) a student body where 50 percent or more of their enrolled students are English learners, low income, or foster youth (EL/LI), or (2) higher than the state average rate of any of the following: dropouts, suspensions and expulsions, child homelessness, foster youth, or justice-involved youth.

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.

**Planning Grants.** The California Community Schools Partnership Program offered two rounds of planning grants. CCSP planning grants are for LEAs with no existing community schools. According to statute, awards for the CCSP planning grant shall not exceed \$200,000 for a two-year period for LEAs, and required a one-third match.

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.

The CDE awarded over \$83 million to 419 LEAs for planning grants. Cohort 1 planning grants were completed in June 2024, and Cohort 2 planning grants were completed in June 2025.

**Implementation Grants.** Pursuant to the Budget Act, up to seventy two percent of total CCSPP grant funding 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 with existing community schools and want to expand, continue or add new schools to their community schools initiative were not eligible to apply for CCSPP Planning Grants and were encouraged to apply for a CCSPP Implementation Grant as part of this first cohort. 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.

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

- 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:

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

Source: CDE

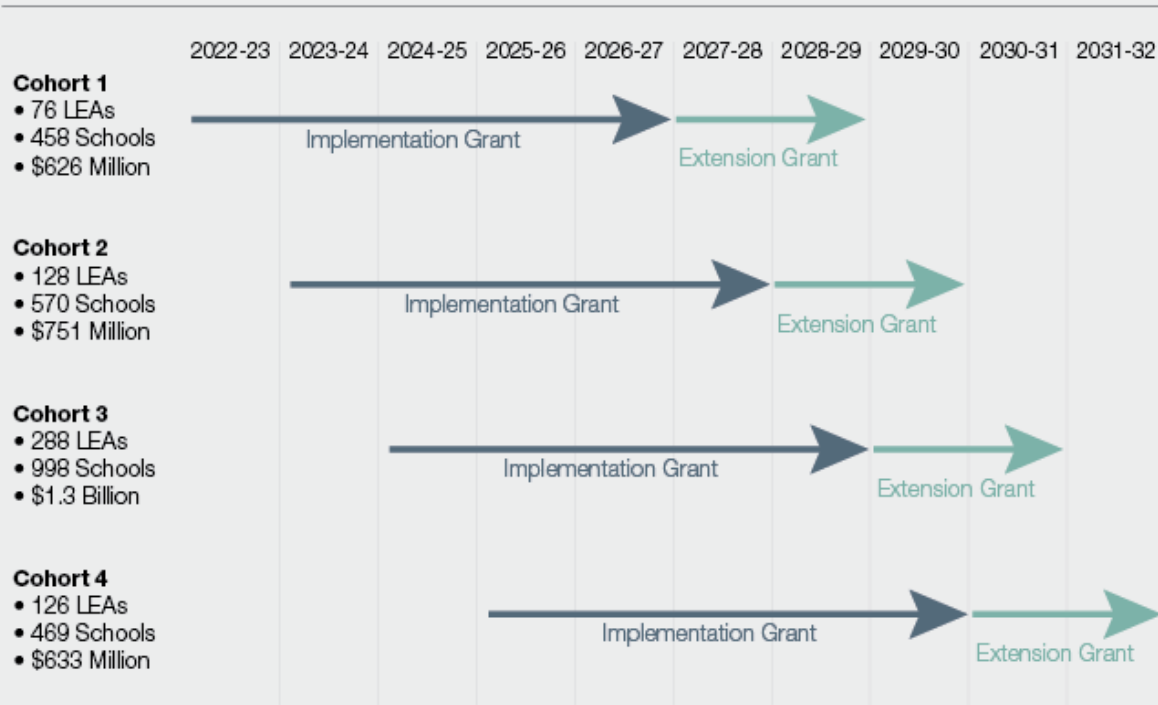
Applicants are required to provide a local match equal to one-third of the total CCSP implementation grant amount. The local match shall be contributed in cash or as services/resources of comparable value, as determined by the CDE.

Thus far, the CDE has awarded over \$3,306,959,000 to 524 LEAs supporting 2,495 school sites for implementation grants. Cohort 4 is the final Implementation Grant cohort.

Figure 3

### State Has Funded Four Rounds of CCSP Implementation Grants

Implementation Grant Duration by Cohort



Note: Several LEAs were awarded grants for their schoolsites in more than one round.  
 CCSP = California Community Schools Partnership Program and LEA = local education agency.



### Extension Grants

Extension grants (at least 18 percent of 2021 funding = \$485,068,860) for the 2027–28 through 2031–32 program years are intended to extend implementation funding for two additional years, which provides seven years of funding to implement the community school model. LEAs may receive up to \$100,000 annually per community school with a one-to-one matching funds requirement. The first Request for Applications (RFA) for extension grants will be posted in 2026–27 for Cohort 1 Implementation Grantees.

At the end of the five-year implementation period, schools could apply to receive extension grants of up to \$100,000 for an additional two years. Cohort 1 will be in the final year of the implementation grant period in 2026-27, and can apply for extension grants for 2027-28 and 2028-29. CCSP is set to sunset at the end of 2031-32 when Cohort 4 will be at the end of the two-year extension grant period.

## **State's System of Technical Assistance**

The state's system of technical assistance for Community Schools, as authorized in statute, is composed of a lead technical assistance center, known as the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC), and eight Regional Technical Assistance Centers (R-TACs). The S-TAC is currently led by the Sacramento COE, in partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Community Schooling; Californians for Justice; and the National Education Association. The eight R-TACs consist of the COEs from Fresno, Los Angeles, Monterey, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Shasta. R-TACs are tasked with providing a variety of supports to community schools, including professional development, models of practice, coaching, and related supports for implementing the community schools model. The S-TAC and R-TAC work closely with the California Department of Education (CDE) for implementation and evaluation of the program. The S-TAC started work in summer 2022, and the R-TACs began work in summer 2023.

In addition to the regional technical assistance structure, statute requires County Coordination grants (\$140,000,000 available) for COEs with a minimum of two CCSP grants in their county. The purpose of this formula-driven allocation is to provide COEs with resources to coordinate county-level governmental, nonprofit, community-based organizations, and other external partnerships to support community school implementation in their county. This program is intended to help LEAs build capacity to plan, implement, and coordinate community schools.

Coordination Grant funds will be awarded on an annual basis for a minimum of seven years. As of 2024's award cycle, 52 County Offices of Education received grants.

The S-TAC leadership contract, the R-TAC contracts supporting regional networks, and the coordination grants to COEs collectively form a comprehensive statewide support system for the implementation of California's community school model to ensure that all LEAs in the state receive the guidance and resources they need.

The Community Schools technical assistance system is intended to be integrated in the larger State System of Support, and benefits from initiatives including the Community Engagement Initiative and the MTSS.

## **Reporting, Data, & Accountability**

As part of the competitive grant process, applicants are required to submit a variety of information, including an implementation plan, a proposed budget for how funds will be used, and various supplemental information demonstrating alignment with the community schools model (such as evidence of having conducted a community asset mapping and needs assessment, a shared decision-making council, and having agreements with external service

providers). Additionally, applicants must submit detailed data regarding student outcomes (such as school attendance rates, test scores, and suspension rates), disaggregated by student subgroup.

As a condition of receiving CCSPP funding, grantees are required to publicly present information on their community school plans at school site and local governing board meetings, as well as post information on their websites. The state requires annual updates as described below.

- *Annual Expenditure Reports.* School sites are required to develop plans for how they will spend community schools funding. This information is aggregated at the LEA level, and the LEA must also document how it used any community schools funding for administrative costs.
- *Implementation Plan Updates.* As part of the initial application, each school must have a plan for how they will implement the community schools model in alignment with all of the key aspects of the state's community schools framework. They must include school goals, activities to achieve these goals, and how progress on goals will be measured. The plans also must specify how a community school coordinator will work on executing the community schools model. Each year, the implementation plan is updated based on any changes in goals or services provided.
- *Annual Progress Reports.* Grantees are required to submit student outcome data on an annual basis for evaluating progress made toward improving student outcomes and other goals set in the original implementation plan. These reports provide an opportunity for the school to assess the effectiveness of the services and supports that are being implemented.
- *Sustainability Plans.* Beginning in year two of the implementation grant cycle, grantees are required to submit plans annually on how they will sustain the community schools model. This includes how practices will be sustained (such as partnerships and shared leadership and decision-making structures), how student supports will be sustained, and potential funding sources that could be leveraged when grant funding expires.

At the end of the implementation grant period, grantees are required to provide CDE with a comprehensive report showing expenditure data and progress on meeting specified goals.

### **Annual Formative Evaluations of CCSPP**

Statute requires CDE to submit annual formative evaluations of CCSPP beginning December 31, 2023, and to submit a final comprehensive report by December 31, 2031. To date, CDE has submitted three reports to the Legislature. These reports provided summaries of CCSPP implementation, including trends in student outcomes and system-level implementation patterns based on data submitted in annual progress reports and expenditure plans.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/ccspp.asp>

According to CDE this “report demonstrates the initial and potential impact of the CCSPP that could transform public education outcomes. All grantees showed meaningful improvement in their collaborative leadership and practices for educators and administrators. At the school level, meaningful change was observed for all Four Pillars of Community School implementation, and numerous items across pillars—such as family supports and student and family access to integrated services—demonstrated significant improvement even as schools continue to struggle to stabilize in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

This comprehensive, formative analysis contains many areas of learning, on how to further improve the state’s local and technical assistance investments, and should be relevant to the Budget proposal.

**The Governor’s 2026-27 Budget**

The Governor’s Budget provides \$1 billion ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund to support the community schools model, and trailer bill changes to the program statewide.

**Community School Site Funding**

To be eligible to receive funding, schools must (1) enroll more than ten students, (2) have a student body where 65 percent or more of their enrolled students are unduplicated under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and (3) must not be a nonclassroom-based charter school. In addition, current CCSPP grantees that do not meet these criteria would be eligible.

Annual grant amounts vary depending on school size and range from \$75,000 to \$400,000.

The administration estimates that, in addition to schools that have already received one-time community schools funding, about 3,700 new schools would be eligible for funding. Beginning in 2027-28, the \$1 billion ongoing allocation would receive an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

**Proposed Grant Amounts Vary by School Size**

Enrollment	Annual Grant
10-24	\$75,000
25-150	115,000
151-400	190,000
401-1,000	230,000
1,001-2,000	305,000
2,001 or more	400,000

Source: LAO

To receive funding in 2026-27, LEAs with eligible schools are required to notify CDE by November 1, 2026 that they intend to receive funding. As with the one-time grants, LEAs would be allowed to keep the lesser of \$500,000 or 10 percent of the total allocation for their eligible community schools to support coordination activities across school sites. For LEAs with eligible school sites that do not opt in by November 1, 2026, trailer legislation specifies that LEAs will have the opportunity to submit a request to be considered for funding during regular intervals. CDE, in collaboration with the S-TAC and R-TACs, would determine the deadlines and timing of the intervals for subsequent requests for funding.

LEAs receiving funding would be required to annually report and publicly present their community school plans. For new community schools grantees, the administration indicates annual reporting requirements would begin in 2029-30, when they will be required to submit an implementation plan by December 31, 2029. Current implementation grantees would satisfy their reporting requirement through their annual progress reports under the existing one-time program. In addition, current and future grant recipients would be required to submit an annual self-certification beginning in 2029-30, indicating they are continuing to implement the community schools model in alignment with the state's community schools framework. The self-certification is to be developed by the S-TAC.

Trailer legislation proposes to free up the \$485 million allocated in prior budgets that is set aside for the two-year extension grants. Current community schools grantees would no longer be required to submit requests for extensions, as they would receive ongoing funding at the new proposed rates after their implementation period is over. Trailer legislation specifies that this freed up funding could be used to provide grants to new community schools.

### **Statewide System of Community Schools Technical Assistance & Accreditation**

The Governor's proposal would set aside \$10 million of the \$1 billion (one percent) annually for technical assistance centers, including \$2 million annually for the S-TAC. Trailer legislation provides CDE discretion to determine contract terms, including duration, for each technical assistance center, subject to approval by the State Board of Education. The administration has indicated their intent is that any current S-TAC or R-TAC that applies and receives funding would receive this funding in addition to their contracted amounts from one-time community schools funding.

Beginning in 2033-34, schools receiving community schools funding must successfully complete a new accreditation process every seven years. The accreditation process would be managed by the technical assistance centers and CDE.

## LAO Comments

***If Providing Ongoing Funding, Recommend Several Modifications to Proposal.*** If the Legislature is interested in providing ongoing funding for community schools, we recommend the Legislature make several modifications to the Governor’s proposal.

- ***Prior to Accreditation Process, Align Requirements for New Grantees With Current CCSPP Guidelines.*** While the state is developing the accreditation process for community schools, we recommend setting annual planning and reporting requirements for LEAs, consistent with the current requirements for CCSPP Cohort 4. This would encourage schools receiving funding to begin planning and accessing technical support earlier in the process. After implementation of the accreditation process, some CCSPP requirements—such as expenditure reports and sustainability plans—may become duplicative or unnecessary.
- ***Phase in Eligibility Over Time.*** To ensure the state has capacity to support new community schools, we recommend initially targeting a narrower scope of schools and then expanding eligibility over multiple years. For example, the state could begin by only allowing schools with an EL/LI percentage that is 85 percent or greater to be eligible in 2026-27, then expand to all schools with 65 percent EL/LI or higher over multiple years. This would allow for smaller cohorts and more time for the state to absorb the influx of new grantees.
- ***Set Clear Guidelines for When Eligible Schools Can Opt in Moving Forward.*** For schools that choose not to initially opt into the program, we recommend specifying the interval in which they could begin participating in the program (currently not defined in the Governor’s proposal). We think allowing schools to opt in on an annual basis is reasonable, as it would ensure that schools do not opt in just to avoid potentially being locked out of the program for a long period of time. In addition, clear expectations would help LEAs develop multiyear plans to expand the community schools model in their eligible schools.
- ***Begin Accreditation Process Earlier for Current Grantees.*** To make implementation of accreditation more manageable for the state, we recommend staggering the accreditation process based on when schools initially received community schools funding. For example, the Legislature could begin the accreditation process for the first cohort of grantees in 2029-30—seven years after receiving their initial CCSPP grants. This would provide all schools with the same amount of time to establish their programs before having to meet accreditation requirements. Starting the process earlier with more experienced schools also would give the state time to apply the accreditation standards to a smaller cohort of schools and determine if changes are needed.

- **Set More Specific Time Lines Around Accreditation Process.** In addition to setting an earlier date for when accreditation would begin, we recommend establishing time lines for key milestones associated with the development of the accreditation process. We recommend the Legislature require CDE and the S-TAC to submit a status update on the accreditation process that includes draft guidelines and estimated costs. We also recommend the Legislature require adoption of the accreditation process several months before schools begin going through accreditation. For example, the Legislature could require a status update by January 2028 and adoption of the process by January 2029, with the goal of beginning accreditation activities in 2029-30. Receiving a status update would give the Legislature an opportunity to determine whether the proposed guidelines provide sufficient accountability for schools and whether existing funding is sufficient to support accreditation costs. This also would allow schools to develop a better understanding of what they must do to meet accreditation standards.
- **Assess Funding Level for Technical Assistance Centers.** The Legislature may want to assess whether the proposed funding level for technical assistance is sufficient given the increased number of schools that will be supported on an ongoing basis. The specific level of funding would depend on several factors, including the number of new schools expected to receive funding annually and the amount of support R-TACs and the S-TAC are expected to provide to new grantees.
- **Require Unspent Funding to Revert Back to the State.** We recommend requiring unallocated funding from community schools grants to revert back to the state at the end of each fiscal year. We also recommend reverting the \$485 million currently set aside for extension grants. This would provide the Legislature an opportunity to determine—through the annual budget process—how these excess funds can be allocated to best achieve the state’s educational goals. If the Legislature finds that additional one-time funding to support community schools is a high priority at that time, it could provide a specific appropriation accordingly.

### Staff Comments

The Governor’s Budget shift for the Community Schools program, from a one-time initiative to a billion-dollar ongoing program presents a crucial moment to consider the ongoing local, regional, and state-level standards and continuous improvements processes necessary to yield student and system outcomes over time, and for the long term.

As was covered the committee’s recent oversight hearing of the existing program, recent research is showing promising student outcomes and process results for the current Community School program investment.

However, the January Budget proposal, while promising ongoing and sustainable funding for the “community schools” approach in California, removes some design features from the existing program, and does not add all the components that prior and national models have also shown to provide impacts.

Also, the Community Schools ongoing funding proposal is an enormous opportunity to achieve coherence between existing transformative investments that are directly linked the four pillars of the Community School model, in terms of planning and eliminating a categorical mindset, including Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, Career Technical Education programs, Dual Enrollment, universal school meals, and literacy coaches.

Further, the Community Schools ongoing state and regional technical assistance proposals provide an opportunity to achieve coherence between the community schools approach and our System of Support, AND better explore Community Schools-specific infrastructure.

**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, that may be addressed in non-codified aspects to current program design*): 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*.

**Effective Community School Policies.** According to the *Community School Playbook*, published in partnership with the Learning Policy Institute and the Partnership for the Future of Learning: Community Schools are a place-based school improvement strategy in which “schools partner with community agencies and local government to provide an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.” The Playbook provides recommendations for policymakers, particularly relevant to supporting new community school development (*emphasis added by staff for recommendations not fully addressed in current Community Schools statute*):

- Define community schools comprehensively, organized around four pillars;
- Specify the criteria by which schools will be selected for grants *and other types of support*;
- Provide specific language about the purpose of the four pillars, while allowing for flexibility in local implementation;
- Build a strong foundation by *specifying key aspects of implementation, including hiring a fulltime community school director for each school*, broad and deep engagement in an assessment/ planning process, and regular reporting around implementation and outcome metrics;
- *Support school transformation strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning, rather than simply focusing on out-of-classroom supports and activities*;
- *Invest in professional development to support collaborative leadership structures and practices and to encourage and facilitate cross-agency collaboration*;
- *Identify a leadership structure and clearly defined next steps, including—where there will be more than one community school—language specifying a cross-sector steering committee or implementation team and a clear articulation of its authority. Baltimore and Los Angeles provide the best examples of this type of language*;
- Ensure the participation of teachers, families, and communities at every stage of the process;
- *Address issues of interagency collaboration, including data sharing with appropriate privacy protections*;
- *Specify which entities will need to be involved for successful local implementation*; and
- *Invest in professional development to support continuous improvement*, the process that follows the broad and deep engagement in an assessment/planning process.

A common theme throughout the various community school analyses: As the state has developed local program requirements, and the regional and state infrastructure authorized in current statute, other aspects of the program not codified, including the State Board of Education Framework, the State Transformation Assistance Centers (STAC) approach, and Request for

Application (RFA) design address these some of these best practices above. In other cases, some best practices are encouraged but not yet required in existing “approach” implementation.

The January Budget proposal is a key opportunity to revisit local requirements and state systems of support, as necessary to drive systems change and sustainability, as well as a community school approach that is integrated with school-day instruction. How does the January Budget proposal improve on the Program design, based on evidence?

And of equal importance, how might the January Budget proposal actually eliminate existing parameters for Community Schools that may be working to facilitate outcomes?

### **Application Process, Planning, & Readiness**

The current statute requires a competitive application process, which CDE and SBE have interpreted to include alignment with the SBE framework, and various contractual requirements for robust planning and data reporting, including the Annual Progress Report and Whole Child Inventory. Does the opt-in process proposed in the January Budget eliminate the robust planning and interest-holder engagement strategies embedded in the existing program?

Existing statute also provided for and encouraged a planning grant process for LEAs not already steeped in the Community Schools approach. Are planning grants still necessary to support readiness for schools not already facilitating a robust community school approach?

### **Standards**

Building upon the statutory pillars, the SBE adopted a Community School Framework in 2022, and directed the CDE RFA design accordingly. This framework is not codified, and includes evidence-based strategies grantees must incorporate for program environmental conditions, instructional strategies, social and emotional learning, and systems of support.

Shouldn't the SBE Framework be codified as a key design feature to the Community Schools standards? And like our curriculum frameworks, should this Community Schools framework be revisited and potentially refreshed under SBE authority, based on evidence and an evolution in practice?

According to the SBE Framework: “Every district and every school are different, and there will therefore be variation in design and practice, but to be a California Community School, each of the four pillars must be evidenced in implementation and practice.” How will should the state require this evidence? Support continuous improvement?

### **System of Support Design**

Current statute articulates the basics of the RTAC design and scope, but does not articulate a clear role for the STAC, or provide clarity on how the System of Support and STAC and RTAC should be integrated for coherence. For example, the leveraging of the Community Engagement

Initiative in a Community Schools interest holder engagement approach is an emerging best practice. How could these initiatives be formally aligned and improved together over time, to impact both Community School agency and LEA LCAP engagement?

Current law only currently requires the following, which predates actual state systems design:

Technical assistance shall, to the extent practicable, be provided in consultation and collaboration with the statewide system of support established pursuant to Section 52059.5, and be made available to share best practices and assist both prospective applicants and grant recipients with tasks, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- (1) Conducting a comprehensive school and community needs and asset assessment.
- (2) Improving authentic family and community engagement in the languages spoken in the community.
- (3) Creating community partnerships.
- (4) Developing sustainable funding sources.
- (5) Coordinating services across child-serving agencies and schools.
- (6) Accessing and combining funding for services from multiple revenue sources.

**County Coordination Capacity vs Technical Assistance.** Current statute requires “at least two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) and up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) annually, for seven years, for each qualifying county office of education. These funds are separate from any funds county offices of education receive pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (h) for serving as qualifying entities to a network of community schools.” Specific roles in statute:

(B) County offices of education receiving funds pursuant to this paragraph shall support centralized grant recipient communications with county-level governmental partners and funding sources, which may include, but not be limited to, pupil support and health care service billing and billing practices technical assistance.

(C) County offices of education receiving funds pursuant to this paragraph shall support local educational agency planning and use of pupil and campus data for integrating community school, expanded learning, early childhood education, county behavioral health, educator professional development, and other state-funded initiatives integral to the four pillars of a community school approach as described in subdivision (b) of Section 8901, which may be part of the qualifying entity’s local control and accountability plan process pursuant to Section 47606.5, 52060, or 52066, as applicable.

How is accompanying January Budget DA proposal inclusive of this capacity?

How could the proposal support Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and health insurance integration into school-based services?

### **Promise Neighborhoods & Community Partnership Capacity.**

Existing statute states: "It is the intent of the Legislature that qualifying entities that serve high school pupils with significant populations of undocumented pupils in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, implement a Dream Resource Center as part of their community school model." Are any high school models inclusive of a Dream Resource Center?

Is there more specificity necessary to effectively leverage community and county resources in the Community School approach, that mirrors the Promise Neighborhood approach in numerous ways?

### **Integration with "Other" Transformational Programs.**

Is there an opportunity to create for coherence between other ongoing programs that support a Community School approach, including the LCFF Equity Multiplier, ELOP, school meals, and the State Preschool Program? For examples:

- Should LEAs with Community School grants on all their TK-6 school sites be relieved of their ELOP planning requirements?
- Should ELOP statute be clarified to make Community School coordinator positions explicitly allowable?
- Should Equity Multiplier sites be allowed to substitute their site-based LCAP for their Community Schools Plan?

Match: is the 1/3 match requirement for Community Schools in current statute a coherence and integration strategy that should remain in ongoing design?

### **Middle School and High School Approaches**

Recent Learning Policy Institute data also showed that the effectiveness of California's Community School program design may have room for improvement in middle schools and high schools. The current program design is flexible for sites, but also not targeted by site types. The Budget proposal is an opportunity to revisit state policy designs, and revisit what middle and high school Community School sites may uniquely need for student and system outcomes success.

### **Suggested Questions:**

1. How does the January Budget proposal improve on the existing Community Schools Program design, based on evidence?

2. Where is the January Budget proposal actually eliminating existing parameters for Community Schools? Why?
3. What parameters for the SBE Framework or RFA design should be codified?
4. Does the opt-in process proposed in the January Budget eliminate the robust planning and interest-holder engagement strategies embedded in the existing program? Is it possible to balance a low bar for entry with strong standards for process and performance, based on evidence?
5. Are planning grants still necessary to support readiness for schools not already pursuing an evidence-based community school approach? How many LEAs that qualify under the proposal do not have a single Community School?
6. How is accompanying January Budget Differentiated Assistance proposal inclusive of key county support roles for Community Schools capacity? Like regional hubs for Promise Neighborhoods and other County service partnerships?
7. How is the proposal supporting Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and health insurance integration into school-based services?
8. Are any high school models inclusive of a Dream Resource Center?
9. Is there more specificity necessary to effectively leverage community and county resources in the Community School approach, that mirrors the Promise Neighborhood approach in numerous ways?
10. How much of the one billion would be needed in the Budget Year for existing implementation grants?
11. How does the proposed annual self certification compare to the existing Annual Progress Report?
12. Who is doing the Accreditation? How does Accreditation impact County infrastructure? RTACs?
13. Do audit penalties need to be created, based on program standards?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 2: Expanded Learning Opportunities Program**

This issue will cover Governor's Budget proposals to augment the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP), the state's universal after school and summer school program, and provide oversight on program implementation.

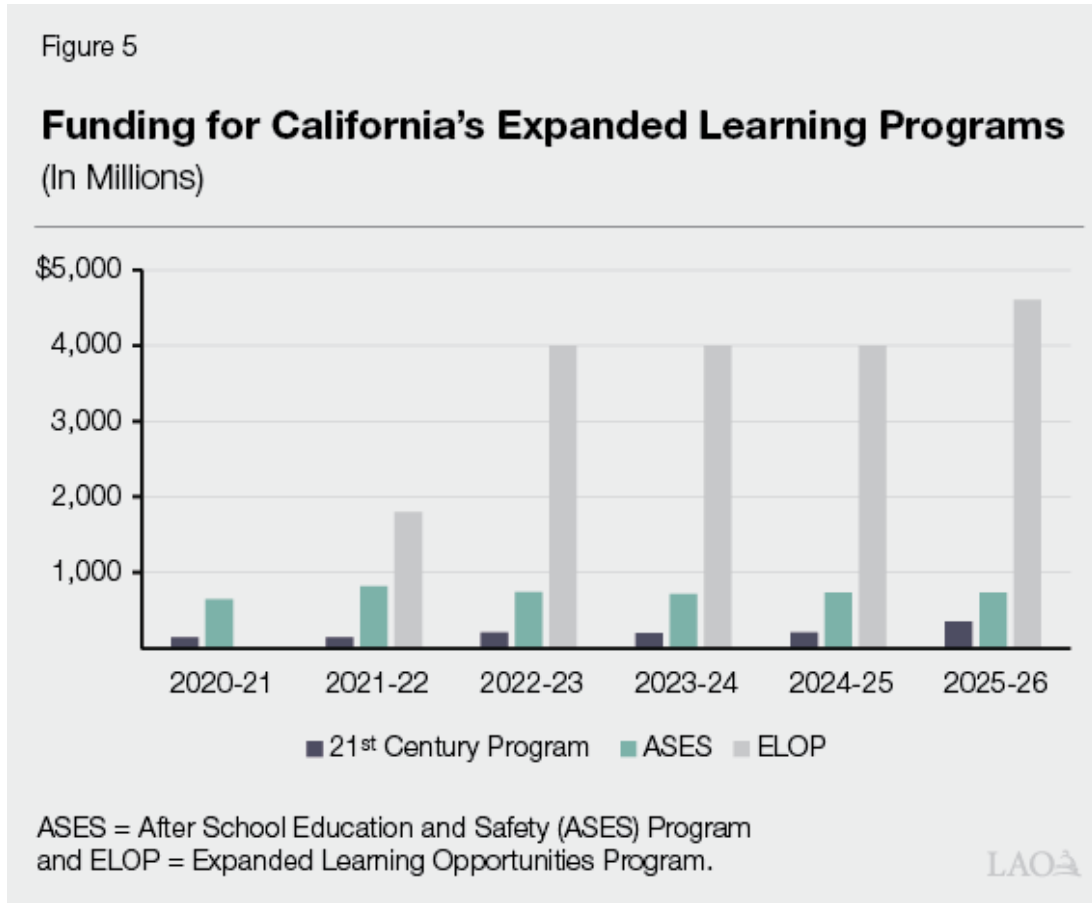
**Panel**

- Idalys Perez, DOF
- Dylan Hawksworth-Lutzow, LAO
- Michael Funk, CDE

**Background**

The state has three expanded learning programs that provide students with academic and enrichment activities outside of normal school hours. Two of these programs, the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century program), are longstanding. In 2002, voters approved Proposition 49, which requires the state to provide at least \$550 million annually to after school programs under the ASES program. The 21st Century program is primarily federally funded.

In 2021-22, the state created the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) with plans to ramp up funding through 2025-26. This program now represents the vast majority of funding schools receive for expanded learning:



**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 2025-26 Budget Act provided \$4.6 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.

**Two-Tiered ELOP Funding Rates & Service Standards**

As the LAO table displays below, the ELOP implementing legislation established two funding rates that account for TK-6 attendance and vary based on the proportion of LEA’s students who are English learners or from low-income families (EL/LI). Beginning in 2025-26, districts with a student body that is 55 percent or more EL/LI receive a rate per EL/LI student (\$2,750) that is set in statute. We refer to these as the Tier 1 rates. For other districts, statute specifies the rate will vary based on the amount of funding remaining after accounting for Tier 1 allotments. (These are known as Tier 2 rates.)

**ELOP Funding Tiers and Rates Over Time**

	Tier 1 EL/LI Threshold	Tier 1 Rate Per EL/LI Student	Tier 2 Rate Per EL/LI Student
2021-22	80%	\$1,170	\$672
2022-23	75	2,500	2,054
2023-24	75	2,750	1,803
2024-25	75	2,750	1,579
2025-26	55	2,750	1,579

ELOP = Expanded Learning Opportunities Program and EL/LI = English learner or low income.

Source: LAO

From 2022-23 through 2024-25, the state appropriation remained at \$4 billion annually, while the Tier 1 rate and overall Tier 1 TK-6 attendance increased. As a result, funding available for Tier 2 rates decreased. In 2025-26, the state increased funding to \$4.6 billion and made several programmatic changes. One goal of the funding increase was to ensure that 2025-26 Tier 2 rates would be no less than \$1,579 per EL/LI student. (The funding increases also covered the costs of lowering the Tier 1 threshold and increasing minimum grant amounts.)

As a condition of ELOP funding, districts and charter schools with a student body that is equal to or more than 55 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 55 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.

### Key Components of California’s Two Largest Expanded Learning Programs

	ASES	ELOP
<b>Funding Allocation</b>	Competitive grant process that prioritizes high-poverty schools. Funded using a daily per-student rate (10.18 in 2024-25).	Two-tier funding formula based on the number of EL/LI students in the district or charter school.
<b>Hours of Operation</b>	Must operate an after school program. Grantees can apply for additional funding for before school or summer programs. Must begin immediately after the school day ends and operate until at least 6 pm every school day.	Must operate for at least 9 hours every school day including normal instruction hours and for at least 30 days over the summer.
<b>Grade Levels</b>	TK-8th grade.	Formula is based on TK-6th grade attendance, but can be used for other grades.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Must include an educational and literacy element and an educational enrichment element.	Same as ASES.
<b>Staffing</b>	For TK and kindergarten, maintain a student to staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1. For other grades, maintain a student to staff ratio of no more than 20 to 1.	Same as ASES.
<b>Parent Fees</b>	Optional. Programs that charge fees must waive them for low-income students, homeless youth, and foster youth. Fees must be based on a sliding scale that considers family income and ability to pay.	Same as ASES.
<b>Local Match</b>	Local match of \$1 (cash or in-kind services) for every \$3 in state funding.	Not required.

ASES = After School Education and Safety Program; ELOP = Expanded Learning Opportunities Program; TK = transitional kindergarten; and EL/LI = English learner or low-income.

Source: LAO

Funds provided to an 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.

**ELOP Data Update:** Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, LEAs will identify students in CALPADS who were enrolled in an ELOP or “other” after school program (ELP) within an academic year (July 1 through June 30) and the start date of that enrollment. Additionally, for any student who is identified as enrolled in an ELP, LEAs will also report the total number of days a student participated in an ELP. An “enrolled student” is defined as a student who has completed an ELP enrollment form. LEAs will certify these data as part of the End of Year (EOY) 3 submission to CALPADS. In accordance with state law, the CDE will continue to provide a

report to the legislature on this program based on this new data source. The first report for this data should be available in the Fall 2026.

### **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 2025-26 funding level for the ASES program is \$794 million. Per statute, CDE awards ASES grants on a competitive, 3-year grant cycle, which provides priority for current grantees.

Priorities for ASES grantees has not been adjusted since the creation of ELOP for TK-6 students.

**21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds. Unlike ASES, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC fund cycles are five years in length, and do not necessarily fund the same grantees each cycle. \$146 million in annual 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds currently support 721 school sites, serving students TK-12. Approximately 374 school sites are funded with both ASES and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds.

Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees have not been adjusted since the creation of ELOP for TK-6 students.

**ELO-P and ASES/21<sup>st</sup> CCLC.** CDE guidance has allowed ASES and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to be blended with ELO-P. 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

System of Support for Expanded Learning. The state uses a portion of ASES (1.5% Prop 49) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century program (5%) allocations 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 Governor's 2026-27 Budget**

The Governor's Budget proposes to set a minimum Tier 2 rate of \$1,800 per EL/LI student, while the Tier 1 rate would remain at \$2,750 per EL/LI student. The budget includes an associated ongoing \$62.4 million Proposition 98 General Fund increase to fund the higher Tier 2 rates. If additional funding is available within the ELOP appropriation, the funding would be allocated to increase Tier 2 rates above \$1,800.

### **LAO Comments**

***Establish Fixed Tier 2 Rate.*** To provide greater predictability for districts, we recommend setting a specific rate for Tier 2 districts in statute. This certainty would help districts make longer term program decisions. We think the current Tier 2 rate of \$1,579 is likely sufficient to meet current ELOP program requirements, but the Legislature could provide a higher rate if it would like to fund additional programs and services. Rather than automatically allocating excess funding within ELOP to Tier 2 districts, we recommend the excess funds revert back to the state. If the Legislature is interested in increasing Tier 1 or Tier 2 rates in the future, we recommend

those increases be based on an analysis of program costs that take into consideration the number of students participating in expanded learning programs and the programmatic requirements set in statute.

### Staff Comments

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program is intended to be one transformation investment in student engagement and addressing root causes of the achievement gaps.

In this sixth year of program implementation and investment, it is 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 sustainability. 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.

In addition to the January Budget proposal to stabilize the Tier 2 rate, the Legislature should consider whether additional adjustments are necessary to support coherence with various Extended Learning funding sources and other transformative categorical investments like school meals and Community Schools.

For example, should ASES and 21stCCLC funds be prioritized for Community Schools that are not TK-6, to provide support for that statutory pillar of the Community School approach?

Should ELOP statute clarify that a Community Schools site or LEA-level coordinator are allowable uses of funds?

### Suggested Questions

1. Why doesn't the January Budget proposal set a statutory rate for Tier 2, as recommended by the LAO?
2. What trends does CDE see in enrollment so far?
3. How many ELOP sites are double-funded with ASES or 21stCCLC grants?
4. How many TK and K students are served in ELOP? In ASES with the larger ratio? Should the ASES ratio conform to ELOP?
5. Are all LEAs be expected to "offer" a program to all students, regardless of income? Disability?

6. How are LEAs “offering” their ELOP options to parents? Are stronger state standards for parent engagement and program advertisement needed?
7. Enrollment vs participation incentives: per the LAO recommendation, should ELOP reward LEAs for student participation?
8. Are LEAs utilizing sliding-scale parent fees to supplement Tier 2 rates? Tier 1 rates?
9. How are LEAs incentivized to ensure all interested students receive services?
10. Are local Resource & Referral agencies posting third-party ELO-P options for parents? What is the estimated magnitude of student services for ELO-P on third-party sites?
11. Should ELOP statute be adjusted to allow school meal time and staff to more inclusive in the ELOP offerings?
12. Are ELOP Plans still necessary now that CalPADS data is collected?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open. Ask staff to work with LAO and CDE on recommendations to transition priority for ASES and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs to non-ELOP eligible students and LEAs.

**Issue 3: Differentiated Assistance & State System of Support Proposals**

This panel will hear the funding and trailer bill proposals in the January Budget, regarding the System of Support and Differentiated Assistance for Local Education Agencies.

**Panel**

- Stephanie Gregson, California Collaborative for Education Excellence
- George Harris, Department of Finance (DOF)
- Michael Alferes, Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO)
- Kimberly Rosenberger, California Department of Education (CDE)

**Background****California School Dashboard & Multiple Measures for School Accountability**

The state uses multiple indicators and a variety of data sources to assess the student outcomes of local education agencies (LEAs)—school districts, county offices of education (COEs), and charter schools—as well as individual schools. For example, to understand student achievement, the state uses standardized test results in English, math, and—for English learners—progress in developing English proficiency. In addition to tracking outcomes related to standardized tests, the state also uses indicators in other areas, such as student engagement and school climate. For example, to understand student engagement, the state uses high school graduation and chronic absenteeism rates.

The state publicly displays achievement on these indicators on a website known as the California School Dashboard. Performance is shown for the state, each LEA, and each school. In addition, performance for the state, each LEA, and each school is disaggregated by up to 14 student subgroups. The dashboard was first made available in fall 2017 and is updated annually.

## Student Subgroups for Which Outcome Data Is Reported

### Racial Subgroups

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- White

### Other Subgroups

- English learners
- Foster youth
- Homeless youth
- Long-term English learners
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Students with disabilities

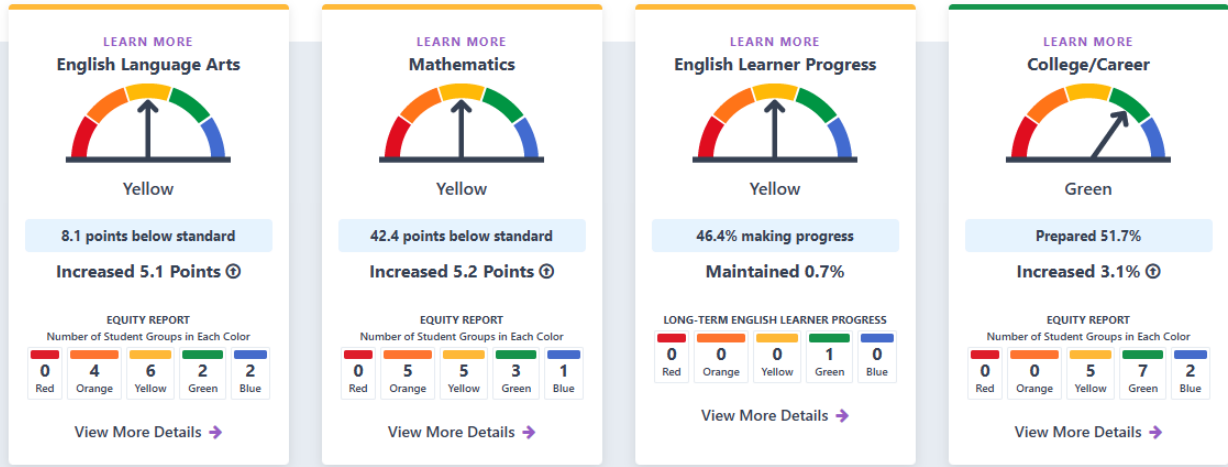
Source: LAO

For each performance indicator shown by LEA, school, or subgroup, the state assigns one of five performance levels. Performance levels are based on a combination of overall status and change in the measure over the past year. Below are snapshots from the 2025 Statewide Dashboard:

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## Academic Performance

View Student Assessment Results and other aspects of school performance.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

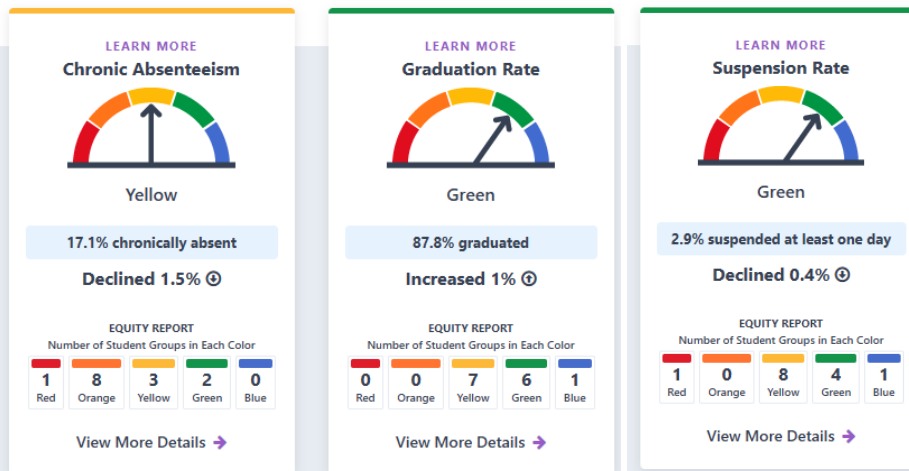
## Academic Engagement

See information that shows how well schools are engaging students in their learning.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## Conditions & Climate

View data related to how well schools are providing a healthy, safe and welcoming environment.



Source: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/ca/2025>

### Differentiated Assistance for Student Outcomes Support

LEAs are identified for differentiated assistance annually based on the performance of their student subgroups—also known as the performance criteria. Certain requirements of the performance criteria are set in statute, with the State Board of Education (SBE) responsible for deciding the specific details for implementation. Under current law, a school district or COE

enters differentiated assistance based on low performance of a student subgroup in two or more areas on the state dashboard. SBE determines the performance level threshold that determines eligibility for differentiated assistance. This is similar for charter schools, except they must meet the performance criteria for two consecutive years to enter differentiated assistance.

In 2025, 553 LEAs were eligible for differentiated assistance, under the existing criteria. When a school district or charter school is identified, it receives assistance from its COE for two years. (Identified COEs receive assistance from a state agency or another COE.) As part of differentiated assistance, the COE is to support the district or charter school to build their capacity to implement actions that address student needs. The specific support may vary, but actions can include helping a district identify the primary causes of its performance issues or securing an expert to assist in a specific area.

The state provides COEs with additional funding to cover the costs associated with their differentiated assistance activities. This funding is provided through a formula that consists of a base amount of \$300,000 for each COE, plus additional funding based on the number of districts and charters in the county in need of differentiated assistance. (The amount per district varies based on the district's size.) The 2025-26 Budget Act provided COEs \$119 million for this purpose.

### **The 2025-26 Budget Act**

At the request of the Administration, trailer legislation included in the 2025-26 budget package requires SBE to update the performance criteria by July 15, 2026. This update could change how LEAs are identified for differentiated assistance.

### **State Board of Education Discussions**

In response to the 2025 Budget Act timelines, the SBE held a study session in November 2025, where SBE members received a comprehensive overview of DA and the State System of Support, along with findings from recent evaluations and reflections from county leaders responsible for implementing support on the ground. One area of focus presented was the sheer number of LEAs identified for DA under the current system: at one point, post-pandemic, more than 60 percent of districts statewide were eligible for DA. The SBE March Item on this issue asserts that this is “an indication that the system is stretched beyond its intended capacity and a sign that the state must rethink how assistance is targeted, delivered, and sustained<sup>2</sup>.” In the study session, WestEd presented on their 2022 statewide evaluation, and reported “DA has had positive impacts on student outcomes and is generally viewed as supportive by districts. However, the quality and consistency of DA vary significantly across the state. She echoed

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<sup>2</sup> March 2026 State Board of Education Agenda <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr26/agenda202603.asp>

concerns about system capacity and raised an additional issue: some districts serve student groups with n-sizes too small to trigger DA eligibility, even when those groups show clear need<sup>3</sup>.”

As further summarized the State Board March 2026 item:

“In public comment and Board discussion, several themes emerged, including: 1) More time is needed across the system to implement targeted improvement strategies. 2) Greater coherence and focus would help reduce churn and allow support providers to work more deeply with districts, 3) The system should become more proactive, with stronger universal supports that prevent challenges in the first place, 4) A shift from compliance to productive support is essential, anchored in trust and informed by student and educator voice, while keeping sight of the system as a whole.

Overall, the study session highlighted both the strain on California’s current Statewide System of Support and the opportunity to build a more coherent, preventive, and sustainable structure. As the Board continues its work, members emphasized the importance of targeting resources where they are most needed and strengthening the system’s ability to support continuous improvement and improved outcomes for all students.”

### **The Governor’s 2026-27 Budget**

The Governor’s Budget contains three distinct proposals, related to Differentiated Assistance:

**Changes Differentiated Assistance Funding Formula.** The Governor’s budget provides an additional \$13 million ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund to adopt a new formula for differentiated assistance. This would bring total differentiated assistance funding to \$132 million. The new formula would increase the base amount for each COE from \$300,000 to \$500,000. The remainder of funds would be based on the number of students within the county rather than the number of districts and size of districts identified. The Governor’s budget also proposes to expand the intended use of these funds. The funding is intended to fund targeted assistance to those LEAs identified for differentiated assistance, as well as universal support to all LEAs for improving student outcomes.

**Changes Frequency of LEA Identification for Differentiated Assistance.** Trailer bill language accompanying the proposal specifies that LEAs will be identified for differentiated assistance once every three years. Once identified, the LEA would receive assistance from their COE for a minimum of three years. Currently, LEAs are identified annually and receive assistance for a minimum of two years.

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<sup>3</sup> March 2026 State Board of Education Agenda <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr26/agenda202603.asp>

**Removes Statute for Existing Performance Criteria.** The proposed trailer bill language removes statute that requires LEAs to be identified for differentiated assistance based on the performance of their student subgroups. This would provide SBE with broad flexibility to establish new performance criteria for differentiated assistance. In addition, the proposed trailer bill language allows SBE to adopt unique performance criteria for charter schools, school districts, and COEs. Currently, the statutory performance criteria are the same for all LEAs, with the exception that charters schools need to meet the criteria for two consecutive years.

### LAO Comments

***Making Changes to Formula and Differentiated Assistance Is Premature.*** As mentioned above, recently enacted state law directs SBE to update the performance criteria used to identify schools for differentiated assistance. These updates have not been made yet and, as a result, the Legislature has no sense of how many LEAs will be identified for assistance in the future. The number of LEAs identified for assistance is a key driver of the costs COEs will incur to provide differentiated assistance. Without this information, the Legislature is unable to assess whether the Governor's proposed funding changes align with the associated costs in future years. Similarly, although the proposed changes to the timing and frequency of differentiated assistance could be reasonable, these also need to be evaluated in tandem with the updated performance criteria. For example, analyzing the merits of providing differentiated assistance for a longer period of time would depend upon the selectivity of the new criteria. This way decisions can be made with a full understanding of who is and is not receiving differentiated assistance.

***Removing Performance Criteria From State Law Limits Input From Legislature.*** The proposed changes to state law give SBE significantly more autonomy to determine performance criteria in the future. Currently, state law specifies certain requirements of the performance criteria, while giving SBE flexibility in the implementation details. The proposed trailer bill removes these requirements from statute, giving SBE authority to change its approach over time without legislative input.

### Recommendations

***Revisit Funding Formula and Changes to Differentiated Assistance When Administration Can Provide More Information About Performance Criteria.*** Given the new SBE performance criteria have yet to be developed, we recommend rejecting the proposed funding and programmatic changes to differentiated assistance. The Legislature could revisit these issues as part of the 2027-28 budget process, after the performance criteria have been adopted by SBE. If the performance criteria are finalized early and the administration can provide additional details this spring on how the changes would affect COE workload, the Legislature could consider this proposal in May.

**Maintain Legislative Role in System of Support Criteria.** We recommend rejecting the proposed changes to statute that give SBE more autonomy to determine the performance criteria. Although changes to state law may ultimately be necessary to align with the new performance criteria, these changes can be adopted after SBE has adopted new criteria in July. Furthermore, we recommend the Legislature continue to include language in state law that sets key requirements for the performance criteria. This would ensure that major changes to the performance criteria cannot be implemented in the future without input from the Legislature.

### Staff Comments

The three Budget proposals can and should be considered separately, rather than as a package:

1. Deletes the requirement for the criteria to be based on performance by pupil subgroups across two or more indicators, or across two or more state priority areas.
  - a. The TBL allows the SBE to adopt unique DA and DTA criteria for county offices of education (COEs), charter schools, and school districts.
  - b. Additionally, TBL authorizes the SBE to determine DTA eligibility based on factors that demonstrate the LEA is in need of intensive, extended support.

This proposal is a significant policy shift, that removes a direct statutory authority in driving intervention, AND potentially delinks DA from the State Dashboard. The proposal would significantly increase the SBE authority over how the need for school improvement is defined across the state, and allow for different standards by LEA type. Staff recommends that the committee reject this policy change, and work with the policy committee on a DA statutory framework that can be responsive to stubborn achievement gaps and state priorities.

In the meantime, the SBE can operate within their existing authority to tighten DA identification, consistent with statute. Once SBE performance criteria discussions conclude later this year, there may be further guidance to the Legislature.

The Administration points to the sheer number of LEAs identified for DA as a reason for this policy shift. Staff would argue that an alternative approach would be to recognize the overall capacity the System of Support needs to actuate our State Dashboard goals. If LEAs are truly struggling to meet state standards, why isn't more capacity for support warranted?

2. Shifts all LEAs to a three-year eligibility and support cycle, aligned with the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) cycle. Beginning with the 2026 Dashboard, COEs, charter schools, and school districts would become eligible for DA and DTA once every three years and receive targeted support for three years.

- a. CALPADS DA, provided pursuant to Education Code (EC) Section 52071(c)(2), would continue on a one-year cycle, meaning that districts and COEs with data management and reporting issues would be eligible for support on a yearly basis, and receive, at minimum, one year of support.
- b. Geographic Lead DA, provided pursuant to EC Section 52071(f), would be phased out with the completion of the 2026-27 school year, and no additional school districts would become eligible for this type of support, beginning with the 2026 Dashboard.

This proposal has merit, to align LCAP and DA timelines, as well as allow more continuity for LEAs and the System of Support. The proposal would also be responsive to multi-year Dashboard areas for concern, rather than single-year anomalies.

3. Replaces the existing DA funding formula with a new funding structure focused on providing universal and targeted assistance, free of cost, to support the continuous improvement of all LEAs within the county.
  - a. The universal and targeted assistance funding would support numerous activities to improve outcomes under the state priorities identified in EC Section 52060(d) and EC Section 52066(c), including, but not limited to, providing DA support; providing effective assistance and coaching to school districts on the development and implementation of the LCAP and annual update; and coordinating county-level governmental, nonprofit community-based organizations, and other external partnerships to support community schools.
  - b. The universal and targeted assistance funding formula would be predominantly based on countywide average daily attendance (ADA), versus the existing formula which depends on the number of districts and charter schools identified for DA.

This proposal has significant merit, as it stabilizes funding for County Offices of Education, in their key role in the system of support, and strengthens the ability to provide more universal supports for all LEAs in their continuous improvement work.

Staff recommends, consistent with Issue One, that adequate Community Schools capacity be added to this proposal, as both a regional service to all Community Schools in a County, but also as a universal and targeted assistance strategy for all schools.

### **Suggested Questions:**

1. Why should the System of Support's process to identify struggling LEAs be decoupled from the "two or more" standard for the State Dashboard?
2. Is the "n" size for LEAs (currently 14 for accountability purposes) as small as possible, based on data science, for protecting privacy but still ensuring visibility for small minority student groups with needs?

3. Are the subgroups currently recognized the complete list necessary to track the diversity of California students? Or are smaller ethnic and social subgroups, like newcomers, and refugees from the Middle East, buried inside larger subgroup definitions?
4. Are there additional capacity investments necessary to meet the universal and targeted assistance needs for all LEAs?
5. Are there necessary changes to the System of Support, to promote coherence?
6. How can the Community Schools County Office of Education capacity be designed best, to support both regional Community Schools facilitation, AND promote a community schools approach in universal and targeted assistance strategies?
7. In Issue One, Community Schools will be considered a Universal Tier 1 Support for all LEAs as requested. Is this proposal funding sufficient for COEs to support all schools with >65% UPP?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 4: Universal Schools Meals & Kitchen Infrastructure Proposals**

This panel will hear the January Budget proposals for universal school meals and a Kitchen Infrastructure and Training Grant.

**Panel**

- Alaina Powell, Department of Finance (DOF)
- Sara Cortez, Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO)
- Kimberly Rosenberger, California Department of Education (CDE)

**Background**

The 2021-22 Budget Act created California’s Universal School Meals initiative, and required that, beginning in 2022-23, all public schools provide one free breakfast and one free lunch per school day to any student requesting a meal, regardless of income. State meal reimbursement rates, adjusted in the annual Budget Act for projected demand, were created to fully fund the LEA costs for the Universal School Meal requirement.

To support schools in meeting the universal school meals requirements, the 2021-22 budget package also provided \$150 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund to create the Kitchen Infrastructure and Training (KIT) grant. In subsequent state budget packages, two more rounds of KIT funding were provided, for a total of \$905 million (Figure 14).

**State Has Funded Three Rounds of Kitchen Infrastructure and Training Grants**

	Amount (In Millions)	Distribution Method	Status	Deadline for Committing Funds
Round 1: 2021-22	\$150	Formula	Distributed to 941 local education agencies (LEAs) that opted in.	June 30, 2025
Round 2: 2022-23	600	Formula	Distributed to 1,010 LEAs that opted into program.	June 30, 2026
Round 3: 2025-26	155	Competitive	LEAs submitted applications for funds January 2026.	June 30, 2028
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$905</b>			

Source: LAO

In the first round of KIT funding, local education agencies (LEAs) could use \$120 million for kitchen infrastructure and equipment such as cooking equipment, service equipment, and refrigeration. This first round also set aside \$30 million for training food service staff. For the second round of grants, LEAs could use \$350 million of these funds for all the same purposes as the first round (including training). In addition, funds could be used for staff costs associated with certain activities such as procuring locally and sustainably grown food. The remaining \$250 million from round 2 can be used for the same activities, but funds must be used to increase

capacity for freshly prepared on-site meals, rather than more broadly to implement universal school meals.

The third round, as enacted in the 2025-26 Budget Act, allows for all the same allowable uses as the first two rounds, but also allows funds to be used to purchase certain ingredients, such as California-grown produce. The third round also sets aside \$10 million for recruitment and retention activities such as one-time bonuses. This most recent KIT grant is competitive.

### **The Governor's 2026-27 Budget**

The Governor's Budget maintains the California universal meals commitment with a decrease of \$67.9 million in annual Proposition 98 funding, to reflect meal service estimates and a proposed meal reimbursement rate increase.

The Governor's budget provides \$100 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for grants to support kitchen equipment, infrastructure, training, and the continued implementation of universal school meals. The allowable uses would be similar to previous rounds of funding, but LEAs could also use funds to implement strategies to provide food assistance to students who may be experiencing food insecurity. Funds would be distributed competitively using criteria to be developed by the California Department of Education (CDE). In awarding funds, CDE is to prioritize LEAs that participate in certain provisions of the federal nutrition programs (generally available to LEAs with relatively high shares of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals). CDE is also to prioritize LEAs that were not awarded the third round of KIT funds and LEAs that have committed at least 65 percent of their second round of KIT funds. Funds would be available until June 30, 2029.

### **LAO Comments**

***Recommend Rejecting Fourth Round of KIT Funds.*** Given that the second round of funds are still being spent and the third round of funds are still being awarded, we recommend the Legislature reject the fourth round of KIT funds. The Legislature could consider providing additional funding in the future, when it has additional information on how the second and third round of funds were spent. If the Legislature provides funding in the future, we recommend funds be restricted for specific goals set by the Legislature, and that data is collected to measure progress toward achieving these goals.

**Staff Comments**

**Suggested Questions:**

1. Are there any estimates on the deferred maintenance needs for school kitchens and cafeterias?
2. Have there been any studies on the adequacy of the new universal school meal reimbursement rates?
3. What barriers exist to school construction and bond funds better supporting kitchen renovations?
4. In light of HR1 reductions to the social safety nets, including food programs, what increased role might school meals have in 2027?

**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.