

2023

| Year in Review

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION



Introduction

The famous orator Charles Spurgeon stated, “The right way usually lies between two extremes: it is the narrow channel between the rock and the whirlpool.” For CSBA, the way forward is one centered on advocacy, research and policy that supports all members and secures the resources needed to sustain and enhance public schools. Our list of 2023 accomplishments demonstrates the rewards of a single-minded focus on the conditions required for universal success and a refusal to be drawn off course by ideological currents.

Charting a middle path is not easy in a state boasting nearly 1,000 school districts and county offices of education (COEs). The beauty and the challenge of public education in this state is that our strategies must encompass the ambitions of local educational agencies large and small, affluent and low income, urban, suburban, rural and everything between. Yet, despite California’s great size and diversity, every single school district and COE will benefit from CSBA’s legislative and legal advocacy, policy and governance technology services, research, communications, events, trainings and more.



Vernon M. Billy
CEO & Executive Director

“The right way usually lies between two extremes: it is the narrow channel between the rock and the whirlpool.”

—Charles Spurgeon

To ensure that CSBA continues to refine and enhance our comprehensive support and service offerings, we developed CSBA’s 2023 Strategic Priorities Implementation Plan, with clearly defined goals, strategies and impact measures that will allow us to fully implement the Board of Directors’ priorities. At the same time, we continued to explore initiatives that expand the options available to CSBA members as you work to address critical issues like staffing shortages. This past year, CSBA secured \$1.7 million in new grant funding from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative to expand CSBA’s pilot workforce housing project and support LEAs in developing workforce housing on existing property. The grant will fund workshops for districts exploring education workforce housing, allow CSBA to expand a first-of-its-kind resource library for LEA housing development, and conduct new research into the role of county offices and the impact of LEA-built housing on staff retention and student outcomes.

As legislators and policymakers struggle to solve statewide issues like the housing and staffing crises, empowering school and county boards to address problems on a local level is crucial to the continued progress of our public schools. We work tirelessly to protect the autonomy of local school districts and COEs, because we recognize the essential role that governing boards play in public education. And now, more than ever, it's important that we embrace this principle.

School boards are a cornerstone of democracy and more important now than ever. For that reason, it's essential that we avoid partisan passions and instead focus on productive policies that support all students. Given the many challenges our education system faces, we must join in common cause to improve our schools and uplift the important work of school district and county board members. The idea that schools are stronger together drives all our work at CSBA. Our members have wide-ranging views on issues related to public schools, so we will never be a liberal or conservative organization, but rather, we will continue to be an organization that focuses on the best interests of students and our members.

In 2023, I, along with CSBA President Susan Markarian and my senior staff, ventured up and down California from Mt. Shasta to San Diego as part of our member engagement tour called the

CSBA Roadshow. We appreciated the chance to connect with trustees and superintendents on your home turf and to hear firsthand about your vision for public education, the challenges you face, the opportunities you see and how CSBA can support you in strengthening public schools and supporting students.

Our travels have provided ample reassurance that, regardless of background or zip code, what school district and county trustees have in common is much greater than what divides you. This is a truth to keep front of mind as you carry out your governance and policy duties. It was certainly a touchstone for CSBA as we advocated on your behalf in Sacramento, Washington, D.C. and in courts all across the state.

I want to thank all of you that welcomed us into your communities in 2023 and engaged us in thoughtful conversations that will improve CSBA as we help you excel in your endeavors. For those we didn't meet in person, trust that we are working just as hard on your behalf. Whether it is through governance trainings, research, or legislative and legal advocacy, CSBA is working to meet your needs and ensure the board of education perspective is represented in the Legislature, in every important policy conversation and in courtrooms across California.

CSBA membership at a glance



966

Local educational agencies



4,786

Elected trustees



97%

of all California public preK-12 school districts and county offices of education



99.9%

percent of all California public school students represented

CSBA 2023 Leadership

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Susan Markarian
President
Pacific Union ESD



Albert Gonzalez
President-elect
Santa Clara USD



Dr. Bettye Lusk
Vice President
Monterey Peninsula USD



Dr. Susan Heredia
Immediate Past President
Natomas USD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Frank Magarino, Region 1
Del Norte County USD

Sherry Crawford, Region 2
Siskiyou COE

David Gracia, Region 3
Napa Valley USD

Renee Nash, Region 4
Eureka Union SD

Alisa MacAvoy, Region 5
Redwood City ESD

Jackie Wong, Region 6
Washington USD

James Aguilar, Region 7
San Leandro USD

Christopher "Kit" Oase, Region 8
Ripon USD

Roger Snyder, Region 9
Scotts Valley USD

Kathy Spate, Region 10
Caruthers USD

Sabrina Rodriguez, Region 11
Ventura USD

William Farris, Region 12
Sierra Sands USD

Susan Henry, Region 15
Huntington Beach Union HSD

Karen Gray, Region 16
Silver Valley USD

Debra Schade, Region 17
Solano Beach SD

Bruce Dennis, Region 18
Riverside COE

Devon Conley, Region 20
Mountain View Whisman SD

Tanya Ortiz Franklin, Region 21
Los Angeles USD

Nancy Smith, Region 22
Palmdale SD

Helen Hall, Region 23
Walnut Valley USD

Jan Baird, Region 24
South Whittier ESD

Chris Clark
Director-at-Large, African American
Folsom-Cordova USD

Christina Cameron-Otero
Director-at-Large, American Indian
Needles USD

Sylvia Leong
Director-at-Large, Asian/Pacific Islander
Cupertino Union SD

Michael Teasdale
Director-at-Large, County
Ventura COE

Joaquín Rivera
Director-at-Large, Hispanic
Alameda COE

Gina Cuclis, CCBE President
Sonoma COE

Advocacy and Communications

From important budgetary wins to a legislative package in which five sponsored bills were signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, the CSBA Governmental Relations (GR) staff was omnipresent in the Legislature, Governor's office and Department of Education advocating for the association's policy and budget priorities. 2023 was a challenging year given the growing "culture wars" in the state and nationally, and the GR team worked to help achieve concessions in critical pieces of legislation born out of concerns from the actions of only a few districts.

In addition to working with GR to keep membership informed and active in advocating for CSBA's policy and budget priorities, the Communications Department shared the latest education-related news and important issues at the local, state and federal levels. The work of trustees continued to be recognized through the School Boards in Action campaign and the Communications team spearheaded the effort to meet members throughout the state via the CSBA Roadshow.



YEAR IN REVIEW

Governmental Relations

- ▶ Secured significant wins in a challenging state budget year, including critical funding for county office-run juvenile court and community schools; minimized cuts to vital block grants such as Arts, Music & Instructional Materials (AMIM); helped secure an 8.22 percent statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the Local Control Funding Formula and specified categorical programs; and continued investments in major programs like home-to-school transportation, universal transitional kindergarten implementation, universal school meals and more.
- ▶ Reviewed more than 3,000 bills introduced in the Legislature, analyzed hundreds of proposals and took positions on nearly 100 critical pieces of legislation impacting public education.
- ▶ Secured the Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature on five CSBA-sponsored bills. Portions of an additional sponsored bill, Senate Bill 551 (Portantino, D-Glendale), were incorporated into SB 326 (Eggman, D-Stockton), the vehicle for the Governor's proposed mental and behavioral health system overhaul. The CSBA-sponsored bills signed into law are:
 - › **SB 765 (Portantino):** Provides immediate relief to schools during the teacher shortage by reducing barriers to hiring a recently retired teacher.
 - › **Assembly Bill 417 (Bennett, D-Ventura):** Expands opportunities for county boards of education to appoint a student member.
 - › **AB 483 (Muratsuchi, D-Torrance):** Expands access to and funding for school-based health and mental health services by improving the Local Education Agency Medi-Cal Billing Option Program (LEA BOP).
 - › **AB 557 (Hart, D-Santa Barbara):** Extends the opportunity for school boards to offer virtual meeting options during states of emergency.
 - › **AB 1023 (Papan, D-San Mateo):** Increases cybersecurity support for school districts.
- ▶ Served as the lone voice for preserving local control while opposing AB 1078 (Jackson, D-Riverside) on the selection of instructional and library materials, SB 494 (Newman, D-Fullerton) on superintendent dismissal processes and AB 1352 (Bonta, D-Oakland) on the censure and removal of school board members.

- ▶ Oversaw the reintroduction of federal legislation to ensure increased funding for infants, toddlers and preschool students under Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, HR 5141 (DeSaulnier, D-CA). CSBA also supported legislation to increase total funding for IDEA, HR 4519 (Huffman, D-CA).
- ▶ Participated with the Forest Schools and Counties Coalition in urging Congressional support to extend the sunset date for the Secure Rural Schools program, HR 5030 (Neguse, D-CO), and to include the sunset extension in the FY 2024 appropriations package.
- ▶ Organized and coordinated a successful Legislative Action Week in March 2023, drawing nearly 400 district and county board members from across California to lobby the state Legislature on CSBA budget and legislative priorities.
- ▶ Organized and co-sponsored the second annual Coast2Coast Federal Advocacy Trip with the Association of California School Administrators in April 2023, where nearly 300 school board members, superintendents and staff traveled to Washington, D.C. for meetings with members of Congress and their staff on Capitol Hill, as well as informational briefings and opportunities to connect with prominent pollsters, journalists, researchers, members of Congress and representatives from the executive branch.
- ▶ Participated in regional and local trainings and presentations across the state, including co-sponsoring twice-yearly Budget Perspectives workshops, and presentations at various conferences, CSBA regions and PACER divisions.

Communications

- ▶ Developed and implemented CSBA's inaugural [Gold Star Bills](#) marketing campaign for some of the most outstanding education bills from this year's legislative session — four of which were signed into law — supporting LEAs in teacher retention, cybersecurity, board meeting governance and closing the digital divide.
- ▶ Extended the School Boards in Action digital marketing campaign to humanize school trustees and share how they are transforming schools for the benefit of students, staff and families. The campaign generated 4.4 million impressions, 9,000 visits to the landing page, 1 million radio spot listens and 2,000 video views.
- ▶ Coordinated the CSBA Roadshow, producing town hall-style meetings in 15 counties across California.
- ▶ Expanded video offerings by debuting the “What’s Your Why?” “Inside Scoop” and “LegislatED” video series focused on what called school trustees to service, breaking news from the Capitol and details of key education bills, respectively.
- ▶ Produced 13 webinars on topics of special interest including state budget updates, school safety and mental health, services to support county board members, and the signing of Assembly Bill 1078.
- ▶ Quoted or cited in media outlets including the *Associated Press*, *Politico*, *CalMatters*, *EdSource*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Orange County Register*, *The Mercury News* (San Jose), *The Fresno Bee*, KQED, CapRadio (NPR), dozens of smaller papers throughout California and the local affiliates of the four major broadcast networks in every major California city.
- ▶ Informed membership of major developments affecting public schools through four issues of *California Schools* magazine, 11 newsletters, 50 weekly update eblasts, 245 Daily News Roundup eblasts and nearly 300 blog posts.
- ▶ Increased engagement across all social media platforms, including increasing Facebook profile visits and reach by 240 percent and 33 percent, respectively, and increasing Instagram profile visits and reach by 148 percent and 799 percent, respectively.



EDUCATE. ENGAGE. EMPOWER.

CSBA Legal Office and Education Legal Alliance

Society is trying to answer many complicated questions and boards of education are at the forefront of navigating the various perspectives held by the public. CSBA's Legal Department works to provide board members with information and resources that help them navigate those perspectives in a more accessible and efficient manner. CSBA's attorneys keep members informed by staying up to date on changes in the law and decisions in state and federal courts and reviewing events with a focus on historical context to understand why changes are occurring and what may come in the future.

The Legal team works to ensure the diverse perspectives of all members throughout the state are represented in informational materials. When considering the potential involvement of the Education Legal Alliance (ELA), the significance of the issue is evaluated, ensuring it is of statewide concern and the outcome will benefit all CSBA members.



YEAR IN REVIEW



- ▶ Produced “Recently Asked Questions: Parental and student rights in relation to transgender and gender nonconforming students” for boards of education to use when considering the ever-evolving issues of transgender student and parent rights.
- ▶ Updated *The Brown Act* book and the Guide to Reporting Gifts.
- ▶ Produced 11 newsletter articles, 21 blog posts and four magazine columns on various topics such as Supreme Court decisions, changes in the law and developments within the ELA.
- ▶ Used the resources of CSBA's ELA to support local educational agencies in various matters of statewide concern, including filing a Writ of Mandate and Complaint for Declaratory Relief in the Sacramento County Superior Court asking the court to:
 - › Set aside the decision by the State Board of Education that reversed the denials of the Mayacamas Charter Middle School petition by the governing boards of Napa Valley USD and Napa COE; and to determine the rights and legal duties of all the parties involved with charter school petitions and appeals. The ELA and the district were successful in their lawsuits challenging the State Board's application of AB 1505 and are now moving forward in defending the lower court's decision in the appeals process.
- ▶ The ELA also filed an amicus brief in the case of *O'Connor-Ratcliff v. Garnier* at the United States Supreme Court arguing in support of board members and seeking clarity on the use of social media to engage with members of the public.

District and COE Legal Services

2023 marked the second full year of CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services program, which continued to grow and expand the services provided to CSBA members throughout the state. Subscribers receive access to CSBA attorneys who can provide low-cost legal services on all matters related to public education and unlimited access to the online Resource Library: a repository of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), memorandums of understanding (MOUs), salary schedules and legal resources designed to assist members in negotiations.



YEAR IN REVIEW

- ▶ Doubled the number of CSBA members subscribing as clients and benefiting from the service.
- ▶ Provided legal advice and assistance on a wide range of issues including:
 - › Brown Act and teleconferencing compliance
 - › Public Records Act requests
 - › Extended Learning Opportunities Program-funded before- and after-school programs
 - › MOUs with outside agencies
 - › Superintendent contracts and evaluations
 - › Student discipline
 - › Layoff procedures
 - › Employee classifications
 - › Title IX and sexual harassment complaints
 - › Board policies and administrative regulations
 - › Bullying complaints
 - › Fraud investigations
 - › Student mediations
 - › First Amendment issues including religious clubs and displaying Pride flags
 - › Restraining orders
- ▶ Expanded the Legal Resource Library to nearly 13,000 documents to help LEAs prepare for successful bargaining and recruit and retain staff.



- ▶ Hosted 10 Lunch and Learn webinars for Legal Services clients providing exclusive guidance and discussion on emerging legal issues.
- ▶ Provided multiple full-day Brown Act trainings in the Los Angeles, Central Valley and Sacramento areas.
- ▶ Facilitated district-specific trainings on complaint procedures and sexual harassment.
- ▶ Collaborated with the CSBA's Governance and Policy Technology Services team to produce quarterly policy update webinars to explain changes in the law and their impacts to CSBA sample policies.
- ▶ Provided regional presentations on changes to Title IX and impacts to LEAs in California.

Member Services

CSBA's Member Services team continues to ensure that new and seasoned trustees alike have access to the crucial information, resources and training provided by the association. Input from members helps to ensure that CSBA services are meeting their needs.



YEAR IN REVIEW

- ▶ Deployed the 2022–23 iCount Census and 2023–24 Survey to CSBA's membership, generating critical input and data to help support the needs of school governance teams, and better inform the public about the role of elected board members.
- ▶ Masters in Governance® content, curriculum and branding were updated and expanded, including a new interactive Participant Learning Journal to allow for participant reflection and action planning.
- ▶ More than 200 school district and county board trustees and superintendents graduated from the MIG program in 2023.
- ▶ Debuted a four-part virtual training course for student board members, focusing on governance, finance, advocacy and engagement, and legacy building. Also hosted Governance Q&A and Networking virtual sessions for student board members to connect with their peers and meet with CSBA faculty members.



- ▶ Facilitated more than 100 Governance Consultant Workshops, each tailored to meet the specific needs of individual governance teams.
- ▶ Created a Finance and Equity one-day workshop that will launch in early 2024.
- ▶ Registration for the Annual Education Conference and Trade Show kicked off in June with record-breaking numbers. The event:
 - › Offered a new ethics training course, allowing trustees to meet recently enacted ethics training requirements contained in Assembly Bill 2158.
 - › Debuted the new course, Experienced Board Members – Advanced Governance Team Leadership.
- ▶ Introduced 26 new Business Affiliates to provide services and support to CSBA members.
- ▶ Entered into an agreement with the Texas Association of School Boards to bring BuyBoard to California LEAs and other associations. BuyBoard provides members with one-stop shopping for goods and services, competitive pricing, a trusted and transparent procurement process and reduced administrative costs.
- ▶ Launched Golden State Technology Solutions, a partnership with the California Association of Business Officials and Carahsoft Corp, in June 2023 to provide comprehensive software, hardware and IT consulting offerings to CSBA members.

Policy and Governance Technology Services

CSBA's Policy and Governance Technology Services team continued to produce new and update existing sample board policies on relevant topics for public schools and in response to new legislation, judicial decisions, and updated guidance from state and federal agencies. The department also focused on helping members access the suite of GAMUT products to help improve board management.



YEAR IN REVIEW

- ▶ Published more than 130 new and updated sample board policies and bylaws, administrative regulations, and exhibits for district and county governance teams, including:
 - › 5131.9 – Academic Honesty (updated to address, among other things, prohibited and permitted student use of technology, including artificial intelligence)
 - › 6177 – Summer Learning Program (updated to clarify that summer learning programs are part of the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program and must be offered to specific students and align with new California Department of Education (CDE) guidance that clarifies that districts are prohibited from charging fees for summer school)
 - › 9270 – Conflict of Interest (updated to reflect new prohibition against elected district officers accepting, soliciting or directing a contribution of \$250 or more from someone connected to a district proceeding involving a license, permit or other entitlement for use while the proceeding is pending before the district and for 12 months before or after the final decision)
- ▶ Released a special packet updating more than a dozen policies in light of Assembly Bill 1078, including:
 - › 1312.2 – Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials
 - › 1312.3 – Uniform Complaint Procedures
 - › 1312.4 – Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures
 - › 6161.1 – Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials
- ▶ Coordinated Policy Development Workshops for 41 districts and county offices of education to update and overhaul their policy manuals and conducted policy manual reviews/audits for an additional seven LEAs.
- ▶ Updated the GAMUT platform with several enhancements for both the Policy and Meeting modules.
- ▶ Increased total number of subscriptions for all GAMUT platforms: Policy, Policy Plus and Meetings.
- ▶ Created, revised and updated six comprehensive comparison charts to aid districts and COEs with policies that are commonly included in the CDE's Federal Program Monitoring review process.



▶ POLICY & POLICY PLUS ◀



▶ MEETINGS ◀



▶ DOCUMENTS ◀



▶ COMMUNICATION ◀



Research and Education Policy Development

The Research and Education Policy Development (REPD) team produced research on a number of key policy issues and provided several resources in response to the state's encroachment on local control. For example, REPD collected data from the membership on the number and types of instructional material removal requests they were receiving prior to the signing of Assembly Bill 1078, and provided a baseline describing what LEAs were experiencing over the summer months.



YEAR IN REVIEW

- ▶ Conducted research and published fact sheets, briefs, blog posts, webinars, surveys, infographics and other resources on topics including:

COVID relief funding updates



School shootings



Firearm safety and storage



Bullying and cyberbullying



Trauma-informed education

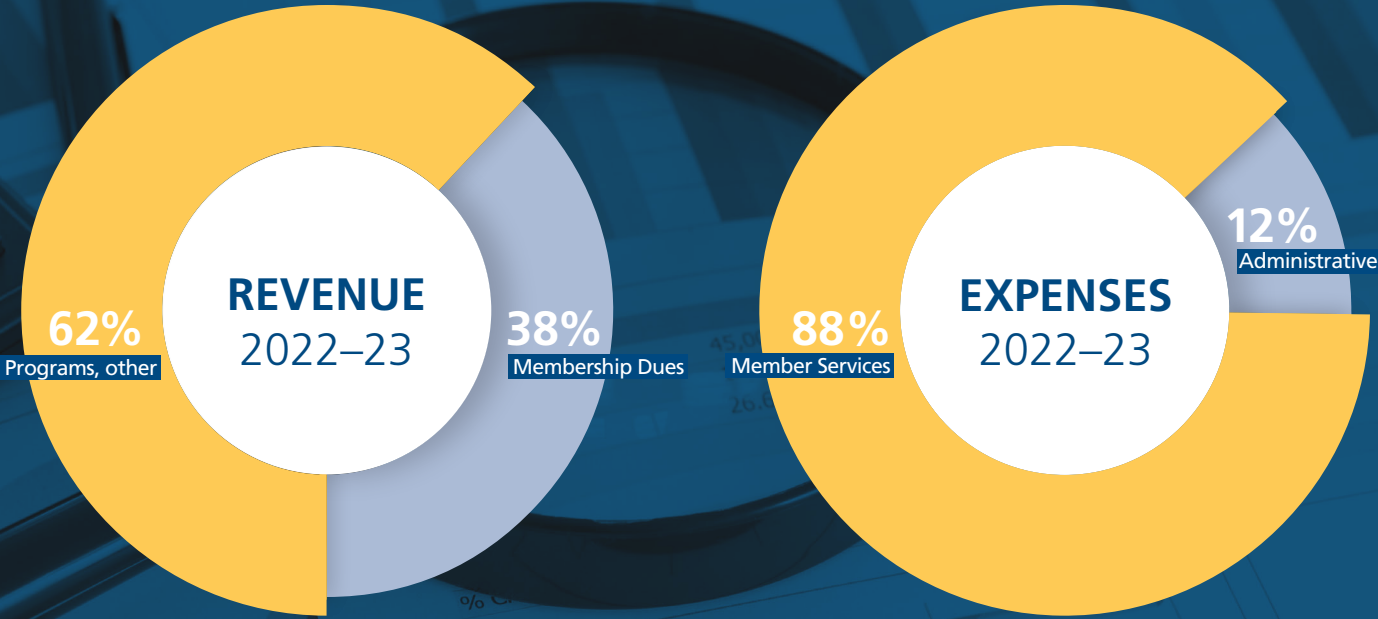


Artificial intelligence



- ▶ Hosted a series of webinars and explanatory videos on important topics including COVID relief funding, school safety and trauma-informed education.
- ▶ Conducted a research project related to the state's implementation of late start and created a School Safety Toolkit. Both projects will be released in 2024.
 - › Convened stakeholder groups related to the late start law to seek board member and superintendent input and the parent and student perspective.
- ▶ Curated a New Member Toolkit made up of resources appropriate for newly elected members and hosted on GAMUT.
- ▶ Launched a Small School Districts Advisory Workgroup that meets monthly to provide insight on various topics and how those topics impact small districts at the local level.
- ▶ Convened the Superintendents Advisory Council and the Artificial Intelligence Taskforce.
- ▶ Prioritized site visits to Golden Bell Award winners to see firsthand the exemplary work members are engaged in to highlight in future research.

CSBA 2022-23 Financial Data





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