

Sacramento Update: What Small Districts Need to Know

Below is a round-up of recent important information out of Sacramento that we think SSDA members should be aware of.

1. CDE releases allocation amounts for new discretionary block grant

On August 8, CDE posted the LEA allocation amounts for the \$1.7 billion Student Support and Professional Development Discretionary Block Grant that was included as part of this year's state budget. While early estimates had put the per-pupil amount under the grant at roughly \$305, the allocation table reflects a slightly higher amount of \$313 per pupil. As a reminder, funding under the SSPDBG is fully discretionary and is available for expenditure through the 2028-29 fiscal year.

To see how much your LEA is expected to receive under the grant, the allocation table is available on the [SSPDBG Funding Results page](#). While CDE has posted the funding amounts, we are still waiting for CDE to announce when the funding will officially go out to LEAs.

2. Legislature returns to Sacramento to close out first year of 2025-26 legislative session

On August 18, Legislators returned to Sacramento from their month-long summer recess. Members now have four more weeks, until September 12, to act on bills and send them to the Governor's desk for his signature if they would like to see them become law this year. Below is a look at some of the major education-related bills still moving in the final weeks of session.

Charter school reform

One of the most contentious issues in education in 2025, reforming oversight for nonclassroom-based (NCB) charter schools, has seen little progress since two bills dealing with the topic were introduced early this year. Charter school advocates and labor unions remain very far apart on the approaches in the bills, and so far, organizations representing school agencies that authorize and oversee charter schools have not seen movement to create a coherent charter oversight structure that is adequately funded.

The two competing bills are [AB 84](#) (Muratsuchi) and [SB 414](#) (Ashby). Both bills received courtesy votes to advance through their final regularly scheduled policy committee hearings back in July, despite a lack of consensus on major issues, including: the scope of oversight and auditing, credentialing requirements, payments to parents for "enrichment activities," and the role of small school district authorizers, among others. Additionally, neither bill provides funding for increased oversight of charter schools.

Particularly Harmful Ultraprocessed Foods (UPF) in school meals

One of the most high-profile school-related bills this year, [AB 1264](#) (Gabriel) would establish a timeline by which the state's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) must establish a definition for "particularly harmful UPFs" and schools must begin phasing out the use of particularly harmful UPFs in school meals.

Though the bill passed out of its policy committees without any no votes, it is clear from the hearings that the bill is still very much a work in progress. Among other things, policy committee members raised concerns about the bill creating increased liability for LEAs, which the author disputes but said is willing to clarify if needed. Committee members also discussed potentially shifting lead agency responsibilities from OEHHA to the California Department of Public Health.

Update to state's literacy instruction

With the Governor having already indicated he would sign the bill once it reaches his desk, [AB 1454](#) (Rivas) continues to move swiftly through the legislative process. The bill would, among other things, require the state to conduct a follow-up adoption for English language arts (ELA) and English language development (ELD) instructional materials, with the State Board required to adopt materials by January 2027. This timeline aligns with the Schedule of Significant Events that was approved by the State Board at its July Meeting. Under that timeline, the Board is scheduled to approve instructional materials at its November 2026 Board Meeting.

The bill also previously included language that would have required the SBE to identify and post a list of inservice programs that LEAs could use to train staff that provide or support reading instruction. However, after the Governor signed [AB 121](#), the TK-12 budget trailer bill which included its own language requiring the SBE to approve and post criteria and guidance for the selection of said inservice programs, that language was removed from AB 1454.

Antisemitism at schools

Until its most recent round of amendments, [AB 715](#) (Zbur) had primarily contained legislative intent language regarding "strengthening protections against discrimination, including antisemitism in K-12 education, including protections against instruction and activity that promotes discrimination." That all changed on July 1, when the bill was essentially gut-and-amended to remove the bill's previous contents and replace it with provisions more specifically aimed at addressing "antisemitic learning environments."

The bill's new provisions had been met with opposition from education groups as well as the ACLU and Jewish Voice for Peace. Opponents argued that the bill would now seem to prioritize one form of discrimination over others, infringe on academic freedom, and fail to address the real problem of antisemitism.

After its original July 9 hearing date in the Senate Education Committee was cancelled, committee staff spent the summer recess working toward a potential compromise. In a statement from Senate Pro Tem Mike McGuire, Legislative Jewish Caucus Co-Chairs Senator Scott Wiener and Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel, and Senate Education Chair Sasha Renée Pérez, they wrote, "We are committed to [stopping antisemitism in schools] and will be working overtime with a broad coalition over the summer to send an antisemitism bill to the Governor by the end of this year's legislative session."

3. New for 2025-26: LEAs able to offer Attendance Recovery Programs to recoup lost ADA

As you prepare for the 2025-26 school year, we wanted to remind you that school districts, county offices of education and classroom-based charter schools may now choose to offer an Attendance Recovery Program (ARP) to eligible students to make up absences as well as to help LEAs for apportionment purposes. This new option was recently added to Ed Code in last year's budget to help with recent downward trends in attendance.

ARPs are voluntary programs for students that allow them to make up for absences. Students can recover up to ten total absences or the total number of absences accrued in a given school year, whichever is less. LEAs that offer an ARP can separately report ADA generated by an ARP at regular reporting periods (Period 1, Period 2 and Annual)

To assist LEAs, CDE has created a [webpage](#) with important information on ARPs, some of which we have copied below for reference.

General Information

When can an ARP be made available to students?

ARPs can be offered before or after school, on weekends, or on intersessional days. If a local educational agency (LEA) chooses to offer an ARP, they must operate sessions at least once per term.

What educational activities are offered to students in ARPs?

As a condition of funding, each student participating in an ARP must be engaged in educational activities and content aligned to grade-level standards that are substantially equivalent to the student's regular instructional program, which may include one-on-one or small group tutoring. LEAs must be able to demonstrate compliance with this requirement during the annual audit process.

How does a student generate ADA through AR?

For school districts, a student generates a full day of attendance through AR once the student participates for the minimum school day per grade span or instructional setting. For charter schools, a student generates a day of attendance through AR once the student participates for the minimum daily instructional minutes required of a school district student in the applicable grade span.

What are the recordkeeping requirements of an ARP?

LEAs must track and report attendance from participation in an ARP separately from attendance generated during the regular school day. The teacher of each AR classroom must document each student's participation time, if hourly accounting of student participation is used. The LEA must maintain these records and provide access to this documentation during their annual audit, as needed.

Other Major Considerations:

Eligibility - TK-12 grade students who are enrolled in classroom-based programs may elect to participate in an ARP on a limited basis. AR is an option for students in classroom-based, regular educational programs. Students who are enrolled in a nonclassroom-based (NCB) program or a NCB charter school cannot participate in an ARP program, and do not generate attendance for apportionment through ARPs.

Supervision - As a condition of apportionment, students in an ARP must be under the immediate supervision and control of a certificated employee of the LEA. ARPs must maintain a student-to-certificated-employee ratio of 10:1 for TK and Kindergarten, and 20:1 for grades 1-12. To meet these supervision requirements, a substitute teacher supervising students in an ARP would need to be an employee of the LEA.

Interaction with Expanded Learning Opportunities Programs (ELO-Ps) - LEAs can offer ELO-P and ARPs in conjunction to realize fiscal efficiencies and expand student access to ELO-P. A student's participation in an ARP must not restrict their ability to participate in the full range of ELO programming offered in the school year. An ELO-P teacher may supervise students in an ARP if they are a certificated employee of the LEA. ELOP funds can be used to support ARPs if the following conditions are met:

- ELO-P and AR must be offered in conjunction.
- The AR program must be operated by the LEA claiming apportionment.
- Both programs must be offered at the same school site.