



California Association for Bilingual Education

## **March 2026 Legislative Advocate Report**

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### **CABE and Californians Together Co-Sponsor English Learner Reclassification Legislation**

CABE and Californians Together are co-sponsoring AB 2555 (Patel), which creates much-needed reform to California’s system of reclassifying English learners as English proficient. The measure will establish an effective solution to monitor and support reclassified students and to change the framework for serving California’s English learners by reframing reclassification through the lens of student milestones on their overall journey to biliteracy.

CABE looks forward to working with Assembly Education Committee Chair Patel and Californians Together to strengthen the overall reclassification process and create better alignment, transparency, and support for the diverse typologies of English learner students during their linguistic voyage. The measure has been referred to the Assembly Education Committee and scheduled for a hearing on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Legislature Budget Subcommittees Discuss Education Budget**

The Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Education and the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Education Finance have both held numerous hearings so far to discuss the Governor’s proposed 2026-27 education budget. The collective hearings have focused on the following:

- **Childcare funding levels and slot reductions:** The budget proposes to reduce overall funding for general childcare by removing over 4,000 slots due to reduced federal and Proposition 64 revenues. Discussions have included the overall impact these reductions would have on families and how providers have begun preparing to serve affected children.
- **Pausing the multiyear childcare expansion plan:** The proposed budget does not include additional slots that had been planned under a multiyear expansion effort. Capitol staff and the Legislative Analyst’s Office have noted the additional ongoing costs that would be included to continue this expansion plan, which is being weighed against the impact this will have on working families.
- **Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and rate structure changes:** The budget proposes to suspend the COLA for childcare providers and to use an alternative formula. The fiscal impact this will have and how the alternative mechanism would work are being debated.

- Proposition 98 funding levels and fiscal structure, including the Governor’s proposal to defer \$5.6 billion in “settle-up” funds from 2025-26, the implications of Test 1 funding, and whether the budget is structurally balanced overall or is pushing costs into future years.
- Managing fiscal risk and building reserves, including deposits into the Proposition 98 Rainy Day Fund, whether to put more funds into this reserve or to delay obligations, as well as protecting schools should the overall Proposition 98 guarantee decline in the future.
- Key aspects of the Governor’s proposal have been reviewed and discussed, including the proposed 2.41 percent COLA to the local control funding formula, the \$2.8 billion one-time increase to the discretionary block grant, \$1 billion for expanding community schools, a \$509 million increase in the special education base for equalization, as well as other proposals.

Overall, the Assembly has focused its key discussions around childcare, while the Senate has focused on macro funding. Issues will not be solidified until after the May Revision is released, allowing the Legislature to process the proposals against the actual amount of revenue the state has received from collected taxes.

### **Assembly Education Committee Discusses Governor’s Master Plan Proposal**

A comprehensive discussion ensued which brought in current Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, a former Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a multitude of experts to educate the Committee on the history, role, and evolution regarding the governance and structure of the California Department of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. A number of questions and concerns were raised, both in favor and in opposition to the Governor’s proposal to shift the roles and responsibilities for the Superintendent of Public Instruction and how that individual would interplay with the California Department of Education, in contrast with the State Board of Education.

Robust concerns were raised regarding how any changes prioritize and support student success and family needs. Multiple stakeholder organizations testified both in support of and in opposition to the proposal. Opponents included the California Federation of Teachers and the California School Employees Association. Organizations in support included Children Now and the California Association for School Administrators. The California Teachers Association expressed that it is neutral but has both questions and concerns. Multiple additional educational stakeholders also testified in both support and opposition.

CABE is neutral on the proposal and has requested that any discussion and solidifying of responsibilities prioritize support of divisions and programs responsible for service and support to California’s over one million English learners, including support for the ELA/ELD Framework, and the English Learner Roadmap.

### **LAO Issues Report on Governor’s Master Plan Proposal**

The [Legislative Analyst’s Office](#) issued a report that examined the Governor’s Master Plan proposal to restructure the state’s education governance system. The report examines the multiple entities with overlapping authority, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the State Board of

Education (SBE). The report notes the current structure has evolved over time but has been widely viewed as fragmented, with unclear lines of responsibility, which can lead to conflict, inconsistent implementation of policy, and limited accountability for outcomes across the state's large and complex public school system.

The Governor's proposal centers on shifting administrative control of the California Department of Education from the SPI to a new education commissioner appointed by and accountable to the Governor, while largely maintaining the SBE's existing responsibilities and giving the SPI a smaller, more advisory and advocacy-oriented role. The LAO notes the change is intended to better align policy development and implementation, reduce disputes among state entities, provide clearer guidance to school districts, and make it easier for the Legislature and the public to hold the Governor accountable for educational results.

Additionally, the report finds that this restructuring could improve coherence and accountability in state education policymaking but emphasizes that several key issues require further attention. In particular, strong legislative oversight will be essential to ensure the Governor's expanded authority is exercised effectively. Fiscal details are currently lacking and will be necessary to ensure the transition is cost-neutral. Further, the new role of the SPI is not clearly defined and could vary significantly without statutory guidance.

Overall, the LAO recommends that the Legislature adopt the proposal with modifications, including requiring Senate confirmation of the new commissioner, the need to develop a clear fiscal plan, and explicitly defining the SPI's responsibilities to focus on independent oversight, public reporting, and policy evaluation. Finally, the report states that while the proposal could address longstanding governance challenges, it is not a complete solution and broader efforts will still be needed to improve student outcomes, district performance, and the overall effectiveness of California's education system.

## CABE-Supported Bills

**AB 1631 (Muratsuchi): Mandatory kindergarten:** Would make kindergarten mandatory beginning in the 2028-29 school year. The bill passed the Assembly Education Committee and has been referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

**AB 1851 (Gipson): Pupil health: social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports:** Would require the State Department of Education (CDE) to create a statewide Tier 1 Social and Emotional Learning, behavioral health, and restorative justice education program for K-12 students. School districts, county offices of education, and charter schools would be required to implement the program, with guidance from the CDE, with funds from the Children and Youth Behavioral Health initiative. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Education Committee and will be heard on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**AB 2019 (Gipson): Deported or detained faculty at community colleges:** Requires community colleges to allow deported faculty to teach and perform professional duties using distance education. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee and will be heard on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

**AB 2056 (Alvarez): Teacher exchange programs:** Revises teacher exchange programs through the CDE and federal government by: 1) Eliminating the use of the regulatory process by the State Board of Education; 2) Eliminating the administration of the program by the CDE; 3) Expressly allowing for exchanges with Mexico; 4) Expanding authorized exchanges to include both county offices of education and charter schools; 5) Eliminating the one-year time limit on exchanges, and; 6) Should regulations be adopted, would require them to authorize specific visa sponsors designated by the United States Department of State to sponsor teachers from Mexico for placement in California schools. The bill passed the Assembly Education Committee and has been referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee and does not yet have a hearing scheduled.

**AB 2107 (Pellerin): Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP): unduplicated pupils:** Would require local educational agencies (LEAs) with the ability to utilize ELOP by prioritizing access to unduplicated pupils. The bill passed the Assembly Education Committee and has been placed on the Assembly Consent Calendar.

**AB 2114 (Bryan): Nonresident tuition fee exemption: educational asylum program:** Would allow California public educational systems, including public schools and institutions of higher education, to grant educational asylum status to a transfer student and would exempt these students, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, from paying nonresident tuition. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee and does not yet have a hearing scheduled.

**AB 2294 (Ta): State holiday: Sylvia Mendez Day:** Would declare April 14<sup>th</sup> as Sylvia Mendez Day in honor of the landmark Mendez v. Westminster school desegregation case. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee and is not yet scheduled for a hearing.

**AB 2325 (Alvarez): Bilingual Teachers: Online database and pipeline:** Establishes a statewide Bilingual Clinical Placement Registry to better connect the preparation, credentialing, and long-term retention of bilingual educators, and expresses legislative intent to foster partnerships between local educational agencies and California's public higher education institutions to develop integrated bilingual teacher credentialing pathways. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Education Committee and will be heard on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**AB 2332 (González): Dual language immersion coordinator:** Would require, prior to July 1, 2027, that the CDE designate a Dual Language Immersion Coordinator (DLIC) to assist in the coordination between LEAs, by providing resources and knowledge on dual language immersion programs. The DLIC would be the primary contact between the CDE and LEAs to assist with creating new or expanding existing dual language immersion programs, as well as to create, publish, and maintain a directory of operative dual language immersion programs on the CDE's website by 2028. The bill passed the Assembly Education Committee and has been referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

**AB 2468 (Patel): School accountability: students with disabilities:** Contingent upon an appropriation, beginning in the 2027-28 school year, would require the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence to administer the Supporting Innovative Practices project, as well as to expand the project and build on its alignment and partnerships with statewide improvement initiatives. This would include improving student outcomes by increasing opportunities for students with disabilities to access education in general education settings, as well as supporting the educator workforce. The

project would be required to provide technical assistance to LEAs and charter schools focused on supporting evidence-based practices to increase access by students with disabilities in general education settings and to support progress toward a high school diploma. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Education Committee and will be heard on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Legislative Calendar

March 26 – Legislative Spring Recess.

April 6 – Legislature reconvenes from Spring Recess.

April 21 – CAFE Lobby Day.

April 24 – Last day for policy committees to hear bills that are fiscal.

May 1 – Last day for policy committees to hear non-fiscal bills.

May 8 – Last day for policy committees to meet prior to June 1.

May 15 – Last day for fiscal committees to hear bills introduced in their house.

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May 25-29 – Floor session only.

May 29 – Last day for each house to pass bills introduced in that house.

June 1 – Committee hearings may resume.

June 15 – Budget bill must be passed by midnight.

June 25 – Last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November election.

July 2 – Last day for policy committees to meet. Legislative Summer Recess begins.

August 3 – Legislature reconvenes from Summer Recess.

August 14 – Last day for fiscal committees to meet.

August 17-31 – Floor Session only.

August 31 – Last day for each house to pass bills. Final recess begins upon adjournment.

September 30 – Last day for Governor to sign or veto bills.