



ACSA Budget Position Paper 2011-12 May Revision

The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) is a statewide nonprofit association representing over 15,000 school principals and education leaders. ACSA continues to be a primary stakeholder in the annual K- adult education budget process and provides analysis, input, and advocacy on behalf of its members to the executive, legislative, regulative branches of state government. ACSA looks forward to working with the administration and the Legislature on the Governor's 2011-12 State Budget and Proposition 98.

Below are ACSA's policy positions in response to governor's budget proposals and the discussion of the current budget deficit:

Prioritizing Public Education

ACSA supports the governor's plan to prioritize public education. In the past two years, the state budget has cut education funding by \$20 billion. Public education which amounts to almost 40 percent of the state budget has absorbed over 60 percent of the cuts. We appreciate the governor acknowledging this fact and prioritizing public education in his January and May Budget Proposal. School leaders have been forced to decimate programs and services to students in the last several years in an effort to balance their budgets. The state's students have experienced the loss of instructional support and services ranging from the elimination of intervention programs to summer school. Further, school leaders have been forced to increase class sizes and layoff thousands of teachers, instructional aids, librarians, counselors, maintenance staff and administrators. Therefore, we fully support the governor's budget to prioritize public education and funding of the minimum guarantee.

Extend the tax revenues

ACSA supports the extension of the temporary revenues adopted as part of the 2009 Budget Act. While the state has solved much of the \$25 billion budget deficit, there is still a shortfall of \$10.8 billion. ACSA believes it is time for the Legislature to solve the structural problems with the state's finances and eliminate ongoing shortfalls. We support Governor Brown's approach of balancing the budget. The state should not solve the deficit with a "cuts" only approach and should provide stable revenues. ACSA believes it is imperative to extend the revenue package to ensure that there are no additional reductions to school budgets. According to the Legislative Analyst Office, an all cuts approach could cost school between \$700 and \$800 per student. A cut of that magnitude would devastate our children's educational opportunities.

Funding Deferrals

ACSA supports the elimination of the \$2.1 billion deferral adopted in the March budget. Currently, the total amount deferred from one fiscal year to the next has reached more than \$7 billion. Deferrals force districts to rely heavily on borrowing from external entities such as private lenders, County Offices of Education or County Treasurers. Borrowing from external sources can often be expensive and forces districts to spend resources paying for borrowing costs instead of dedicating those resources to instruction. We support the governor's ongoing attempt to reduce the state's debt and continued attempt to reduce funding deferrals.

AB 3632 Shift

The May Revision proposes to shift the responsibility of providing mental health services from county mental health agencies and county welfare agencies to school districts. The first priority in any change is ensuring that students with disabilities receive the services required under the IDEA. With services to students being our main concern, there are several implementation issues associated with this proposal that need to be examined as the state shifts the responsibility for these services to schools. The state must ensure that the level of funding proposed will cover the increased costs of services. Further, ACSA believes that the funding should be stable and adequate to meet the needs for these students now and in the future. Schools should be given full latitude and authority to determine how best to provide these services and the flexibility to control their costs commensurate with the revenues they receive from the state. Lastly, ACSA supports having a transition period enacted which will assure that students currently in residential placements, often out-of-state, or any other treatment have no break in services or treatment as we transition to a new funding model.

CALPADS

The May Revision suspends funding for 2011-2012 from both CALPADS and CALTIDES with the intention to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to consider reforms to the state's testing, accountability, and data collection systems. ACSA believes it is important that school principals and leaders are actively engaged in the Governor's proposals to (1) reduce the amount of time devoted to state testing, (2) eliminate data collections that do not provide useful information to school administrators, teachers and parents and, (3) restore power to school administrators, teachers and parents. ACSA has consistently advocated for a testing, accountability and data system that is more efficient and useful to local schools and communities. It is important to spend quality time to revise and improve upon a data collection system that has frustrated school leaders with its minimal impact on the learning environment. Rather than starting over, the system must be rebenched to focus on the important work of learning and teaching locally.

State Mandates

The May Revision proposes to eliminate some state mandates and implement some reforms proposed by a working group charged with mandate reform. While we support reforming the mandate claiming process and the elimination of some mandates, we are concerned with the direction of the mandate working group. The recommendations from the working group appear to be moving in a direction of only focusing on how to eliminate the state responsibility for paying mandated claims instead of how to improve the mandate process. ACSA is interested in reforming mandated claims but not to the detriment of ensuring that school districts receive the resources due to them for mandated activities.