

ABCFT YOUionews

**WE HAVE A
TENTATIVE
AGREEMENT!**



NEW SEMESTER!!!



NEW ME!!!

HOTLINKS! In this edition of YOUnionews

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HOTLINKS- Contact ABCFT at ABC Federation of Teachers abcft@abcusd.us

- For confidential emails - use your non-work email to write to us at: abcft2317@gmail.com
- Find us on [Twitter @ #ABCTeachernews](#) or [Facebook](#)
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KEEPING YOU INFORMED - Negotiations Update By Ruben Mancillas



Positive news; we have a tentative agreement.

Yesterday, the ABCFT executive board voted to approve the master contract tentative agreement and move it forward to the full ABCFT Representative Council next week. If the representative council votes to approve,

the master contract tentative agreement, then an electronic version will be sent out to the full membership that evening of Thursday, February 2. An in-person general meeting would be held on Monday, February 6, at Haskell Stem Academy from 4-5 p.m. An electronic vote would then be scheduled from that Monday evening until the afternoon of Thursday, February 9.

If the master contract tentative agreement passes with a majority vote it would then go back to the school board for approval during their meeting on February 21. Assuming a majority of the school board approves of the deal we would likely begin seeing the new raise on our April checks.



This master contract tentative agreement which would be in place until the end of 2025 includes compensation for the 2022-2023 school year. *Details of the master contract tentative agreement will be made available once the rep council votes for approval.*

Thank you to all of the members of the ABCFT negotiating team; from left to right, Laura Lacar, Edith Corrales, Daren Ham, Ruben Mancillas, Ray Gaer, Tanya Golden, and Jill Yasutake (Patty Alcantar and David Hind not pictured), for the many hours they volunteered to help bring this agreement together.

In Unity,



ACADEMIC SERVICES UPDATE

This month's academic service update is vital for all teachers. We hope you will take a moment to look at this monthly report which discusses changes in academic services. This document provides the union with a means of giving the District feedback on the many programs or changes they are proposing at any time. Without your feedback or questions on these changes, it is harder for ABCFT to slow down and modify the district's neverending rollout of new projects. Please submit your comments and questions to the appropriate ABCFT liaison.

For Elementary curricular issues, please email Kelley at Kelley.Forsythe@abcusd.us if you have any questions or concerns.

For Secondary curricular issues, please email Catherine at Catherine.Pascual@abcusd.us if you have any questions or concerns.

[Click Here For This Month's Full Report](#)

Keys to Literacy Series



A Union of Professionals

Check out these free tip sheets that provide strategies and ideas for parents who are looking to improve their children's literacy.

- [Tips for Elementary School Parents \(K-2\)](#)
- [Tips for Elementary School Parents \(3-5\)](#)
- [Tips for Middle School Parents](#)

[Reading Is Rocket Science](#)

In this article, Louisa C. Moats calls for teacher preparation and professional development to be more rigorous and better aligned with decades of reading science. She describes the knowledge that undergirds successful instruction and concludes with recommendations for the professional preparation of all teachers of reading. Find the full report [here](#).

ABCFT PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Ray Gaer



Consistent and regular communication is a union's most important tool for advocating for its members at the bargaining table. Every conversation with members is focused on the end result of negotiating for the future prosperity and well-being of ALL ABCFT members. The goal of this weekly report is to keep members informed about issues that impact their working/learning conditions and their mental well-being. Our work as a Union is a larger conversation, and together we make the YOUnion.

“So do you have a haircut appointment yet?” - Mary Fitterer asked to see if we had yet signed a tentative agreement during a committee meeting. She almost got me to crack and give it away...nice angle, Mary! Yes, now that we have a tentative agreement getting a haircut will be a priority in the coming weeks after months of hair gel to calm my curly hair. It's a silly tradition, but it builds solidarity with my negotiating colleagues.

Over the next week, members of the negotiating team and I will be working on preparing digital documents for the ABCFT Representative Council for their meeting next Thursday, February 2. We are currently working on an annotated version of the Master Contract tentative agreement so that all members have a good understanding of the language and implications of the new contract language. This tentative agreement includes a compensation package for 2022-2023 in addition to changes in the master contract language. ABCFT will have more details on the TA after next week's representative council meeting. Thank you all for your patience in the meantime, but we wanted to let you know that our approval process has begun, and thank you for your continued support. The power of the union is what we can do together at the bargaining

table. In most jobs, they don't have a union to negotiate better pay or working conditions on a yearly basis. Your continued support for ABCFT makes this tentative agreement possible.

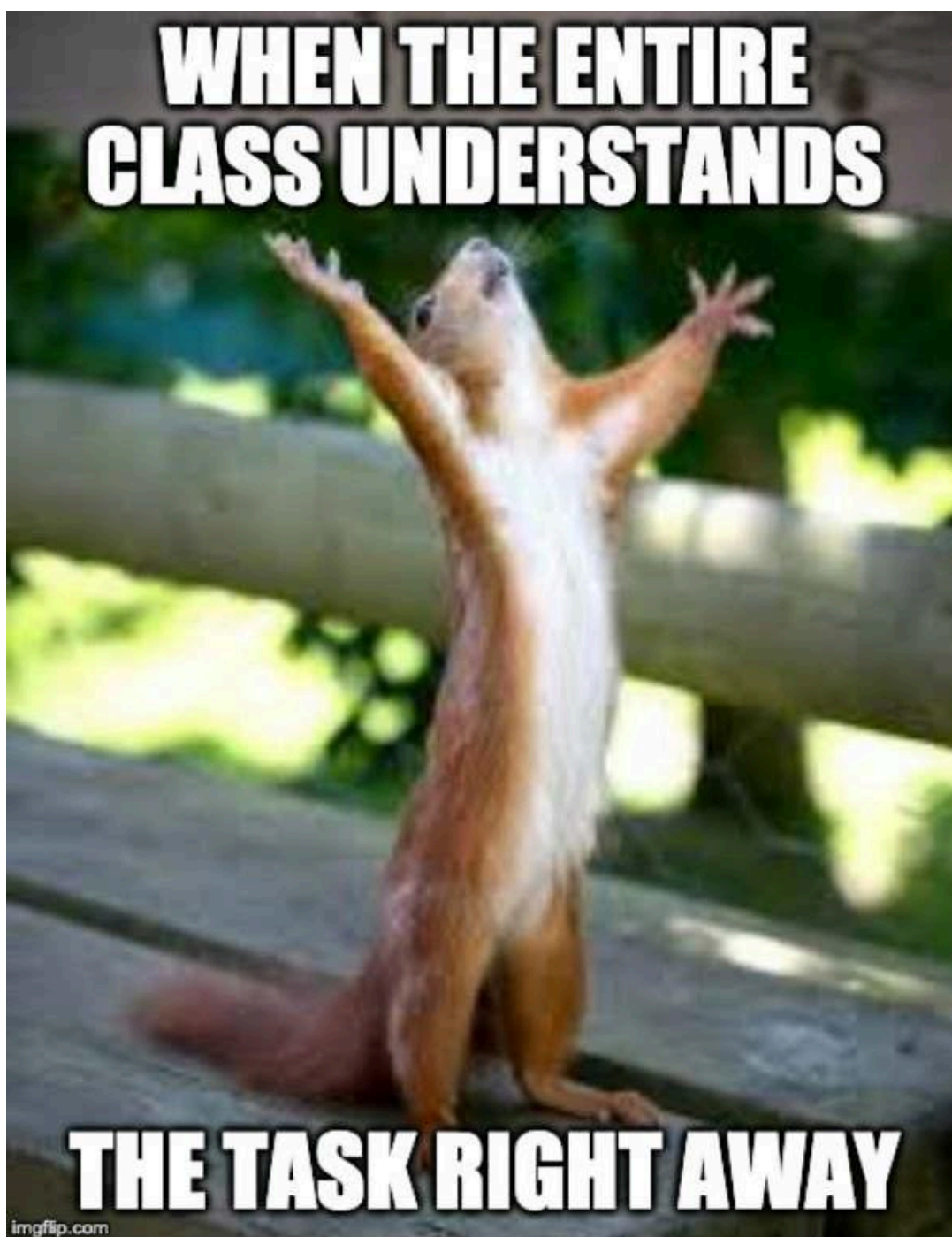
As of yet, the school board and the district have not scheduled any meetings for the School Facilities/Declining Enrollment committee to discuss facilities, enrollment, and usage. Any discussion or action plan from such a committee would take multiple years to enact, so I guarantee you that there will be no drastic facility changes for the next school year. More information to come.

I'm going to keep this report short. The big push was to get this TA signed and moving through the process. There will be plenty of information in the coming weeks as we move towards the goal of having members ratify this agreement.

Thanks for all you do each day; it makes a difference in the lives of the people around you.

In YOUunity,

Ray Gaer
President, ABCFT





*A Union of Educators
& Classified Professionals*

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

The latest CFT articles and news stories can be found here on the PreK12 news feed on the CFT.org website.

[View current issues here](#)

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS



[Find the latest AFT news here](#)

[Find the latest AFT news here](#)

New AFT poll shows voters prioritize school basics over culture wars

The AFT [released a poll](#) on Jan. 13 and the message is clear. Voters are rejecting the culture war that has recently saturated education policy and instead want to see political leaders prioritize what kids need to succeed in school: strong fundamental academic skills and safe and welcoming school environments.

Among the key findings, the poll found that voters are most likely to emphasize issues affecting student success, starting with school staff shortages, and are least likely to emphasize the “culture war” issues that are the focus of many conservative activists.

For more information about the poll, [click here](#).

Follow AFT President Randi Weingarten: <http://twitter.com/rweingarten>



----- NEWS STORY HIGHLIGHT-----

IRS raises teacher tax deduction ceiling

For the first time since the Internal Revenue Service enacted the educator expense deduction in 2002, the agency has raised it from \$250 to \$300 for the current tax filing season. K-12 educators who work a minimum of 900 hours during the school year will benefit and among the items deductible are classroom materials, including technology equipment and any COVID-19 protective items recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Classroom teachers use around \$550 of their own money each year to provide their students with basic supplies, according to data from savings.com, prompting financial experts to complain that the deduction broadly falls short. Pauline Stavrou, a tax attorney for Frost Tax Law in Baltimore, comments: "The amount is just so small, it's a joke."

[Education Week](#)

----- SPECIAL EDUCATION HIRING CRISIS -----

States working to resolve special educator shortage

Several positive developments are emerging from the crisis in special education teacher shortages. States are looking to wean themselves off noncompliant special education emergency licenses, expand pathways that are compliant and create innovative practices that improve teaching practices, meet federal requirements and overcome teacher shortages. Meanwhile, state and local special education offices are teaming up with advocacy groups and higher education institutions for solutions. Alternative licensure programs have also proven successful. One approach in Indiana for example is the Aspiring Statewide Special Education Teacher, or ASSET, program, which supports licensed educators in adding a special education teaching credential. The state is using \$238,234 in federal COVID-19 funds for this program and, in total, from July 1 2022 to December 31 2022, the state has issued 1,102 alternative special education licenses in mild interventions, intense interventions, blind/low vision, and deaf/hard of hearing specialty areas. Special education is one of the highest need teacher positions. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 45% of schools with at least one teacher vacancy said they were missing special educators last winter. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data predicted an annual need for 37,600 special educators between 2021 and 2031. Many of those openings, the bureau estimates, will result from teachers switching to other occupations or leaving the labor force.

[K12 Dive](#)

----- NATIONAL NEWS -----

Data shows student debt relief applicants in each state

The Biden administration has released a state-by-state breakdown of people who could get assistance from the president's embattled student-loan debt relief program. The data shows the most populous states had the highest numbers of applicants or eligible borrowers, with California leading the pack with 2.3m people, followed by Texas with 2.1m. Officials say 26m people had applied or were automatically deemed eligible to have up to \$20,000 of their federal student loans canceled before an appeals court imposed a nationwide injunction halting the relief plan. The department has approved 16m applications, assuring borrowers that the administration will discharge the debt if it prevails in court. Next month, the Supreme Court will hear oral

arguments in two cases seeking to overturn the debt relief policy that conservatives have panned as an expensive giveaway and executive overreach.

[Washington Post](#)

Calls For \$1bn To Boost Teacher Pay In Florida BUT DeSantis comes with an political agenda

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday announced an education plan that, if approved by Florida lawmakers, would put more state funds toward teacher salaries and make changes to how teacher unions operate and negotiate teacher compensation packages in the state. The governor said he will ask the Republican Legislature to set aside \$1bn for teacher pay increases in the upcoming fiscal year, an amount that would be a \$200m more than the current year's funding on that issue. The governor also called for changes to school board term limits and party affiliations, and restrictions on teachers unions, among other proposals. If the money is approved, its goal would be twofold: It could continue to fund DeSantis' goal of boosting the minimum salary for teachers toward \$47,500, a goal that most districts have met; and it would provide more funding to go beyond that goal. "All that additional money can go to increase teacher salaries however the district wants to do it, and we think that's important to both recruit and retain good people in the classroom," DeSantis said at a news conference at Duval Charter School in Jacksonville. The Miami Herald Editorial Board suggests the bill would be better described as the Teachers' Union-Busting Bill. "It's impossible to blast the governor for wanting to pay teachers more. But the moniker "Teachers' Bill of Rights" is pure spin and public relations. Unfortunately, in Florida nowadays, no good policy comes without a not-so-hidden agenda," the Board writes.

[The Miami Herald](#) [NBC Miami](#) [Tampa Bay Times](#)

----- STATE NEWS -----

Newsom's proposal for low-performing students fails most Black students, claim critics

A plan by Gov. Gavin Newsom to increase oversight of all low-performing student groups and focus additional money on the state's poorest schools has angered a coalition of Black education and civil rights organizations that had pressed him for extra state funding to help Black students. Rather than target funds to all Black students, Newsom's plan would target the lowest-income schools that educate about 5% of all students and only 6% of Black students, an *EdSource* analysis shows. Black students make up 5.1% of the state's students. "It's almost the opposite of what we were asking for," said Debra Watkins, the founder and executive director of the California-based A Black Education Network. Mr. Newsom's plan, which is part of the 2023-24 state budget, includes \$300m in new ongoing annual funding to high-poverty schools for what he calls an "equity multiplier." The funding would be divided among schools based on their students' eligibility for free meals — at least 90% of students in elementary and middle schools and at least 85% of students in high schools. Mr. Newsom's analysts chose free lunch rather than the broader measure of free and reduced lunch, which would more than double the number of eligible low-income schools and add to the expense of the plan. Details of the proposals are expected in accompanying legislation, called the trailer bill, due out early in February.

[EdSource](#)

Childcare funds going unspent in California

While California has set aside money to expand subsidized childcare to serve more than 100,000 more children, actually spending the money is proving to be a challenge. Last fiscal year, \$328.5m that was allocated to three state-subsidized childcare and preschool programs went unspent, state data obtained by The Union-Tribune show. That money represented 17% of the \$2bn that was allocated for those programs and

could have paid for childcare or preschool for 22,700, according to figures from the state's education and finance departments. In 2018, \$139.9m went unspent from the same three childcare programs, plus the state's childcare voucher program, according to state figures. "Families across the state are waiting for childcare but we just don't have the money or the slots yet," says Denyne Colburn, chief executive officer of the California Alternative Payment Program Association, a network for agencies who contract with the state to provide subsidized childcare.

[San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

----- DISTRICTS -----

Oakland staff criticize decision to keep schools open

Oakland USD's decision to keep five under-enrolled and low-performing schools from closing at the end of the school year will have dire financial and academic consequences on classrooms across the district, according to a staff analysis of the last-minute reversal. With a new president and a newly sworn in majority of members against school closures, the board rescinded the decision to close the schools during a special meeting, with little advance notice, in early January, violating its own policy that requires the board to review the fiscal impact of any decision prior to a vote. Instead, the board is expected to review the fiscal and academic impact after the fact at its meeting Wednesday. "The District did not have sufficient resources to fully support all of its existing schools at the level that the District sought to fund them and that the schools needed in order to offer a high quality education," according to the report, referring to the initial decision to close schools. "Therefore, in addition to addressing its structural deficit, the District sought to reduce the number of schools it operated so that the remaining schools could be 'properly resourced and staffed.'" Because the schools are so small, with too few kindergarten students in a few cases to fill even one classroom, the district spends a disproportionate amount to keep them open, according to the analysis. The analysis also noted that the decision to keep the schools open comes late into the enrollment process for the fall, requiring a separate application process to add them back into the system. It also means that 751 students from the six schools will no longer be eligible for an Opportunity Ticket, giving them priority admission to the school of their choice. Many families have already applied for fall placement based on that ticket, with the on-time application cycle from Dec. 1 to February 10th.

[San Francisco Chronicle](#)

Students, teachers speak out following violent week at Fresno High

Students and teachers again called on **Fresno USD** leadership to improve campus safety following a particularly violent week at **Fresno High School**. Two people were stabbed just off campus January 18th, and one student was arrested in a confrontation police described as some kind of "high school issue." Two days later, three Fresno High students were arrested following a brawl that brought Fresno police to the campus "I don't want a committee. I don't want a focus group," Fresno High teacher Jose Sandoval told the school board Wednesday night. I don't want anything but action." He was joined by seven other students, teachers, and concerned community members who echoed calls to expedite new safety measures to prevent such incidents from occurring. Some of the most common requests include improving the fencing and gates around campus, installing more security cameras, and hiring additional counselors and campus safety assistants. The comments came during "unscheduled oral communications" on subjects outside of that night meeting's agenda, which the board may not take action on except in limited cases required by law. Board President Veve Islas told the speakers not to interpret that as a show of "disinterest" from the board. "Our inability to have a discussion right now is really driven by mandates about having something that's not agendaized," she said. "I appreciate all of the comments that were made tonight," she added. "As someone who believes deeply in

prevention, I hear you and my heart is full with all of the sentiment around moving to prevention and less intervention.”

[The Fresno Bee](#)

Berkeley USD to adopt new K-3 science curriculum

Berkeley USD is adopting a new science curriculum for grades K-3. According to Adelita Martinez, coordinator of professional development for BUSD, the current curriculum is outdated and not aligned with the New Generation Science Standards, or NGSS. A new science curriculum for grades 4-8 was adopted in winter 2021, she added, but this update did not apply to grades K-3. Ms. Martinez noted that the three curricula that have been piloted — Mystery Science, Full Option Science System Pathways and Twig Science — are made to align with next-generation standards. She added that the curricula addressed the core ideas of science, major shifts and science and engineering practices. In addition, all three curricula support instruction in Spanish, facilitating the dual immersion program.

[The Daily Californian](#)

----- CLASSROOM -----

Political climate impacting how educators teach race and gender

According to one of the first nationally representative studies of the subject, teachers are changing their lessons amid increasing scrutiny from parents and a raft of state laws and school policies that circumscribe lessons on race and gender. A report published by the RAND Corporation today found that of a sample of 8,000 teachers, 25% said they had revised their instructional materials or teaching practices to limit or exclude discussions of race and gender. The report also found that some teachers were more likely than others to alter their lesson plans — including teachers of color, high school teachers and educators in suburban school districts. And the report found that teachers are feeling direct pressure from parents to shift their teaching habits. Relatedly, a Washington Post analysis found that, as of late 2022, legislators in 45 states had passed 64 laws across the past three years restricting what teachers can say and children can do at school.

[Washington Post](#)

AP African American Studies course blocked in Florida

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis 's administration has blocked the inclusion of an Advanced Placement class centered on African American Studies in high schools. A letter from the Florida Department of Education's Office of Articulation to the College Board states that the course is "inexplicably contrary" to Florida law and significantly lacks educational value. "If the course comes into compliance and incorporates historically accurate content, the Department will reopen the discussion," department spokesperson Cassie Palelis says. The College Board's African American Studies course is currently being piloted in 60 schools nationwide during the 2022-2023 school year.

[Washington Examiner](#)

----- LEGAL -----

Court to reconsider if district should recognize Christian club

A federal appeals court is to reconsider a decision requiring the **San Jose Unified School District** to recognize a Christian student group over its objections to a policy the district says discriminatorily bars LGBTQ students from serving as club leaders. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a Wednesday order

vacated a panel's 2-1 decision in August finding the district violated the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' rights by revoking its status as an official high school student club. The San Francisco-based appeals court did so after a majority of its non-recused active judges voted to have an 11-judge panel rehear the case en banc. Arguments will take place the week of March 20 in Pasadena.

[Reuters](#)

----- WORKFORCE -----

Teach For America to cut a quarter of staff

Teach For America plans to cut more than a quarter of its staff by June, impacting around 400 positions. Spokesperson Erin Bradley said the organization would have a “smaller and more agile team of about 1,000 staff by summer.” The shakeup comes after TFA's 2022 cohort was its smallest crop of first-year teachers in more than a decade. TFA no longer places new recruits in 13 of the 51 communities it served just a few years ago, like San Diego, where the organization now focuses on “alumni innovation.” Despite continuing to attract donations from philanthropists, public audits and financial reports show signs that TFA has faced financial difficulties. In the last fiscal year, the nonprofit reported more than \$274m in operating expenses but only about \$197m in revenue. Its endowment and investments have also dropped steeply in value in recent years.

[Chalkbeat](#)

----- HEALTH & WELLBEING -----

Higher ed partnerships supporting schools' mental health workforce expansion efforts

There simply aren't enough qualified personnel or candidates in the pipeline to fill the need for K-12 school counselors still. Even if every school district in the country committed to hiring one school counselor per 250 students — the ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association — there likely wouldn't be enough people available to fill those positions. Partnerships with higher education institutions are bearing fruit however. One of the more significant financial supports emerged in October, when the U.S. Department of Education opened applications for two school mental health programs totaling \$280m. The funding comes from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and FY 2022 appropriations. One program, Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grants, encourages innovative partnerships between districts and higher education institutions to train providers to work in schools and districts. With funding from the Virginia Department of Education for example, the Virginia Partnership for School Mental Health launched in 2019 at the University of Virginia boasts an online asynchronous training for current school mental health professionals that covers the basics of mental health interventions and how to use data and better organize tasks. This professional development also provides extra support and skill building to better prepare and retain staff.

[K12 Dive](#)

----- SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE -----

Student school board members enjoy little agency

The push for students to serve on school boards is gaining traction nationally. Over the past five years, eight states have added at least one student member on their state board, created a student advisory council, or a combination of board membership and advisory council. Some 14% of the nation's largest school districts now have a student serving on their boards. The vast majority (86%) of student reps however do not have

voting rights, according to a 2020 survey. Some students say they have to work to convince the adult panel members to vote for their causes and a large number of young people feel like they have little agency in a role that should provide them with direct input into their educational experiences.

[Chalkbeat](#)

----- TECHNOLOGY -----

School leaders must take more responsibility for cybersecurity, CISA says

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) this week outlined recommendations on how districts can strengthen their cyberdefenses. They include implementing multi-factor authentication and running a strong cybersecurity training program. District leaders should also work with peers and partners in the education space to raise awareness around the issue. The agency's report began with a message that these recommendations must come "from the top down," with leaders emphasizing a "cyber secure culture." The burden to take on these changes cannot fall squarely on IT and cybersecurity staff alone, CISA insisted. K-12 leaders also need to ensure cybersecurity is a bigger priority and use available grant programs to improve networks. The report was mandated by Congress' passage of the K-12 Cybersecurity Act of 2021, which requires the agency to report risks the K-12 sector faces in the cybersphere. Doug Levin, national director of K12 Security Information Exchange, comments: "This landmark federal report clearly and concisely communicates the cybersecurity challenge the U.S. K-12 education sector is facing and recommends common sense steps that stakeholders — including superintendents, school administrators, school board members, and state policymakers—can take to bring about needed change."

[K12 Dive](#)

----- HIGHER EDUCATION -----

Cal State contends with 'unprecedented' enrollment declines

Decreases in Cal State enrollment have officials worried.

Interim Chancellor Jolene Koester first warned last year that enrollment projections were down across the 23 campus system. She now concludes that those drops are real and can undermine Cal State operations.

"Our enrollment projections are unprecedented and deeply concerning," Koester said, during the CSU board of trustees meeting Tuesday.

The system is continuing to project that it will be 7% below its state-funded target of 383,680 for resident students during the 2022-23 academic year — that's more than 25,000 full-time equivalent students. The decreases are due to the effects of the pandemic and long-term declining birth rates.

<https://edsources.org/2023/cal-state-contends-with-unprecedented-enrollment-declines/684803>

12 opportunity gaps fuel 'enormous' college-going disparities

Differences in academic preparation during elementary and secondary school partly explain the large racial, gender and socioeconomic disparities in U.S. college enrollment rates, according to new research from the Brookings Institution. Researchers found steep divides in college-going rates between students with higher and lower socioeconomic status. Of students in the top quintile for socioeconomic status, 88.9% attended

college, compared to just 51.2% of students in the bottom quintile — leaving a nearly 38 percentage point gap. When researchers compared students with similar levels of academic preparation however, the divide between those two socioeconomic groups shrunk to 11 percentage points. They observed even more pronounced effects when examining differences by race and gender. Sarah Reber, a senior fellow at Brookings and co-author of the report, comments: “I think it’s fair to characterize these socioeconomic status disparities in four-year college enrollment as enormous.”

[K12 Dive](#)

----- OTHER -----

Four-day school week gaining popularity nationally. Why isn’t it happening in California?

School districts across the country are increasingly turning to four-day school weeks to save money, increase student attendance and recruit new teachers. But the trend isn’t taking hold in California. Only two tiny, remote California school districts, Leggett Valley Unified in Mendocino County and Big Sur Unified in Monterey County, have shortened the week for students.

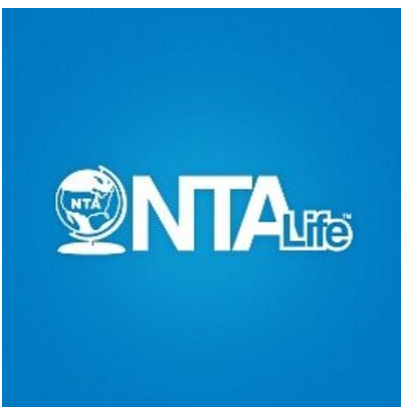
The four-day week isn’t feasible for most schools in the state. California’s Education Code requires schools to hold classes five days a week or have their funding reduced. Over the years state legislators have given exemptions to a handful of school districts in remote areas of California, although they must still meet the requirement for annual instructional minutes. Some of the districts that gained approval for a four-day week have reverted to a five-day schedule and others never instituted the truncated week.

The state of California gave Leggett Valley Unified permission to operate on a four-day schedule almost 14 years ago. Students at Whale Gulch School were the first in the district to move to a shortened week. The off-the-grid school, in the area known as the Lost Coast, serves 50 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The school generates electricity with solar panels, and water is kept in storage tanks fed by a pipe that brings stream water from the top of a mountain through a “crazy filtration system,” said Superintendent Jeff Ritchley.

<https://edsource.org/2023/four-day-school-week-gaining-popularity-nationally-why-isnt-it-happening-in-california/684696>



NTA Life Insurance - An ABCFT Sponsor



Years ago ABCFT started a working relationship with [National Teachers Associates Life Insurance Company](#). Throughout our partnership, NTA has been supportive of ABCFT activities by sponsorship and prizes for our various events. This organization specializes in providing insurance for educators across the nation. We have been provided both data and member testimonials about how pleased they have been with the NTA products and the opportunity to look at alternatives to the district insurance choice.

To All Members of the ABC Federation of Teachers,

National Teacher Associates (NTA) is committed in our efforts to helping educators through tough times. It's what we do. After all...in our eyes, you are the heart and soul of our communities.

Protecting you and your families has been our goal for over 45 years. Despite the current global pandemic, we are not about to slow down now. We know that many of you have had our programs for years and sometimes forget the intricacies of how they work. NTA wants to help facilitate any possible claims for now and in the future. Fortunately, all claims and reviews can be done by phone and



online. I personally want to offer my services to guide you in the right direction with your NTA benefits.

We also apologize for not being able to finish the open enrollment for those of you who wanted to get our protection. We are still able to help by extending our enrollment window for the near future. Again, this can be done over the phone, email, or online.

Please contact **Leann Blaisdell** at any time either by phone or email.

562-822-5004

Leann.Blaisdell@horacemann.com

[**Click here to schedule an appointment**](#)